

The Basilica of Saint Mary of the Assumption

PARISH OFFICE: 506 Fourth Street, Marietta OH 45750 PHONE: 740-373-3643
WEBSITE: www.stmarysmarietta.org  www.facebook.com/stmarysmarietta EMAIL: info@stmarysmarietta.org



December 25, 2022
The Nativity of the Lord

MASSES FOR THE WEEK

	<i>CHRISTMAS EVE</i>
SAT	5:00 PM - People of the Parish 7:30 PM - Dec'd Parishioners of the Basilica 10:00 PM - Dec'd Pastors of the Basilica
	<i>CHRISTMAS DAY</i>
SUN	8:00 AM - Intentions of the Holy Father 10:00 AM - Needs of our Diocese
MON	7:45 AM - Catherine Schneider, 42 nd Anniversary 12:05 PM - John Arnold
TUE	7:45 AM - Bill Rice 12:05 PM - Jim Archer
WED	7:45 AM - Liv/dec'd of the George & Virginia Zide Family 12:05 PM - Jeanne Offenberger
THU	7:45 AM - Mark Bradley 12:05 PM - Dan & Katie Hrycenko
FRI	7:45 AM - Jack Rose 12:05 PM - Lee Bryant
SAT	9:00 AM - Preston John Huck 5:30 PM - Father Ed Kakascik
SUN	8:00 AM - Liv/dec'd of the George & Virginia Zide Family 10:00 AM - People of the Parish 12:00 PM - Larry Steinel

SUNDAY MASSES - Saturday 5:30 PM; Sunday 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 12:00 PM
CONFESSIONS - Saturday 3:30-5:00 PM (or anytime by appointment)
BAPTISMS - Contact Parish Office
WEDDINGS - Contact Parish Office *six months* in advance

Rector - Rev. Msgr. John Michael Campbell (fatherjmike@gmail.com)
Parochial Vicar - Rev. Edward Maxfield Jr. (emaxfield@diosteub.org)
Retired - Rev. Dale Tornes
Permanent Deacon - Rev. Mr. Lee Weisend
Music Director - Mr. John Ontko (740-350-4224, ontkob@suddenlink.net)
St. Mary School - 320 Marion St, 740-374-8181 (www.stmaryscatholic.org)
School Principal - Elizabeth Tokodi (elizabethtokodi@stmaryscatholic.org)
DRE - Mrs. Deborah Coty - (dmcoty22@gmail.com)
Parish Council Chairman - Larry Hawn (740) 373-9095
K of C Grand Knight - Mr. Pete Saliba (304-494-6170)
CWC President - Jenn Tinkler
Hibernians - Mr. William Rathbone (740) 374-5492
Prayer Line - & Eucharistic Adoration, Mrs. Shelly Medley (740-525-6360)
Health Ministry - Mrs. Janet Jaeger (740-374-6768)
Daily Bread Kitchen - Mrs. Carol Henshaw (740-885-1181)
St. Vincent De Paul - Help Line (740-376-1334)
Welcoming Committee - Jim Naylor (740) 350-5510
Divine Mercy Gift Shop - Barb Ritchie (740) 538-4733

I PROCLAIM TO YOU GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY: TODAY A SAVIOR IS BORN FOR US, CHRIST THE LORD.

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY:

The Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God:
Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21.

MASSES NEXT WEEKEND:

January 1st is the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Masses for next weekend, will follow our regular weekend schedule: 5:30 PM on Saturday, December 31 (New Year's Eve) and 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM and Noon on Sunday, January 1st (New Year's Day)

2023 RELIGIOUS CALENDARS ARE HERE:

2023 Religious Calendars are available at all Basilica entrances. They are a gift to our parishes from Bill Peoples, Cawley & Peoples Funeral Home. We thank him for this very generous gift.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS:

The parish offices will be closed Monday, December 26th and until 1:00 PM Tuesday, December 27th because of the Christmas holiday.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

VISITORS WELCOME! We welcome any visitors who are joining us for Mass this weekend. We hope your stay in Marietta is enjoyable. Any new parishioners at the Basilica are asked to please register with the parish office.

PARISH OFFICES are open from 1:00 PM until 4:00 PM on Mondays and from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM Tuesday through Friday, with a lunch break from Noon until 1:00 PM each day.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

MON	6:15 PM	-	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Devotions. See announcement.
WED	8:20 AM	-	6:45 PM – Eucharistic Adoration in the Chapel of the English Martyrs.
	6:00 PM	-	Basilica Book Club Meeting in the Basilica Social Hall
FRI	8:30 AM	-	7:00 PM – Eucharistic Adoration in the Chapel of the English Martyrs.

The Lord Will Never Be Outdone In Generosity!

Total collection last weekend: \$ 17,149.00

Amount needed each week for the
Basilica budget: \$ 14,225.00

God bless those who support our Basilica Parish!

SECOND COLLECTION

The first weekend of each month there is a second collection for the maintenance of our Basilica. This collection will be taken up at all Masses next weekend. Envelopes were provided with your support envelope packet.

ONLINE GIVING

Online giving is available at the Basilica. For more information, please visit this website:

<http://www.stmarysmarietta.org> and go to the left side of the web page. Click on the GIVE ONLINE button to see more information or to sign up.

BASILICA FOUNDATION:

A fund has been established by the Marietta Community Foundation for the maintenance and repairs of our Basilica. This fund is separate from the monthly maintenance collection. Our goal is to have at least One Million Dollars in the fund before using it. To donate, contact the Marietta Community Foundation.

SCHEDULING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Before scheduling a meeting or event in the Basilica Social Hall, Conference Room or using the Basilica Kitchen, please check with the parish office to be sure the time and date are available. If you change the time or date of a previously scheduled event, be sure the new time is available. All meetings and events MUST be put in the master book in the parish office.

ST. MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL NEWS

St. Mary Catholic School wrapped up a fun filled last week of school with our school “elf” joining in the fun and stirring up shenanigans! What a fun way to wrap up 2022.

Our 8th grade class is sponsoring a sock drive to help the less fortunate. There is a basket at the school entrance and the Basilica 4th Street entrance to collect socks through December 29th.

St. Mary Catholic School wishes you all a very Merry Christmas. Thank you for the support of our school.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bulletin announcements must be in by Wednesday morning in order to be included in the following weekend’s bulletin. Announcements MUST be in writing. We do not accept them by phone.

SAINT MARY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL REUNION

Our next reunion will be in two years. It has been scheduled for July 13, 2024. Also, a reminder about our upcoming sports memorabilia display – if you have any items that you would like to donate, Jerseys, numbers, letters, articles, etc., please contact Dave Archer at 740-896-2755 or Ken Strahler at 740-373-4529.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF CRUSADERTTE BASKETBALL

Plans are being made to honor and remember Doug Hoselton, the first Crusadertte basketball coach. The celebration will be Saturday, February 4, 2023 prior to an afternoon game against Frankfort. The Crusaderttes will also celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the first team at that time. More information will be forthcoming.

WATER FOR LIFE

Every 15 seconds a child in a developing country dies of cholera or some other water borne disease. The cause? Contaminated water! When a village does not have a well, women and children must walk for miles with buckets to collect water.

Your help and generosity have provided clean water for life for many families in a remote, rural community of Hinche, Haiti. Our Catholic Woman's Club is grateful for you in reaching our goal of \$6,000 needed for the clean water project. In partnership with Cross Catholic Outreach, we remain focused on the Lord; blessing Haiti's families with clean water and hope this Christmas.

PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY

We pray for all of those serving our country in the military. We especially remember those from our own parish and friends and relatives of parishioners. May God watch over them and keep them safe.

BASILICA CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS

Our 2022 Christmas ornament is a perfect gift for anyone. This year we have available two different designs. One of the exterior of the Basilica; and one of the beautiful glass dome. There is a limited number of each. Stop in the gift shop to get yours. Divine Mercy Gift Shop is located in the lower level of our Basilica.

PRE-CANA

A Pre-Cana Session is scheduled for Saturday, March 11, 2023 here at the Basilica. If you are planning to be married within the next year you should register for this session by calling the parish office, 373-3643. Pre-Cana is a requirement for marriage in the Diocese of Steubenville.

DAILY BREAD KITCHEN

Families are struggling to make ends meet with higher prices going up each day. As a result the number of people we serve at the Daily Bread Kitchen continues to increase. We are asking for your prayers and support.

Please place your donation in an envelope marked "DBK" and put it in the collection basket Thank you and God bless you for all of your help.

BASILICA BOOK CLUB

Our December Meeting will be held December 28th at 6:00 PM in the Social Hall.

We will be reading the Bishop Barron article "What Are You Waiting For?" There are copies in the library if you need one. Remember: All are welcome, bring a friend. Snacks and drinks will be provided. Any thoughts, questions or if you would like to be added to the BBC email list, contact Debbie Lazorik: lazorikd@marietta.edu or 740-434-3769.

The January book is The Butterfly and the Violin

by Kristy Cambron. 1942: A darling of the Austrian aristocracy, talented violinist, and daughter to a high-ranking member of the Third Reich, Adele Von Bron risks everything when she begins smuggling Jews out of Vienna. In a heartbeat, her life of prosperity and privilege dissolves into a world of starvation and barbed wire.

As Sera untangles the secrets behind the painting, she finds beauty in the most unlikely places: the grim concentration camps of Auschwitz and the inner recesses of her own troubled heart.

"Cambron expertly weaves together multiple, timelines, and perspectives to produce a poignant tale of the power of love and faith in difficult circumstances.

The book is available to check out at the Parish Library. Since it is the holidays and this book is 335 pgs., we will have this as our January book, giving everyone time to get it read. Check out time is 4 weeks or sooner if you finish. Please return the book within that time frame so it will be available to others for check out.

ADDRESS POR PHONE NUMBER?

If you have recently moved, please contact the parish office and give us your current address. Also, many families have done away with their land-line and are just using cell phones. Please let us know so we can update our parish roster. Thank you for your cooperation.

MINISTRY SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEKEND OF December 31 & January 1

	Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion	Lectors	Altar Servers
Sat:	Theresa Huck(CAPT) (swap req.)	Nancy Funk	Not Filled
5:30	Sheri Black (HOST)		Not Filled
	Gregg Black (HOST)		Not Filled
	Jean Tornes (CHALICE)		
	Sandy George (CHALICE) (swap req.)		
Sun:	Mary Weddle (CAPT)	Shelly Medley	David Baker
8:00	Patti Finkel (HOST)		Charles Kremer
	Carol Antill (HOST)		Greg Dickson
	Sharon Loken (CHALICE)		Kenny Offenberger
	Cory Marshall (CHALICE)		
10:00	Gerald Cooke (CAPT)	Khadine Ritter	Henry Corcoran
	Carol O'Grady (HOST)		Jonah Corcoran
	Gary Pitt (HOST)		Nico Marasco
	Pat Dickinson (CHALICE)		Valentina Marasco
	Elizabeth Tokodi (CHALICE)		
12:00	Not Filled (CAPT)	Sherry Hill	Evan Huffman
	Lisa Taylor (HOST)		Grant Huffman
	Sandy Bickert (HOST)		Karter Lankford
	Joe Schmidt (CHALICE)		
	Jeanette Flowers		

CHRISTMAS 2022

CHRIST IS BORN LET US GLORIFY HIM



Today, the greeting “Merry Christmas” is on our lips and in our hearts. What does this simple greeting mean? We know, of course, that for many people, things are not merry today, and that for all of us, there are certain things that cause us anxiety and sadness. There is evil in the world and in our lives. But “Merry Christmas” does not mean that we always feel happy, nor does it mean that everything is going our way. What it means instead is that even if everything else is falling apart, we always have access to God. Christ has come to lead us to the Father and bring us a new relationship with God and each other in the life that never ends. “Merry Christmas” means that even in the midst of sadness, we can never lose this gift. We simply need to take hold of it and be faithful. He is with us always, and that brings a peace and joy that the world can neither give nor take away. Merry Christmas!

The wonder of Christmas is that the promised coming of the Messiah of the Lord was fulfilled in a surprising way that surpassed the hopes and dreams of the people of old. On the first Christmas night, angels announced Christ's birth to the shepherds. But instead of saying that Jesus was the Messiah of the Lord, they said that He is "Messiah and Lord" (Lk. 2:11). God, in other words, did not simply send someone to represent Him. He came Himself!

Because the child born is Lord, Christmas means more than welcoming the child. It means welcoming the one who will preach the Sermon on the Mount, instruct us by parables, give us the sacraments, and establish his Church. All of these Christmas presents are to be opened and used! Christmas is about a God who created the human family, and then decided to become a member of that family. Christmas is not when Jesus began; it is when Jesus began existing as one of us, and thereby joined all of us to Himself. He joins to His Divinity all who share human nature: the weak and strong, the small and big, the born and unborn.

Therefore, welcoming the child demands welcoming all whom this child came to redeem, all who are united to God in him. It means welcoming the poor and destitute, the stranger and the alienated, the disabled and the unborn. Christmas is universal and is about the exaltation of the human person.



Adoration of Jesus in the Most Blessed

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will take place in our Basilica's Chapel of the English Martyrs on Wednesday and Friday of this week. Adoration takes place on these two days from 8:15 am. until 7:00 pm. every week. Adoration is an opportunity to reconnect with God on a personal level. Jesus remains in the Blessed Sacrament to refresh us in mind, in heart and in spirit. Eucharistic Adoration allows us to clear

our minds and just pray in the presence of the Lord.

PILGRIMAGES TO OUR BASILICA

Our Basilica of Saint Mary of the Assumption welcomes all visitors, encouraging them to come, pray, and enjoy our beautiful church. If you are a member of a group who would like to tour our Basilica or make a spiritual pilgrimage, please let us know how we can be of assistance. We are honored to host visitors and pilgrims to our Basilica.

Special Events & Scheduled Pilgrimages at the Basilica:

- Jan. - 4, - Bishop's priests Dinner
- Jan. - 8, - St. Henry Pot-luck
- Jan. - 21, - Eucharistic Congress Mass (Bishop)
- Jan. - 31, - Catholic School Week
- Feb. - 4, - Bethlehem Christian Families Items
- Feb. - 22, - Ash Wednesday
- Mar. - 5, - Rite of Election (Bishop)
- May. - 21 - Confirmation



GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

On Tuesday, January 3rd, we will continue our grief support group session at 7:00 pm. in the rectory. There have been several deaths and it is beneficial to share our thoughts and grief. The death of a loved one is a very difficult journey – sharing with others who are going through the same process gives us support. Transforming loss into living again with faith, hope and love and moving toward healing and growth.

The death of one we love - a child or spouse - a very difficult journey. When we have the support of others who are experiencing the same kind of loss, we can begin to put our lives back together and begin and transform our loss into living again with faith, hope and love and moving toward healing and growth.

SPECIAL THANKS

We thank all those who helped decorate the Basilica for Christmas. As usual, the Basilica is beautiful for Christmas.

DECEASED PRIESTS OF OUR DIOCESE

On Saturday, we remember the 9th anniversary of the death of Fr. Edward Kakascik, our immediate former pastor. He worked very hard for our parish and school. May he now rest forever in the Kingdom of our Father.

Perpetual Help Devotions This Monday

Perpetual Help Devotions will be celebrated this Monday evening at 6:15 pm. Parishioners are encouraged to participate in this devotion celebrated in our Basilica on Monday evening. We ask Our Lady to guide and protect our Basilica, all visitors, and each one of us. Since 1866 the Redemptorists have spread devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary under the icon and title of Our Mother of Perpetual Help.

Feast days this week

Monday, December 26, Saint Stephen, First Martyr

Stephen was one of seven deacons of the Acts of the Apostles. He was the first disciple to be martyred. He was martyred in the year 35.

Tuesday, December 27, Saint John the Evangelist

John was the brother of James. He is the "Disciple whom Jesus loved". He authored three letters the book of Revelation and a gospel. He is symbolized by the eagle.

Wednesday, December 28, The Holy Innocents (Martyrs)

The massacre of the Innocents bears witness to the blood of Jesus.

Thursday, December 29, Saint Thomas Becket (Martyr)

Thomas Becket was the Chancellor of England and the archbishop of Canterbury. He defended the Freedoms of the Church he was canonized three years after his death on December 29th 1170. He is one of three martyrs after which our chapel is named.

Friday, December 30, The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, & Joseph.

Family life is rooted in the unconditional love of God as witnessed by the Holy Family.

Saturday, December 31, Saint Sylvester.

Sylvester was the Bishop of Rome from 314-335. He organized public worship and dedicated the Lateran basilica. He condemned Arianism, and is one of the first non-martyrs venerated as a saint.

*On this Christmas day, enjoy your families
and the knowledge that you are loved by God!*

EVENTS AND MEETINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday, December 26,

7:45 am. - Mass
12:05 pm. - Mass
6:15 pm. - Perpetual Help Devotions
6:45 pm. - Reposition of the Eucharist

Tuesday, December 27,

7:45 am. - Mass
12:05 pm. - Mass
3:30 pm. - Confessions

Wednesday, December 28,

7:45 am. - Mass
8:20 am. - Adoration of the Eucharist
12:05 pm.
6:45 pm. - Reposition of the Eucharist

Thursday, December 29,

7:45 am. - Mass
12:05 pm. - Mass

Friday, December 30,

7:45 am. - Mass
8:20 am. - Adoration of the Eucharist
12:05 pm. - Mass

Saturday, December 31,

9:00 am. - Mass

5:30 pm. - Mass

Sunday, January 1,

8:00 am. - Mass
9:30 am. - Mass - St. Henry
10:00 am. - Mass
12:00 pm. - Mass

Ukrainian archbishop: 'Many will sing Christmas carols with our soldiers'

For months, the Greek Catholic Cathedral of the Resurrection in Kyiv was a refuge for more than 200 people. They made the basement a shelter against air attacks. In those days, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk walked around in a bulletproof vest and a helmet, trying to comfort the afflicted. Currently, the major archbishopric complex is building a kitchen to let up to 100 people cook their own meals at a time — in the hope that it will convince people to stay.

Many citizens in Kyiv have gotten used to war, Shevchuk said. "We have learned to recognize noises," the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church told a group of journalists on a recent trip to Kyiv organized by the Polish and Ukrainian embassies to the Holy See. The archbishop explained, you understand there are usually two or three missiles launched at one time. So you no longer bother to seek shelter under some circumstances, instead waiting for the attack to end.

An ongoing problem is the power supply: The capital has electricity in 75% of its territory, and there can be sudden blackouts. In cities closer to the border, like Kharkiv, there are curfews at night, and all the lights are blacked out. Life has become very complicated, and the third wave of temporary migration from Ukraine has begun. The population has organized itself to immediately fix what is destroyed, so as not to give the idea of bowing to any enemy provocation.

[Pope returns Greece's Parthenon sculptures in ecumenical nod](#)

In an ecumenical gesture, Pope Francis is donating three marble fragments in the Vatican Museums to Archbishop Ieronymos II of Athens, the primate of the Greek Orthodox Church.



THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION

506 4TH STREET • MARIETTA OH 45750 • 740-373-3643



December 25, 2022

Dear Parishioners,

As the world lay covered in darkness that first Christmas eve, a bright light broke through the night that would forever change the world. For most, it was an event that went unnoticed at the time, but it is an event that still affects us today.

The world today often still sits in darkness. Sometimes we do the same in our own lives. But the Nativity of Our Lord comes to us each year to remind us that there is a great light to guide us, if we just open our eyes and our hearts to it.

Whatever has caused the light to dim in our lives during the past year, Christ comes to us this Christmas day to renew us, restore us and bring light and joy back to us. He reminds us that God is with us, and will remain with us for all time.

The Lord Jesus never ceases to knock at our door like a humble pilgrim in search of hospitality. So this Christmas, the Infant Savior comes to us, like a humble pilgrim, and knocks at the door of our heart, seeking to make His home within us and be for us a true and enduring hope as we continue to journey towards the House of our Father.

In this Holy Season, and on all the days that follow, through prayer, Mass, and the reception of the sacraments, let us open our hearts in welcome to this Divine Humble Pilgrim – Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us give Him hospitality, bringing Him to our families, our places of work, our neighborhoods and our schools. Let us also entrust all men and women in the armed forces, especially those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Ukraine, and the Middle East, to the Christ Child - for He is the hope of us all. Amidst war and the economic uncertainties faced by our nation, it is Christ who strengthens us to face these challenges with courage so as to shed light upon the darkness which so often marks our world. Let us live then in joyful hope and light this holy day, until we see the Infant Savior, not in the stable of Bethlehem, but face to face in the eternal glory of heaven.

May the hope and light of Jesus Christ come to each of us on this Holy Day of Christmas.

Sincerely,

Rev. Msgr. John M Campbell
(Rector)

Vatican dismisses Father Frank Pavone from priesthood

Father Frank Pavone, a well-known pro-life activist and national director of the organization Priests for Life, has been dismissed from the clerical state for “blasphemous communications on social media” and “persistent disobedience of the lawful instructions of his diocesan bishop.”

In a Dec. 13 letter to U.S. bishops obtained by CNA and confirmed by multiple sources as authentic, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, wrote that the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Clergy issued the decision on Nov. 9, adding that there was “no possibility of appeal.”

“Father Pavone was given ample opportunity to defend himself in the canonical proceedings, and he was also given multiple opportunities to submit himself to the authority of his diocesan bishop,” explains a separate statement attached to Pierre’s letter. “It was determined that Father Pavone had no reasonable justification for his actions.”

It is not clear in what diocese Pavone, 63, is incardinated as a priest. On the Priests for Life website, it says he received permission from the Vatican in 2019 to transfer from the Diocese of Amarillo, Texas, where he was incardinated in 2005, to another, unnamed diocese.

Pavone has a long history of conflicts with bishops, beginning more than 20 years ago with the late Cardinal Edward Egan of the Archdiocese of New York. Egan succeeded the late Cardinal John J. O’Connor, who ordained Pavone in 1988 and encouraged his pro-life work.

Pavone has been at odds with Bishop Patrick J. Zurek in Amarillo since the latter became bishop there in 2008. In 2011, Zurek publicly suspended Pavone, though Pavone later had the suspension overruled by the Vatican. Pavone’s political activism played a role in his problems in Amarillo.

An outspoken supporter of former president Donald Trump, Pavone served on official Trump campaign outreach positions in 2016, and was originally a co-chair of Trump’s 2020 pro-life coalition, as well as an advisory board member of Catholics for Trump. Canon law forbids clerics from having an active role in political parties unless they receive the permission of their bishop.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHT

During the weeks of Advent, we have been preparing for Christmas. Today we celebrate the historical coming of the Son of God into human history. The Son of God – the Eternal Son of the Father – now dwells in our very midst.

Today, we ask the Holy Spirit to help us experience the greatness of the Father’s love for each one of us.

We bear witness to the truth of Christmas by the way we live our lives and by the love we show to one another. We should not think that just because we give presents to one another, our relationships are what they should be; nor should we think that just because we come to Mass on Christmas, we have a suitable relationship with God. Because Jesus came into the world, our lives can and must change. May the Lord of creation be invited into each home in our parish and ever remain there.

'When a Loved One Dies by Suicide'

During this season of gift-giving, in his letter, St. James tells us, "All good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights" (James 1:17).

When death occurs, everyone grieves in their own way, and no two healing journeys are the same. Suicide is very difficult to deal with for those who are left behind. People are not defined by the way we die; nor are they defined by mental illness. We are wonderful creations of God and we need to do better as a society to help people that live with these illnesses that lead to suicide.

A great number of people that are affected by suicide of a loved one and in need of support. Regarding suicide grief and how to cope during the holidays and at the present moment of Christmas, the holidays are difficult because there is an expectation that they be celebrated with happiness, yet when you are in the depths of grief it is not possible to feel happy. Oftentimes people who are grieving cope with the holidays by becoming numb and withdrawing. Layered on top of the emotions is the stigma, misunderstanding, and judgement that comes with suicide. The first holidays after the death by suicide of our loved one can be a burden and a time that cannot be enjoyed, but only endured. However, as the years go by, grief changes. We learn how to integrate the grief into our lives and accept the fact that it never goes away completely.

To support those who grieve, simply accompany them ... Let those who are grieving the suicide of a loved one know that you care and that you pray for them and their loved one who died. Realize that grief is exhausting, so doing little things to help with the many tasks that come with the holidays can mean a great deal."

For those who have faced the crisis of suicide, Christmas will taken on a meaning that goes beyond a sentimental affection for Christmas carols and holiday traditions. It becomes a time of hope born through the grief that draws us to Christ. I believe that by coming into the world and 'dwelling among us,' Christ understands the human pain and suffering that leads to suicide. On this Christmas Day, the gospel reading is from the book of John: 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' (John 1:5) Christ came into the world to overcome the darkness of evil and death, even the evil that leads to death by suicide. That is the hope we find in Christmas.

Living nativity takes to the streets of Rome

Catholics from Italy participated in a re-enactment of the Christmas story in Rome on Saturday. The processional living nativity began outside Rome's cathedral, the Basilica of St. John Lateran, and proceeded down Via Merulana, a major thoroughfare, to reach the Basilica of St. Mary Major.
