

You are welcome here!

Thanks for giving us a great Christmas gift: the gift of *your presence* here at St. Joseph-St. Lawrence Parish. We are blessed that you are celebrating the Birth of Jesus with us.

And I want you to know that our door is always open to you, no matter where you're coming from or if you've been away a while.

We've had our ups and downs. But having a Church Family that accepts us as we are helps us to cope with life's twists and turns.

Our parish is made up of diverse people who search together, pray for each other, and who lift up to God's care all the suffering in the world. We even roll up our sleeves and try to be of service to those in need. Because of this we each feel included, knowing that we never need to feel isolated. We believe this is God's plan for everyone and one of the reasons why Jesus was born.

So, we invite you to be part of our family-- these good-hearted folks who work for justice, seek peace, and strive to live good Christian lives.

Now that does not mean we're perfect. Some people have stopped being part of a parish because they feel that the Church has failed to live up to its name, have failed to be Christian enough. Some people have been hurt by someone who works for the Church. Others just have trouble believing everything the Church teaches.

We understand this. But God wants us all to open the ears of our souls and really let divine wisdom sink in. By coming to Mass week after week we grow spiritually. The words of the Bible stir us and challenge us to become the person God created us to be. Holy Communion unites us to Jesus Himself and makes us more and more like Christ.

Taking part in Church life is how our members become better Christians and more able to measure up to the loving standards of Jesus. We need you here. We need your prayers, your help, your voice, and your presence. Come back soon.

May your Christmas be filled with many blessings!

Father Bill

If you have questions or like to talk about any of this, please contact me: Email: Fr.Wm.McEvoy@gmail.com. Phone: (913) 773-5712.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: SJSLPARISH.ORG

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK: "ST. JOSEPH-ST. LAWRENCE PARISH (EASTON)"

What is the origin of the Nativity Scene?

Nativity scenes have for centuries been a popular Christmas decoration, and in churches and homes all over Christendom it helps us, in the words of the carol, "Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing."

It all started with St. Francis of Assisi. He had a special devotion to the Child Jesus, and he created the first nativity scene on Christmas Eve of the year 1223. St. Francis was first inspired by this idea after visiting the historical site of Christ's birth on a pilgrimage to the Bethlehem. This visit deepened his devotion to the Child Jesus, who was born in poverty and humility. He wanted others who could not visit Bethlehem to have the same spiritual experience he did.

St. Francis recreated the scene of Christ's birth for Midnight Mass held inside of a cave near the small central Italian village of Greccio. The townspeople joined in the liturgy. St. Francis, who was an ordained deacon, proclaimed the Gospel and preached the homily.

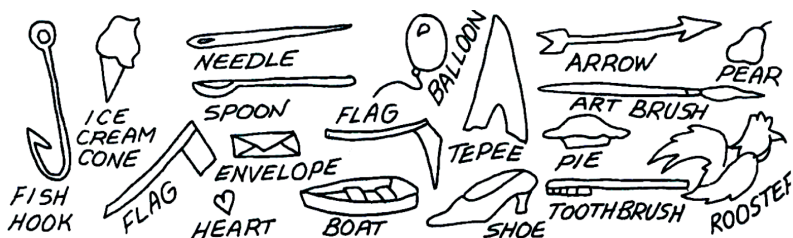
Inside the cave, St. Francis had set up an empty manger (the feeding trough for farm animals), added hay, and brought in a live ox and donkey to stand near the manger just as it was believed to have happened on that first Christmas night. He wrote, "I want to do something that will recall the memory of that Child who was born in Bethlehem, to see with bodily eyes the inconveniences of his infancy, how he lay in the manger, and how the ox and ass stood by."

A knight of Greccio, John of Velita, said that at one point in the Mass the baby Jesus appeared in the manger and seemed asleep. St. Francis then went to the manger and held the baby in his arms.



So when you look upon the manger, imagine yourself there and witness before your eyes the humble birth of our Savior.

See if you can find these hidden pictures below



Prayer before Christmas Dinner

GOD OF ALL GOOD GIFTS, we thank you for the many ways you have blessed us this day. We are grateful for each of those who are gathered around this table. We ask You to bless us and our food and to bless those we love who are not with us today. In our gratitude and love, we recall Your humble birth into our lives and pray for those who live without enough to eat. We call to mind the stable in which You were born and pray for those who have no place to live. We remember Your challenging message of caring and giving and we pray for peace in families and nations throughout the world. We bless You and give You thanks united in Your Spirit who brings our hearts to life on Christmas Day and forever. Amen.



START THE NEW YEAR
OFF RIGHT

SOLEMNITY OF MARY,
MOTHER OF GOD
Holy Day of Obligation

MASSES:

NEW YEARS EVE 5pm
St. Joseph of the Valley

NEW YEARS DAY 9am
St. Lawrence

**Merry
Christmas!**

*from
Father Bill
and Bentley*

