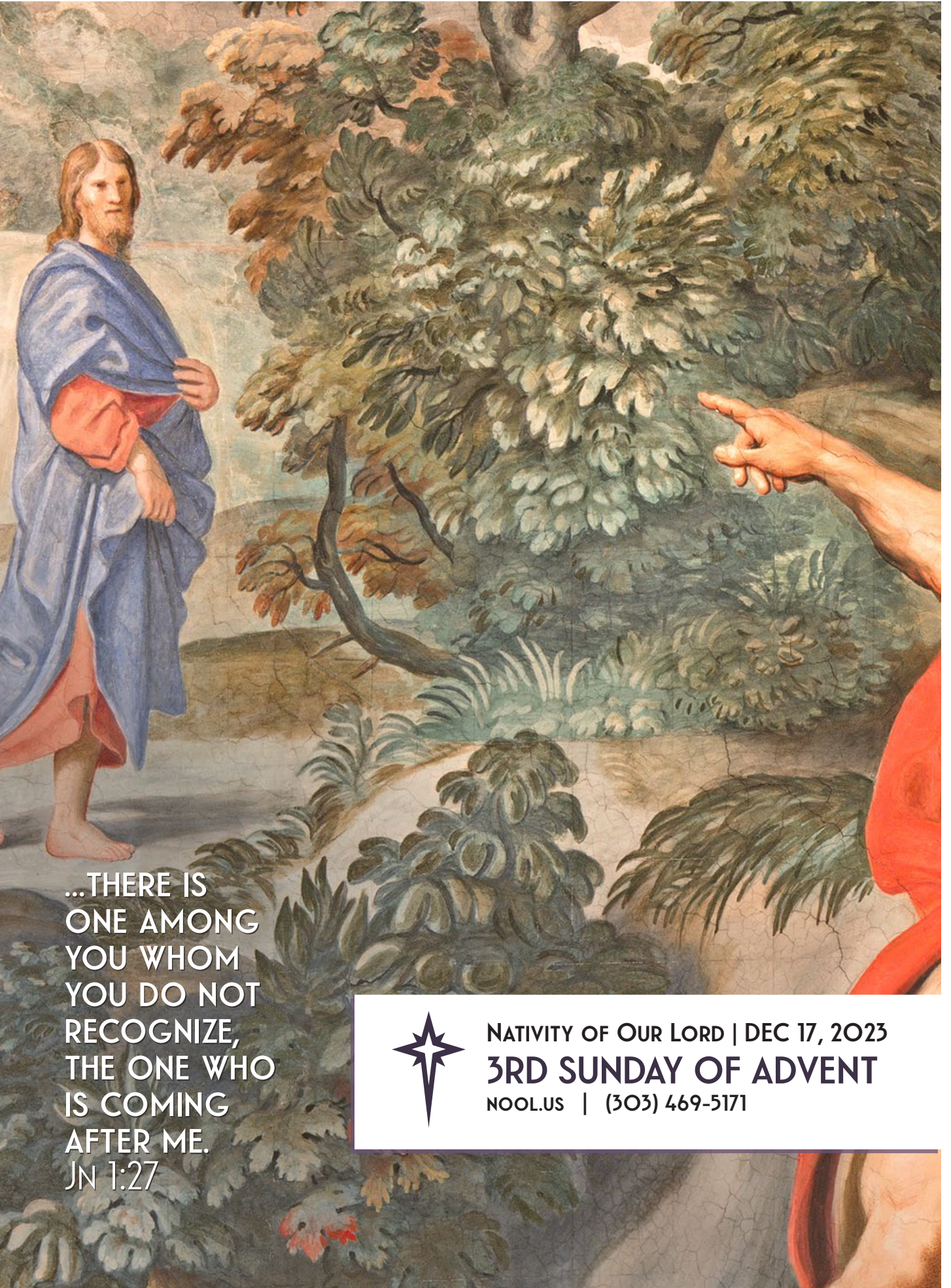


Domenichino, *John the Baptist Points at Jesus*, 1621-1628, fresco, detail; Basilica di Sant'Andrea della Valle, Rome, Italy; USPD



...THERE IS
ONE AMONG
YOU WHOM
YOU DO NOT
RECOGNIZE,
THE ONE WHO
IS COMING
AFTER ME.
JN 1:27



NATIVITY OF OUR LORD | DEC 17, 2023
3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
NOOL.US | (303) 469-5171

MASS TIMES

MONDAY-FRIDAY

7:00 am
9:30 am (livestreamed)
School Mass this week:
Friday 12/22/2023, 8:15 am

SATURDAY

9:30 am (livestreamed)

VIGIL MASS

4:30 pm

SUNDAY

7:30 am
9:30 am (livestreamed)
11:30 am
5:00 pm

CONFESSION

THURSDAY

5:00-6:00 pm

SATURDAY

8:00-9:30 am
3:00-4:30 pm

SUNDAY

30 min before Masses

PARISH OFFICE HOURS:

MONDAY-FRIDAY: 8 am-5 pm

FRONT DESK:

MONDAY-FRIDAY: 8 am-8 pm

SATURDAY: 8 am-3:30 pm

Phone: (303) 469-5171

Fax: (303) 469-5172

School: (303) 466-4177

900 W. Midway Blvd.
Broomfield, CO 80020



SACRISTY LAUNDRY

Katherine Vagher

COLLECTION COUNTERS

Mon, Dec 18 | 10 am

Bob Johnson
Deborah Mittleman
Victoria Villegas
Ann McGinness

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, DEC 24 MASSES

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
4:30 PM (VIGIL 12/23),
7:30 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM

CHRISTMAS EVE
4 PM, 6 PM, 8 PM, 10 PM

MONDAY, DEC 25 MASSES

CHRISTMAS DAY
7:30 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

IN THE CHURCH:

THURSDAY

12:00-6:00 pm
SOLEMN HOLY HOUR:
5:00-6:00 pm with *Confession* and *Vespers*
Benediction: 5:55 pm

IN THE CHAPEL:

FOR SCHEDULED ADORERS,
SEE AVAILABLE HOURS AND SIGN UP AT

www.nool.us/adoration

OPEN FOR WALK-INS
MONDAY-FRIDAY

8:00 am-5:00 pm



Scan to
sign up for
adoration

VISITING THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND

Do you know or do you have someone in your family who is sick or homebound, cannot attend Sunday Mass regularly, and desires to receive sacraments of penance and Eucharist? Please do not hesitate to contact Nativity to schedule a visit of a priest or Eucharistic minister at (303) 469-5171.

GOING TO THE HOSPITAL

If you are going to the hospital and need a visit from a priest or deacon, please call the front desk at (303) 469-5171.

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have any prayer requests, please contact Joanne Farver at (303) 466-8859 or at joannefarver@comcast.net.

Dear Parishioners,
This year, the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve fall on the same date: December 24. Both Sunday and the Solemnity of Christmas are Holy Days of Obligation. Therefore, all Catholics must attend Mass two times between December 23 and 25, once for Sunday and once for Christmas.

MASS INTENTIONS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

9:30 am † Sherry Johnston
by Rapp Family
4:30 pm † Robert Bruck
by Ken & Mary Ann Cole

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

7:30 am † Sr. Mary Rose Stockton
by Marion University
Chemistry Students
9:30 am People of the Parish
11:30 am † Mary Twaddle
by Janet Carpenter
5:00 pm Christy Oldfield Thomsen
by Beahn Family

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18

7:00 am † Ray Figaro by Emily Figaro
9:30 am All Ancestors by La

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

7:00 am Kevin Knight by Moreira Family
9:30 am † Jim and Midge Anderson
by Smith and Zamora Families

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

7:00 am † Shane Fross by Fross Family
9:30 am † Julia Sava by Schaffer Family

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

7:00 am Anita Everson by Eric Everson
9:30 am † Greg Schoeninger
by Walker Family

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

7:00 am † Juvenal Cordova
by Veronica Harris
9:30 am Birthday Blessings for Marjorie
Twaddle by Janet Carpenter

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23

9:30 am Mac J. Rizzo, Birthday
by Gary and Sally Thomas
4:30 pm † Gerald and Mary Coufal

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

7:30 am † Tillie, Marlene, and Edward
Fitterer by Sally Fitterer
9:30 am People of the Parish
11:30 am † Robert Brick by Mary Ann
& Ken Cole
4:00 pm † James, Elisabeth, and Betty
Doyle by Sally Fitterer
6:00 pm † John Cook by Alma Cordova
8:00 pm Souls in Purgatory
by Alma Cordova
10:00 pm † Alex Welch
by Mari & Dan Welch

What am I waiting for?



August Hagborg, *Waiting*, Oil on canvas US PD

POPE BENEDICT XVI | ANGELUS | ST PETER'S SQUARE | ADVENT, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Expectation or waiting is a dimension that flows through our whole personal, family and social existence. Expectation is present in thousands of situations, from the smallest and most banal to the most important that involve us completely and in our depths. Among these, let us think of waiting for a child, on the part of a husband and wife; of waiting for a relative or friend who is coming from far away to visit us; let us think, for a young person, of waiting to know his results in a crucially important examination or of the outcome of a job interview; in emotional relationships, of waiting to meet the beloved, of waiting for the answer to a letter, or for the acceptance of forgiveness.... **One could say that man is alive as long as he waits, as long as hope is alive in his heart.** And from his expectations man recognizes himself: our moral and spiritual “stature” can be measured by what we wait for, by what we hope for.



Every one of us, therefore, especially in this Season which prepares us for Christmas, can ask himself: **What am I waiting for? What, at this moment of my life, does my heart long for?** And this same question can be posed at the level of the family, of the community, of the nation. **What are we waiting for together?** What unites our aspirations, what brings them together? In the time before Jesus’ birth the expectation of the Messiah was very strong in Israel – that is, the expectation of an Anointed one, a descendant of King David, who would at last set the people free from every form of moral and political slavery and find the Kingdom of God. **But no one would ever have imagined that the Messiah could be born of a humble girl like Mary, the betrothed of a righteous man, Joseph.** Nor would she have ever thought of it, and yet in her heart the expectation of the Savior was so great, her faith and hope were so ardent, that he was able to find in her a worthy mother. Moreover, God himself had prepared her before time. There is a mysterious correspondence between the waiting of God and that of Mary, the creature “full of grace,” totally transparent to the loving plan of the Most High. Let us learn from her, the Woman of Advent, how to live our daily actions with a new spirit, with the feeling of profound expectation that only the coming of God can fulfill.

Let us learn from [Mary], the Woman of Advent, how to live our daily actions with a new spirit, with the feeling of profound expectation that only the coming of God can fulfill.

CALL FOR ALTAR SERVERS

Dear Altar Servers and Parents, Please prayerfully consider signing up to serve the Masses during Christmas. Please look for the sign-up communication sent via email.



CHURCH SANCTUARY CLOSURE IN PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS

– SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24
12:45–3:00 PM

OFFICE/FRONT DESK CLOSURE

– SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23
– MONDAY, DECEMBER 25
– TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

PARISH CALENDAR

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

8:00 am | Marian Movement of Priests Cenacle
8:15 am | School of Community (CL)*
8:50 am | Pro Life Rosary
9:00 am | Stephen Ministry Training
10:15 am | Altar Server Training
5:00 pm CL* Fraternity Gathering

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

8:30 am | School of Community (CL)*
11:00 am | Parishioners' Rosary
11:00 am | RCIA
6:00 pm | GS/High School Youth
6:15 pm | Catholic Young Adults Group

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18

10:30 am | ENDOW
10:30 am | Women's Guild Gathering
1:00 pm | CGS Level 1 & 2
4:00 pm | CGS-Level 2
6:30 pm | Catechetical School Class
6:30 pm | New Springtime Charismatic Prayer Group
6:30 pm | Spanish Prayer Group
7:30 pm | St. Joseph Men's Group
7:45 pm | CL* Choir Rehearsal

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

10:00 am | CGS Level 1
1:00 pm | Adult Bible Study:
The Bible is a Catholic Book
4:00 pm | CGS Level 1 Session 2
4:00 pm | Children's Choir Rehearsal
6:00 pm | RE Grades 1-5
Faith Formation Family Night
6:30 pm | Adult Catechism Study
6:30 pm | Venturers of the Star (Middle School Youth)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

5:30 am | St. Joseph Men's Group
8:15 am | ENDOW
12:30 pm | Advent Bible Study:
Presence: The Mystery of the Eucharist
6:00 pm | Boy Scouts Troop 766
7:30 pm | School of Community for University Students (CLU)*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

8:15 am | ENDOW
12:00 pm | Eucharistic Adoration begins in the church
12:30 pm | Nativity Staff School of Community (CL)*
6:00 pm | Music Ministry Rehearsal
6:00 pm | Sacrament Preparation with Deacon Huan
6:30 pm | Advent Bible Study: *Presence: The Mystery of the Eucharist*
7:30 pm | School of Community (CL)*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

7:30 am | Men of Emmaus
9:00 am | ENDOW
10:00 am | FIAT Gathering

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23

8:00 am | Marian Movement of Priests Cenacle
8:15 am | School of Community (CL)*
8:50 am | Pro Life Rosary

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

11:00 am | Parishioners' Rosary

*(CL) Communion & Liberation

DAILY READINGS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

Reading 1: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11
Psalm: 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19
Gospel: Mt 17:9a, 10-13

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

Reading 1: Is 61:1-2A, 10-11
Psalm: Lk 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54
Reading 2: 1 Thes 5:16-24
Gospel: Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18

Reading 1: Jer 23:5-8
Psalm: 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19
Gospel: Mt 1:18-25

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

Reading 1: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a
Psalm: 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17
Gospel: Lk 1:5-25

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

Reading 1: Is 7:10-14
Psalm: 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6
Gospel: Lk 1:26-38

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

Reading 1: Sg 2:8-14
Psalm: 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21
Gospel: Lk 1:39-45

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

Reading 1: 1 Sm 1:24-28
Psalm: 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd
Gospel: Lk 1:46-56

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23

Reading 1: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24
Psalm: 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14
Gospel: Lk 1:57-66

PRAY THE ROSARY WITH US

SATURDAY

8:50 am | Pro-Life Rosary

SUNDAY

11:00 am | Parishioners' Rosary

Faith. The certainty that everything is God's, that God is the Father of everyone, that the world is destined to everlasting positivity. If [Mary] had not had this in her mind every day, if she had not gotten up every morning thinking about this, if she had not moved through her day thinking about this, if she had not gone to bed at night thinking about this, it would have been an abstract theory, it would have been just thoughts.

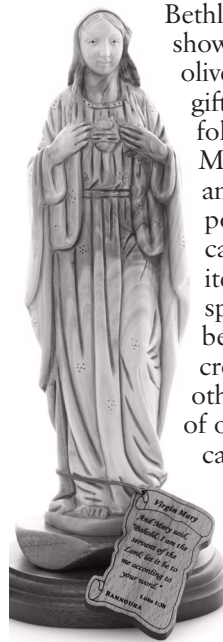
— Servant of God, Fr. Luigi Giussani

For programs, events, and faith formation at Nativity, please visit:

www.nool.us

SUPPORTING THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIANS IN THE HOLY LAND

DECEMBER 16–17, 2023
AFTER SUNDAY MASSES



Bethlehem Handicrafts will showcase a collection of olive wood carvings & gifts from the Holy Land following each Sunday Mass on December 16 and 17. Our artisans pour their heart into carving these religious items. Their goal is to spread the faith through beautiful statues, crosses, rosaries, and other artistic displays of our faith. Their wood carving allows them to pass the faith

on to generations of Christians, ensuring that the faith is alive and well in the Holy

Land. Buying their art pieces, not only will you help give Holy Land Christian families a livelihood and dignity to endure these difficult times, but you will also have a treasured item from Bethlehem as a gift for friends, families, your home, and workplace.

Store Location:
4114 S Parker Rd
(Parker & Quincy)
Aurora, Colorado 80014
www.bethlehemhandicrafts.com



CHRISTMAS GIVING

At Christmas, many people give an additional gift to the parish. To do so use the QR code or link here or the envelope in the pew. Thank you for your generosity.

ppay.co/IMlvNF9HF0k





They
were
overjoyed
at seeing
the star!

**NATIVITY:
FAITH & REASON
CHRISTMAS
CONCERT
THURSDAY
DECEMBER 21
7:00 PM**

Followed by cookies &
hot chocolate at
Cabrini Hall

**LEARN HOW TO SING MISSA
DE ANGELIS ON NATIVITY'S
WEBSITE AT**
www.nool.us/music



JOHN PAUL II Healing Center
Transformation in the Heart of the Church

**HEALING THE WHOLE
PERSON**

JANUARY 22–MARCH 18, 2024

**MONDAYS | 6– 8 PM
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD,
KATERI ROOM**

Would you like to deepen your relationship with Jesus Christ? Have you forgiven, but are still experiencing negative emotions? Do you feel like you bring the same sins to confession, again and again? Sin leaves all of us wounded, and as Pope Francis reminds us, the Church is a field hospital with all of us in need of healing from the Divine Physician.

In this 9-week series called, Healing the Whole Person, from the John Paul II Healing Center, you will encounter God in a powerful way, and experience deeper freedom as the Father speaks to you in the depths of your heart, and through the supernatural graces of the sacraments. During the 9-week series, we will listen and pray, following an audio from Dr. Bob Schutz and the John Paul II Healing Center team from their series on Healing the Whole Person.

Fee: \$20.00 to cover the cost of the workbook.

Registration cut-off date:
December 31, 2023

Questions? Contact Liz Buderus at lizbuderus@gmail.com or 303-994-7733.

Register at:
www.nool.us/upcoming-events
or scan the QR code below.



**GS/HIGH
SCHOOL
STUDENTS
WINTER
STAYCATION
DEC 26–DEC 29**

**BRING
YOUR
FRIEND**

www.nool.us/high-school



REGISTER

SIGN UP

Fr. Emanuele and Sr. Teresa invite all high school youth to join them for Nativity's Annual Staycation Retreat, where we will spend the days after Christmas in friendship and prayer, with daily Mass, games, charitable work, presentations, ice skating, hiking, and much more.

The Staycation will begin Tuesday, December 26, at 1 pm at Frassati House and run until 9:30 pm. We will be at Nativity and going off-site together. It will continue with full days on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

We have a limit of 20 students due to transportation restrictions, so it will be first come, first served in order of registrations received until full. Registration will close at that time. Please register on the Nativity website. Schedule details will be emailed to registered participants.

We invite you to come and to bring a friend. Cost of the Staycation, which includes all dinners, will be \$30.

QUESTIONS? Contact:
Fr. Emanuele, e.fadini@nool.us or
Cathy Schaffer, c.schaffer@nool.us



Hospitality

FROM ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The third Sunday of Advent, Gaudete Sunday, reminds us to “rejoice” for our deliverance is near. We are getting ready to celebrate the 800th Anniversary of the first Nativity creche created by St. Francis in 1223. There is a nice description of how the original scene all came to be in the article, “St. Francis and the Crib,” by author Jack Wintz, OFM dated May 10, 2020 published in the *Franciscan Media Spirit Blog*.

According to Jack Wintz, St. Francis was recalling his visit to the Holy Land. He wanted to have some sort of remembrance of the manger scene to be created in a cave in Greccio.

St. Francis requested the help of his good friend, Giovanni (John) Vellita:

“If you want to celebrate the Feast of the Lord at Greccio, hurry and diligently prepare what I tell you. For I wish to recall to memory the little child who was born in Bethlehem. I want to set before our bodily eyes the hardships of his infant needs, how he lay in the manger, how with an ox and ass standing by he lay upon the hay.”

People began to prepare with torches and candles for the procession. The manger was prepared in the cave and the live animals, the ox and ass, stood near. The woods were filled with singing. St. Francis wanted to show how the infant Jesus from his very arrival into this world was surrounded by “poverty” and “humility.”

For more information on our local Nativity of Our Lord St. Vincent de Paul chapter and our mission to help the poor, see our FLOCKNOTE site at nool.flocknote.com/svdpvol.

Register for free at nool.formed.org

to access faithful Catholic content: award-winning studies, lectures, documentaries, audiobooks, movies, and family-friendly kids' programming.

FORMED®

How does hospitality relate to stewardship? As good stewards we are aware that all we have comes from God and we return these gifts out of thankfulness. Being hospitable, inviting others to share in our life, our home, our happiness is a beautiful way of returning these gifts from the Father.

I invite you to remember St. Lydia of Philippi, Acts 16:14-15. She hosted Paul when he was on his first mission to Europe. As a wealthy businesswoman, she opened her house to the Christian community. Her simple act of hospitality helped to grow the early church.

Hospitality is a gift we receive because of the fullness of life we have through Mary's “yes” to the angel Gabriel. This Advent as we await the coming of our Savior, not only remembered in the past, but also at the end of time, and in our daily life, pray that we have the simplicity of Mary to make room for Him, welcoming Him in the womb of our life.

Do not discount the importance of hospitality in stewardship. If you are blessed with the gift of hospitality and want to share it with others, consider joining our Special Events and Hospitality group. Learn more at



www.nool.us/ministries

ANGEL HAUS NATIVITY SCENES

Do you have a way to witness to your faith during the holidays, promoting the true meaning of Christmas?

Angel Haus is a non-profit corporation, a religious art company in Broomfield that promotes sacred art and strives to provide seasonal employment opportunities with dignity for persons with disabilities.

Deacon Dave Arling and his wife, Marianne, have been operating this special ministry for 8 years. Their team has sold products at Nativity and several Colorado Marian Conferences and on occasion as a fundraiser for the Knights of Columbus.

Angel Haus is once again offering beautiful sturdy, durable, easy-to-store panels portraying the Nativity in full color, perfect for displaying in your front yard. You can order a four foot panel for just \$170.00. You also have the option to order the four foot panel with an added cedar shadow box frame (shown here) for only \$295.00. Order yours now to be a witness to your faith with these stunning art pieces that promote the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of Jesus.

If you are interested in placing an order, simply go to:

www.angelhaus.org

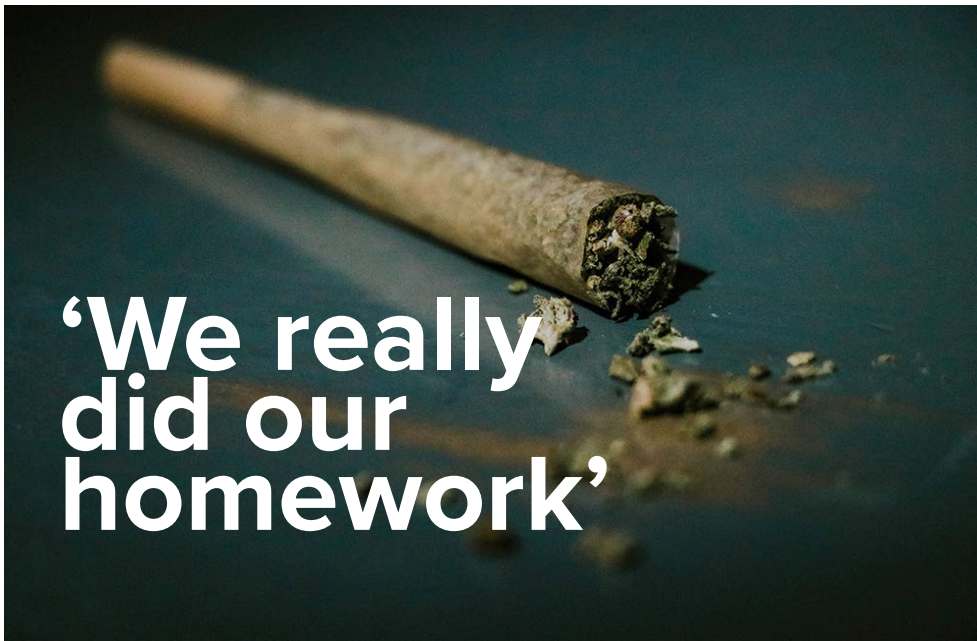
or contact Deacon Dave at d.arling@nool.us

Orders will be filled within 1-2 weeks. Help keep Christ in Christmas!



A SIMPLE WAY TO SUPPORT NATIVITY: FAITH & REASON LONGMONT MILK CAPS COLLECTION

The parish and school collect Longmont dairy milk caps as a fundraiser for the school. We get five cents for each milk cap. Please bring them to the school or parish office. Thank you!



‘We really did our homework’

ARCHBISHOP AQUILA SPEAKS ABOUT HIS PASTORAL LETTER ON DRUGS IN A NEW INTERVIEW GIVEN TO WWNN

Why did you write a pastoral letter on drugs, with a special focus on marijuana?



Archbishop Aquila: I was the newly appointed Archbishop of Denver when Colorado voted to legalize recreational marijuana in 2012. I felt a need to speak about the devastating effects witnessed firsthand, especially since many states have followed Colorado’s lead. The legalization of marijuana and cultural acceptance of drug use has been disastrous to our society, and there are limited Catholic resources about it. In *That They Might Have Life* I approach marijuana via the natural law, Christian morality, and the findings of social science, because we need Catholics who can dialogue with everyone about this important issue.

For this letter we really did our homework. It is full of well-documented research data from a variety of sources. Since laws against marijuana have changed, one benefit—if I can call it that—has been wider opportunity to study the effects of it on the individual and on society. So we were able to draw from studies conducted recently that used better methodologies.

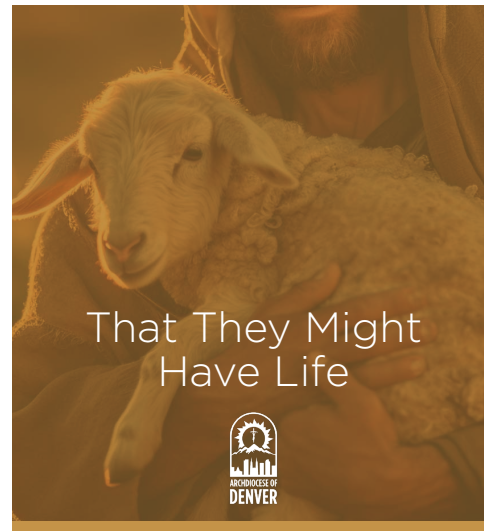
How did you approach the issue of recreational drugs in the letter?

We can only judge whether an action is good or bad for a thing when we understand its purpose. So the letter begins with man’s purpose and nature, which are foundational in assessing recreational drug use. [...] We were made to be in relationship with our Creator, and He designed us for that purpose. God gave each of us an intellect to know Him, a will to choose to love Him, and emotions to move us to actions that propel us toward Him and repel us from evils that draw us away from Him. Understanding that we are persons created for loving communion, we can judge that drugs are only an apparent good. They are bad for us since they hinder our ability to know and to love. Drugs diminish our self-possession by harming the very faculties that make us human: they inhibit our use of reason, weaken our will’s orientation toward the good, and train our emotions to expect quick relief from artificial pleasure. These effects severely limit our ability to freely give ourselves to another—whether it be temporarily, as in the case of occasional drug use, or regularly, as in the case of drug addiction. We say “no” to drugs so that we may fully say “yes” to our vocation to love.

What does our Catholic tradition add to discussion about recreational drug use?

[...] We can sum up the two foundational principles that explain why recreational drugs are immoral like so:

Since the human person is of such value, it is wrong to use any substance that is



That They Might Have Life



A PASTORAL LETTER FROM MOST REVEREND SAMUEL J. AQUILA, S.T.L.

The copies of Archbishop Aquila's Pastoral letter are available to all parishioners in Nativity's gathering area.

harmful to human life.

Anything that diminishes man’s use of reason and will assails his dignity as a human person and is therefore harmful.

Drugs assault the human person by negatively affecting him on physical, intellectual, psychological, social, and moral levels. They diminish man’s ability to make free choices because they impede the intellect and dull judgment, while simultaneously weakening the will and sapping moral energy. Drug use frustrates a person’s capacity for communion and self-gift—with each other and with God—which is her very reason for being. For us as Catholics, our vocation to love is lived with and through the Person of Jesus, who said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (Jn 10:10). This abundant life, which the Church Fathers identified as eternal life, is not simply a promise fulfilled in the next world; it is a reality we can begin to experience in this one. While drugs offer fleeting pleasure, Jesus wants to give us a fullness of love, joy, and peace that remains constant through life’s peaks and valleys.

Rather than reaching for chemicals when we are feeling weary and burdened, Jesus invites us to turn to Him, who promises rest and abundance.

Continue to Page 8 >>

Obviously most Americans don't agree with the Church on this issue; you even cite a study that says 70% of Americans think recreational marijuana should be legal. What have you seen in Colorado since its legalization?

Many argued for the legalization of marijuana because of the tax revenue it would generate, but our government is spending much more than it collects in taxes once all the related costs are calculated. One study found that for every dollar of tax revenue, Coloradans spent about \$4.50 on costs stemming from its legalization. I think many minds would change on this issue if they understood their tax dollars were paying to offset the many negative effects of the legalization of marijuana.

More importantly, while people tend to think of marijuana as harmless, we have witnessed a spike in addiction, with marijuana use disorder more than doubling in a span of less than twenty years. This is not surprising since Coloradans' cannabis use has increased dramatically since legalization: the latest data show about a 25% increase. More people using marijuana inevitably means more addiction.

Increasing cannabis use has also ballooned other problems. One study that tracked a major local hospital found marijuana-related emergency room visits tripled after the sale of recreational marijuana began in January 2014. Issues ranged from cannabis-induced bouts of vomiting to acute psychiatric symptoms to cardiovascular problems. Another troubling fact is that marijuana-related DUIs in the state more than doubled in the first six years since legalization. Tragically, traffic deaths involving drivers who tested positive for marijuana also more than doubled. In a similarly heartrending vein, statistics show that the number of Coloradans with marijuana in their systems when they committed suicide also more than doubled. These lives needlessly lost and impacted need to be part of the national conversation on the legalization of marijuana.

What about other drugs?

When a drug is illegal, it deters a certain percentage of the population from using it, and that is a good thing. Last year Colorado voted to remove criminal penalties for psychedelic mushrooms and three other psychedelic substances, and this will inevitably increase the drugs' harm to society, like we saw above with the legalization of marijuana.

We have already witnessed the tragic results of Colorado's decision to reclassify fentanyl possession from a felony to a misdemeanor in 2019. Although well-meaning, one study estimates that the change in classification caused a staggering 600 additional deaths, even when taking into account the upward trend of fentanyl use in the previous years. The tragic story of this deadly drug reinforces Pope Francis' words, "Drug addiction is an evil, and with evil there can be no yielding or compromise." The opioid epidemic is especially heartbreaking and we must do everything in our power to deter all kinds of drugs—recreational and illegal—because lives are at stake.

Ultimately, it isn't laws but the human person that is at the center of this problem. At the heart of drug use we tend to find two core themes: a crisis of values and a privation of relational connection that make the person open or susceptible to drug use. The most important thing we can do as Christians in response to a drug culture is to proclaim the Gospel. It is through the love, mercy, meaning, and hope found in Christ that people will be deterred from drug use or inspired to break free of its influence. In the pastoral letter I say more about the Church's three-pronged effort against drugs (namely, prevention, suppression, and rehabilitation).

Many people think there's no difference between drugs and alcohol. How do you respond to that objection?

Temperate use of alcohol, along with condemnation of drunkenness, has always been part of Catholic tradition. Scripture itself describes wine as a blessing from God. Historically, alcohol has been enjoyed not only for the taste, but also for its hydrating, nutritional, and medicinal properties. We see this idea echoed in Scripture when St. Paul tells St. Timothy, "Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses" (1 Tim 5:23). Additionally, Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana bolsters the case that alcohol is a good that we may moderately



enjoy not just for health but also for mirth. Lastly and most powerfully, that Jesus chooses to change bread and wine into His very Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity makes clear that both substances must be good in themselves.

In the pastoral letter I also go into detail about how the average American drinks alcohol for hydration and enjoyment, while the typical use of recreational drugs is intoxication. Both can be abused, but most Americans who drink do not binge drink; most Americans who use drugs get high.

Any final thoughts?

If we're going to change hearts and minds on this issue, it will be accomplished largely by the laity. [...]

[The letter] is full of footnotes and precise citations to the studies referred to earlier in the interview. I took great care to write it in an accessible way, so though it is written with academic precision, you don't have to be an academic to understand it. This is especially true for the spiritual aspects, which engage our hearts as well as our minds. What we need now are Catholics who can speak intelligently against the typical arguments in favor of recreational drug use and legalization. Learn, and then talk to your siblings, your cousins, your children, your nieces and nephews. Ask their views about the meaning of life, how to handle life's inevitable pain, and drug use. After listening, share what you've learned from the pastoral letter (or share the letter itself) and most importantly, share how your life and your answer to those questions are different because of Jesus. Give them a glimpse into your own efforts to step into the abundant life offered by Christ. In the words of St. John Paul II, "Be not afraid!"

Source: www.denvercatholic.org/archbishop-aquila-on-new-pastoral-letter-on-drugs-we-really-did-our-homework



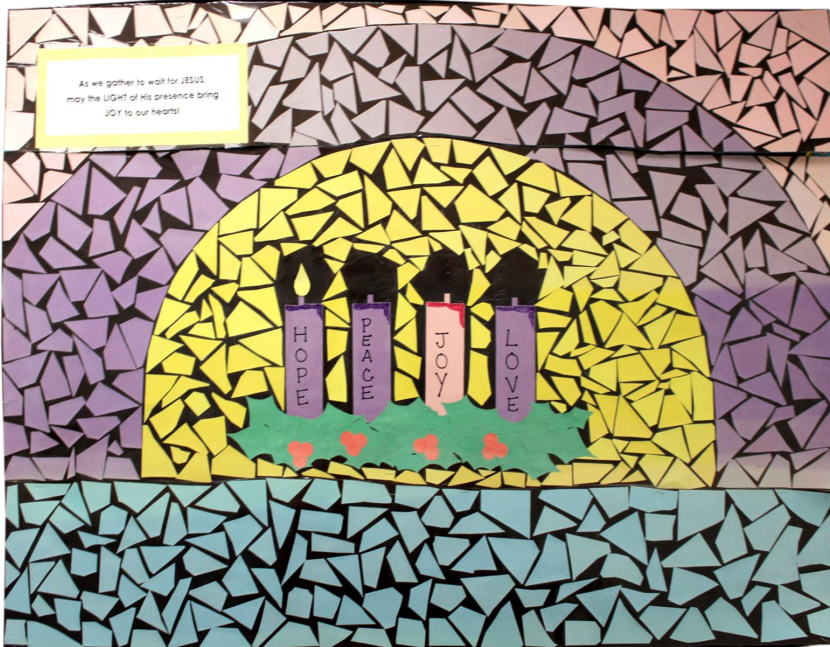
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"Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves."

— St. John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*

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Recommended Advent readings:

- Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth. The Infancy Narratives* (Ignatius Press, 2012)
- Benedict XVI, *The Blessings of Christmas* (Ignatius Press, 2007)
- José Granados, *The Fifth Candle of Advent* (Disciples Books, 2012)
- Jean Daniélou, *The Infancy Narratives* (Cluny, 2022)
- John Henry Newman, *Waiting for Christ* (Augustine Institute, 2018)



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Priestly: “The priestly vocation [...] is a continuous communion with God and man. [...] It acts as a bridge between heaven and earth, represents a fundamental link in the history of salvation, and also serves as an important figure in the journey towards unity among men.”

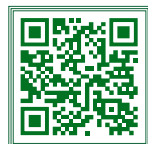
Missionary: “Mission [...] consists simply in entering within the same mission for which God sent His own Son into the world, for which the Son sent the Apostles, and for which, in turn, the Apostles sent other brothers, until the visible echo of that event touched even us.”

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