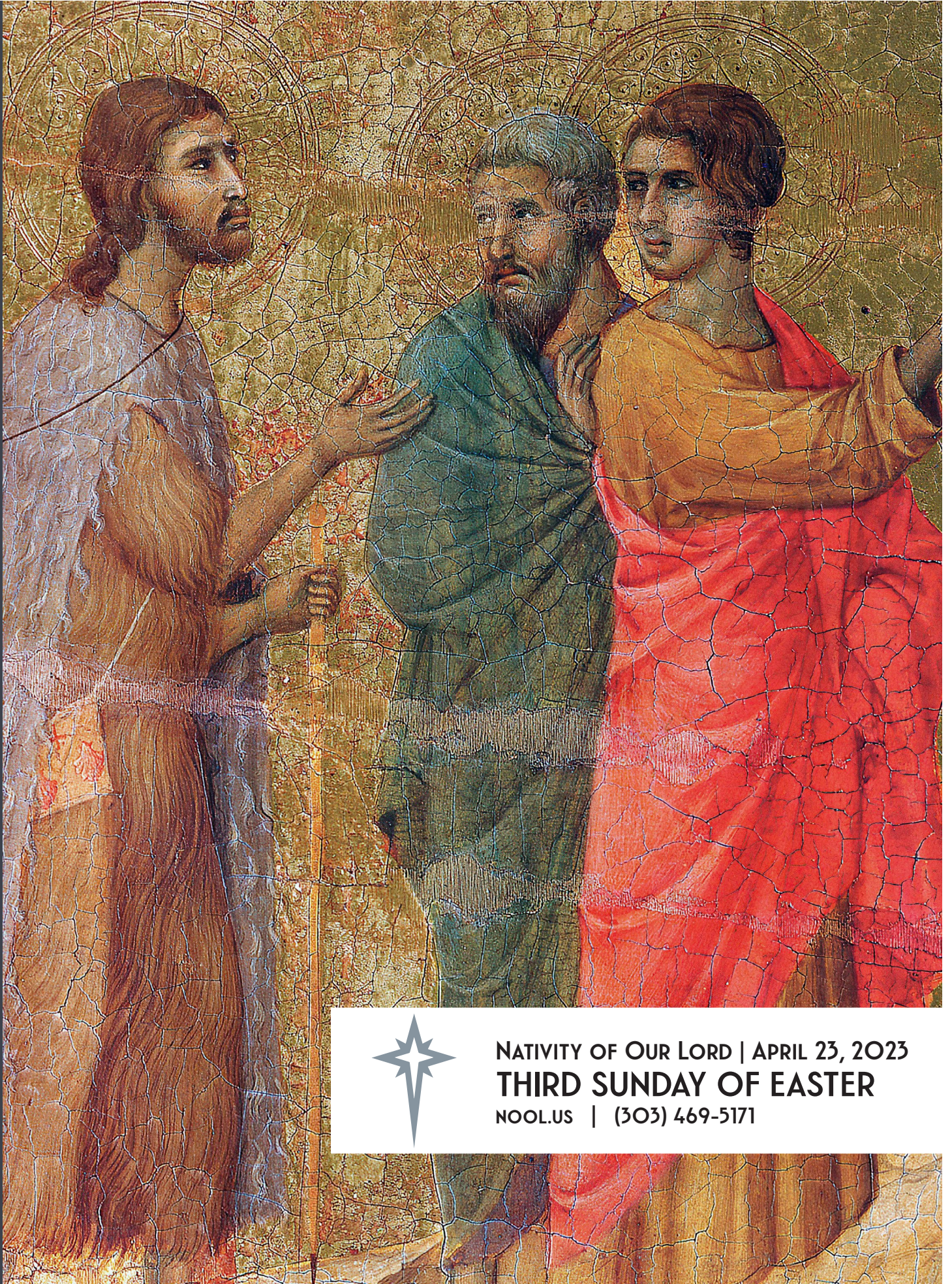


Duccio Di Buoninsegna, *Christ on the Road to Emmaus*, 1308-1311, tempera on wood; Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena; source: Wiki Commons, US PD



NATIVITY OF OUR LORD | APRIL 23, 2023
THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
NOOL.US | (303) 469-5171



STAY AWAKE AND PRAY

It is a tradition to have a procession with the Blessed Sacrament throughout the Church to a beautifully decorated altar of repose following the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. This procession is a visible sign of Jesus leaving the Upper Room and going to the Garden of Gethsemane where he would spend the night in prayer. Through this tradition, the Church invites us as Jesus' friends to actively respond to his invitation: "*Stay awake and pray for strength against temptation. Your spirit wants to do what is right, but your body is weak*" (Mat 26:41).

Ever since the time of my conversion to the Catholic faith in college, I have always tried to spend some time in quiet adoration after Mass on Holy Thursday to reflect on the great mystery of everything that took place in Jesus' passion. I also ponder my own personal sin and betrayals of Christ and his Church, as well as the wars, conflicts, suffering, illnesses, and confusion that dominates our contemporary world. It can seem very overwhelming. On this night, the Church invites me to not turn away from these terrible events of Jesus' life, or those in my own life and in the world, but to stay with Him, to place myself in the company of the pious men and women who accompanied Jesus during his trial and death on the Cross. The Church invites me to lift my heart which is aware of my sin and that of the world to Jesus Christ present in the consecrated host in the tabernacle surrounded by beautiful plants and flowers. It is good to stay awake and pray on this night.

This year a group of friends from the parish proposed a Seven Church pilgrimage on the night of Holy Thursday to live together Jesus' invitation to stay awake and pray. This ancient Holy Week tradition originated in Rome and was revived in the sixteenth century by St. Philip Neri. The custom is to visit nearby parishes to pray before the Blessed Sacrament after the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Each of the seven stations have a specific meditation:

1. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22: 39-46)
2. Jesus bound and taken before Annas (John 18: 19-22)
3. Jesus taken before the High Priest, Caiaphas (Matthew 26: 63-65)
4. Jesus taken before Pilate (John 18: 35-37)
5. Jesus taken before Herod (Luke 23: 8-9; 11)
6. Jesus taken before Pilate again (Matthew 27: 22-26)
7. Jesus given the crown of thorns and led to his crucifixion (Matthew 27: 27-31)

Before departing from Nativity, we entrusted our pilgrimage and our desire to accompany Jesus during the night to the Blessed Mother. We then piled into a few cars to visit six parishes in the general area: St. Louis, Sacred Heart of Mary, St. Martin de Porres, St. Thomas Aquinas, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Immaculate Conception, and finishing at Nativity of our Lord.

Arriving at each parish, we would read the reflection, pray a decade of the rosary and spend about ten minutes in quiet adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. We were greeted by both big and small numbers of faithful parishioners keeping watch and praying with Jesus. We prayed alongside people of all ages, families with their little children, as well as many university students at St. Thomas Aquinas. It was special to see how much attention went into the preparation of the beautiful altars of

repose and the effort to stay open late to welcome pilgrims who wanted to come in and visit with Jesus. One of my friends shared that he was deeply moved by seeing so many people in various communities all on their knees accompanying Jesus through the night. It was evident to him that we were all part of the Body of Christ in northern Denver keeping vigil with Jesus. Another friend remarked how amazing it was to see so many people accompanying Jesus in his terrible moment of suffering. "When a friend or loved one is suffering," she said, "it is only natural to want to spend time together with them."

I was reminded of her insight the following week when I was called to the home of a couple to whom I regularly bring Holy Communion. Their family called informing me that my elderly friend had taken a turn for the worse and was now dying. Upon arrival it was beautiful to see many family members praying and keeping vigil around the bed of their loved one who was greatly suffering. I invited everyone to gather around our beloved friend to pray together the Divine Mercy chaplet. During this time of prayer, I had the grace to recognize that we were actively responding to Jesus' invitation to keep vigil and pray for and with our friend who was suffering and nearing death. We were living the same experience as those who accompanied and walked with Jesus towards his death on the Cross.



Through these events I am reminded of my great need to have friends to accompany and walk with me, that lead me to prayer before Christ. We are on this pilgrim journey together as friends and disciples of the Resurrected Lord. During this Easter season, I would like to invite everyone to take time with their friends and families, or by yourselves, to be still, to stay awake and keep vigil before the great mystery of our Lord's Death and Resurrection. These are the great events that bring light and hope to all of our personal difficulties and struggles and to those of the whole world.

Fr. John Roderick

Image: *The Rock of Agony* at the Basilica of the Agony, Jerusalem

MONDAY-FRIDAY

7:00 am

9:30 am (livestreamed)

FRIDAY SCHOOL MASS

8:15 am

SATURDAY

9:30 am

VIGIL MASS

4:30 pm

SUNDAY

7:30 am

9:30 am

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 weekend Masses

OFFICE HOURS:

MONDAY-FRIDAY

8:00 am-5:00 pm

SATURDAY

8:00 am-3:00 pm

Phone: (303) 469-5171

Fax: (303) 469-5172

School: (303) 466-4177

Website: www.nool.us

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

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

MASS INTENTIONS

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

9:30 Health of Nina & Zronimir
by Znidarcic Family

4:30 † Dominic Petrocco
by Al & Marie Petrocco

SUNDAY, APRIL 23

7:30 Ed & Vicky Villegas
57th Wedding Anniversary

9:30 People of the Parish

11:30 † Otto Kirmaier
by Joe & Jana Cirincione

5:00 Melania Cordova by Veronica Harris

MONDAY, APRIL 24

7:00 Gonzalo Navarrete
by Veronica Harris

9:30 † Thomas Fattor by Carol Day

TUESDAY, APRIL 25

7:00 Cheryl Ice Birthday Blessings
by Anderson Family

9:30 † Ruth Larson by Rask Family

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

7:00 † John Cook by Alma Cortoba

9:30 Nicolas, Lucy, Lily, and Alexander
Rask by Grandma

THURSDAY, APRIL 27

7:00 † Agapito, Maria, & Linda Abeyta
by Doris

9:30 † Paul Hahn by Rick & Theresa

FRIDAY, APRIL 28

7:00 † Robert Reed by Gary Thomas

9:30 † Tom Fattor by Bette Dean

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

9:30 † Souls in Purgatory
by Alma Cordoba

4:30 Nicholas Cole & Family
by Ken & Mary Ann Cole

SUNDAY, MAY 30

7:30 † Lucia Musumeci
by Faith Alive Team

9:30 People of the Parish

11:30 † Dean Twaddle
by Janet Carpenter

5:00 Jett Thomas Rizzo by Gary Thomas

PARISH CALENDAR

SUNDAY, APRIL 23

K of C Breakfast after morning Masses

8:00 am | CL

11:00 am | Parishioners' Rosary

11:00 am | RCIA

6:00 pm | GS High School

MONDAY, APRIL 24

10:00 am | Creighton Model Session

10:00 am | Endow

1:00 pm | CGS 1 Mon Level I and II

3:15 pm | Chess Club

4:00 pm | CGS 2 Mon Level II

6:00 pm | SVDP Conference Meeting

6:30 pm | Biblical School

6:30 pm | New Springtime Prayer Group

6:30 pm | Spanish Prayer Group

6:45 pm | St. Joseph Men's Prayer Group

TUESDAY, APRIL 25

10:00 am | CGS 3 Tues Level I Sess 1

1:00 pm | Adult Bible Study

4:00 pm | CGS 4 Tues Level I Sess 2

6:30 pm | RE

6:30 pm | Venturers

7:30 pm | CLU/CL University Students

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

5:30 am | St. Joseph Men's Prayer Group

8:15 am | Endow

8:15 am | PTO Board Meeting

1:00 pm | Jesus & Jewish Roots of Mary

4:30 pm | RE

5:30 pm | Knights of Columbus Meeting

6:15 pm | Boy Scouts Tr. 766

6:15 pm | Divorce Support Group

6:15 pm | Spring Sacramental Rehearsal

THURSDAY, APRIL 27

4:00 pm | Easter Nativity Night

6:00 pm | Stephen Ministry

6:30 pm | Jesus & Jewish Roots of Mary

6:45 pm | Creighton Model Session

7:30 pm | CL

FRIDAY, APRIL 28

7:30 am | Men of Emmaus

9:00 am | Endow

1:00 pm | Great Adventure Bible Study CL

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

8:00 am | CL

8:00 am | Marian Cenacle

8:50 am | Pro Life Rosary

11:00 am | 2023 RO Conf Spring



NATIVITY NIGHT

THURSDAY, APRIL 27
4-7 PM

4:00 pm | Marian Hour
(Rosary: 4:15 pm)

5:00 pm | Music Hour

6:00 pm | Liturgy of the Hours and
Benediction

900 W. Midway Blvd.
Broomfield, CO 80020



Sign up on Flocknote for up-to-date
information delivered directly into your
inbox at:

app.flocknote.com/nool



Community events registration link: www.nool.us/upcoming-events

SACRISTY LAUNDRY
Peggy Silvers

COLLECTION COUNTERS
Monday 4/24 | 10:00 am

Steve Moser
Deborah Mittleman
Cathy Suppes
Ann McGinness

DAILY READINGS

SATURDAY 22

Reading 1: Acts 6:1-7
Psalm: 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19
Gospel: Jn 6:16-21

SUNDAY, APRIL 23

Reading 1: Acts 2:14, 22-33
Psalm: 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11
Reading 2: 1 Pt 1:17-21
Gospel: Lk 24:13-35

MONDAY, APRIL 24

Reading 1: Acts 6:8-15
Psalm: 119:23-24, 26-27, 29-30
Gospel: Jn 6:22-29

TUESDAY, APRIL 25

Feast of Saint Mark, evangelist

Reading 1: 1 Pt 5:5b-14
Psalm: 89:2-3, 6-7, 16-17
Gospel: Mk 16:15-20

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

Reading 1: Acts 8:1b-8
Psalm: 66:1-3a, 4-5, 6-7a
Gospel: Jn 6:35-40

THURSDAY, APRIL 27

Reading 1: Acts 8:26-40
Psalm: 66:8-9, 16-17, 20
Gospel: Jn 6:44-51

FRIDAY, APRIL 28

Reading 1: Acts 9:1-20
Psalm: 117:1bc, 2
Gospel: Jn 6:52-59

SATURDAY 29

Memorial of Saint Catherine of Siena, Virgin and Doctor of the Church

Reading 1: Acts 9:31-42
Psalm: 116:12-13, 14-15, 16-17
Gospel: Jn 6:60-69

PRAY THE ROSARY

WITH US

EVERY SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

"Through the Rosary, the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer."

John Paul II



APRIL 22-23, 2023: ARCHBISHOP'S CATHOLIC APPEAL COMMITMENT WEEKEND

Don't miss your chance to see the Archbishop's message about being "Rooted in Christ, Spreading His message, and Sharing His fruit" for the 2023 Archbishop's Catholic Appeal in the new video at www.archden.org/givetoday.

Your gift helps others grow in their relationship with Christ through more than 40 ministries and helps support our parish. Make your gift today!



DONATE

FAMILIES of JP II HALF-DAY TOGETHER SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 2023



During our "Half-Days Together," all the families meet with their children, the priests, and the sisters for a Sunday afternoon. We have lunch, singing, and some games. Then, while the kids have a moment with high school volunteers and some of the sisters, the adults have a talk with the priests.

Once a year, each small group shares a few days of vacation, usually during the summer, accompanied by the sisters and/or one of the priests. Prayer together, hikes, singing, good food, and nice conversations are the core of our proposal.

If this is something you may be interested in, please fill out the interest form on the parish website, and we will be in touch with you soon!

WWW.NOOL.US/FAMILIES-OF-JPII

STEWARDSHIP SPOTLIGHT

The Easter Season is a special time of recommitment to the Lord. Rejoicing in the Lord's Resurrection and contemplating His Divine Mercy helps us remember all that God gives us. All that we have comes from the Lord: our life, home, family, friends, our faith, trials, blessings, our job, money, our free will. Everything we have is a gift from God.

This is a great time to remember our stewardship commitments. It's been a few months since we made our pledge of prayer, talent, and treasure. In this beautiful season filled with joy, I encourage you to reflect on your commitments. If you've fallen behind, start again. Wrap yourself in God's mercy, pray, and begin. Feel God's presence as you trust in Him.



STEWARDSHIP
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

NATIVITY NIGHT

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 4-7 PM

Nativity Night for the season of Easter is this coming Thursday, with family friendly Eucharistic Adoration, an opportunity for Confession, kids' activities in the gathering area, and dinner served in Cabrini Hall. You are welcome to join us for any part of the night.

4:00 pm | Marian Hour
(Rosary: 4:15 pm)

5:00 pm | Music Hour

6:00 pm | Liturgy of the Hours and
Benediction



Register for FREE today
at nool.formed.org.

FORMED™ THE CATHOLIC PATH
TO HEAVEN



FROM ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The fruit of SILENCE is prayer,
 The fruit of PRAYER is faith,
 The fruit of FAITH is love,
 The fruit of LOVE is service,
 The fruit of SERVICE is PEACE.

Mother Teresa

During this Easter season, we celebrate Jesus Christ conquering sin and death. It is also good to remember our neighbors who put their lives on the line for our country and communities each day – our first responders. When danger, disasters, or emergencies call, they rush to help. Please lift up our police, firefighters, paramedics, and all emergency personnel as well as our military members who serve our country. Say a prayer for their protection. When you see them in person, say thank you. Give them a “thumbs up” for all they do.

For information on our Nativity chapter of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) and how we serve our neighbors in need, check out: flocknote.com/svdp for meeting times and updates.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER VACATION REGISTRATION IS OPEN!



REGISTER

June 5–9, 2023
MIDDLE SCHOOL
 SUMMER VACATION

YMCA of the Rockies
 Snow Mountain Ranch
 Granby, CO
Cost: \$550
 Open to anyone entering grades 6–9 in the fall of 2023
 MORE INFORMATION: [WWW.NOOL.US/MIDDLE-SCHOOL](http://www.nool.us/middle-school)

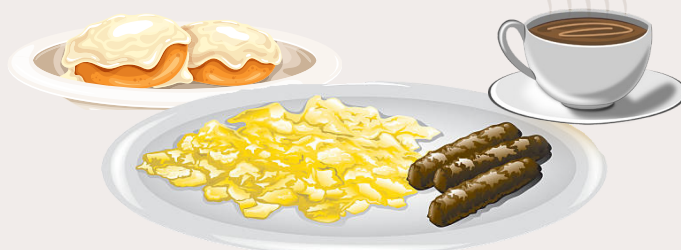


KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS



Parish Breakfast

Please join us for breakfast in Cabrini Hall **April 23rd** after the **7:30** and **9:30** Masses. The Knights of Columbus will be serving biscuits and gravy, sausage, and scrambled eggs.



& Brunch

Brunch will be served after the **11:30** Mass - featuring ham and cheese croissants, cheesy potatoes, and fruit.

Totus Tuus
 SUMMER CATECHETICAL EXPERIENCE

REGISTER

www.nool.us/totus-tuus

GRADES 1–6 | JUNE 26–30, 9 AM–2:30 PM
 GRADES 7–12 | JUNE 25–29, 7–9 PM

Totus Tuus (Latin for “Totally Yours”) is a summer youth program dedicated to sharing the Gospel and promoting the Catholic faith through catechesis, Christian witness, and a ton of fun!

FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST NEEDED!

Nativity of Our Lord Catholic Church seeks a mature, qualified individual to serve as a Front Desk Receptionist on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, 8 am–5 pm. If interested, please email Bonnie Skelton at b.skelton@nool.us.

WELCOME TO NATIVITY!

Sammy A.	Violet K.
Victoria A.	Shawna L.
Emina A.	Tennille R.
Senada A.	Xavier L.
Hope A.	Cynthia L.
Leonard A. C.	Emily L.
Elizabeth B.	Matthew M.
Tamara D.	Clare M.
Laura F.	Michael O.
Bryce F.	Thomas S.
Megan H.	Catie S.
Michael K.	Bruno S.
Jessica K.	Slater S.
Joseph K.	Christina T.
Isabella K.	Patrick T.
Pearl K.	

17
NEW
FAMILIES
IN MARCH

ARE YOU A REGISTERED PARISHIONER?

It's not uncommon for people to come to Mass regularly but not be registered as parishioners. At Nativity, we understand, people sometimes come to a parish for sacraments because it works for their schedule, but we strongly encourage people to register.

It has its advantages. One is that you will receive the Denver Catholic publication in the mail. It has beautiful articles to help you understand and grow your faith. You also will be known to the parish and receive communications. But one of the best reasons for being a registered parishioner is that you have a sense of belonging with people who are on the same journey as you; a journey of faith that we hope one day will lead to the fullness of life in God's Kingdom forever.

Becoming a registered parishioner is easy. Go to our website: www.nool.us, click the JOIN tab under the ABOUT menu and complete the registration form. If you have any questions or need anything don't hesitate to contact our parish registrar, Marilyn Sikora at m.sikora@nool.us or 303-469-5171, ext. 110.



NOOL.CCBCHURCH.COM/GOTO/FORMS/8/RESPONSES/NEW

Since its establishment in 1958, Nativity has been a living testimony of faith in Jesus Christ. Beginning with only a few families at a time when Broomfield was still characterized by open fields, Nativity has grown into a Catholic community of roughly 2,800 families.



EASTER VIGIL
APRIL 8, 2023

THE CELEBRANTS HOLD THEIR HANDS OUTSTRETCHED OVER THE GROUP OF THOSE TO BE CONFIRMED AT NATIVITY DURING EASTER VIGIL, 2023



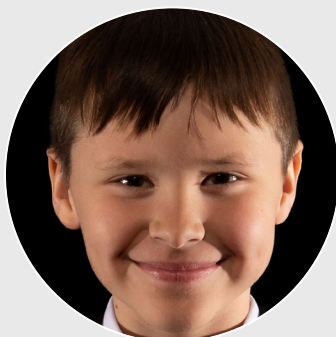
All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.

— Rite of Confirmation

WE WELCOME WITH JOY THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH AT NATIVITY!



AURELIA



ADRIAN



YUKON



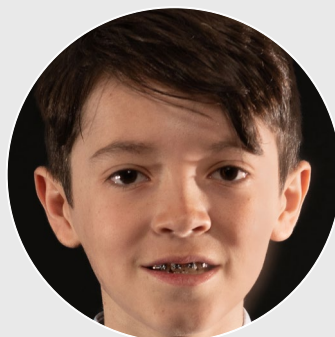
JOE ANTHONY



PAUL



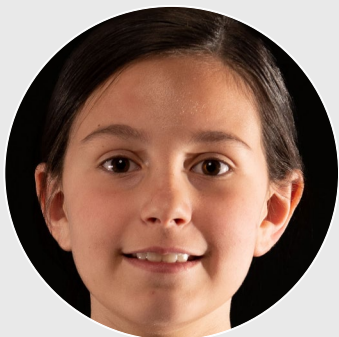
ROBERT MARSHALL



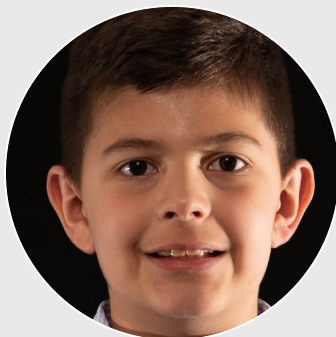
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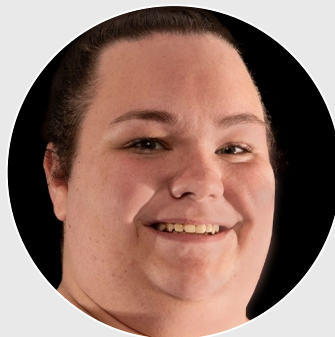
SUZANNE



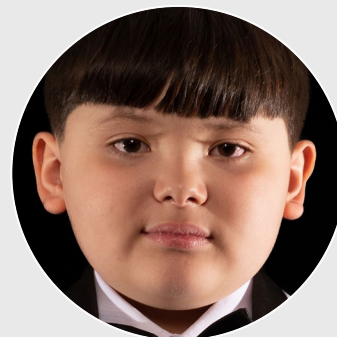
KAITLYN



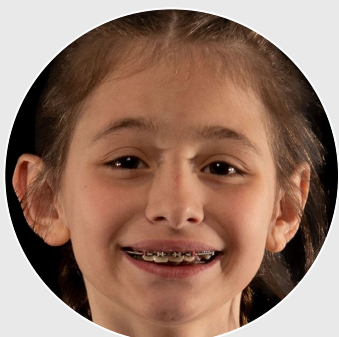
WYATT



ASHLEIGH



VICTOR



AMAYA



LAUREN

May this new life that Christ earned for these new members of the Church grow and endure in them until it is one day consummated with Mary, the angels, and saints in the eternal kingdom of heaven, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

— Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila's
April prayer intention





NATIVITY
FAITH & REASON

COME & SEE!

WWW.SCHOOL.NOOL.US



CALL TODAY
303-466-4177

With questions about admission or to schedule a tour, contact
Shannon Spinuzzi
s.spinuzzi@nool.us

2023-2024
ENROLLMENT
IS OPEN!

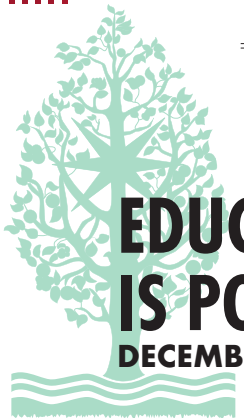
school.nool.us/enroll



giving a lesson on the religious sense. [...] I had invited my high-school sophomores to present a movie, chosen by them, to their classmates so that some of the themes discussed in class would emerge. At the end of the period, a boy named Juan came up to me and confessed that he had been struck by the lesson. Above all, he said that watching a movie in that way was more beautiful and that he would like to do it again. What's more, he added acutely, if this way of looking at things can be applied to a movie, it could be used for any other thing. Another classmate who was listening to us inserted herself into the conversation saying that she, too, would like to continue. I invited them to join us one afternoon after class and to do the same thing bringing with them a song that was meaningful for them. The chosen song was *Angel Down* by Lady Gaga, which begins with these lyrics: "I confess I am lost / In the age of the social / On our knees, take a test / To be lovin' and grateful." They explained to me that they fully identify with the song: they desire a place in which they can be themselves. Where they can love one another authentically, where they can stay without the fear of being judged, where they can say what's on their minds without fear. I helped them understand that it was exactly what was happening in that moment: weren't they opening up, talking to each other freely, without fear of being judged?

This moment coincided with one of my desires, to be able to accompany these kids to know Christ, through their own desire. I think it's important that this happens: without this meeting of desires, we risk becoming too inflexible and artificial in the educational proposal.

We then decided to see each other again and we called our small group *Para y mira*, "Stop and look." Another student and a teacher joined immediately. The idea was to meet every week and freely bring with us everything that was important to us during the week: a page from a book, an article, a song, a lesson at school, a conversation with a friend... anything as long as we are ready to share it and look at it seriously. More or less, we started a radius. Little by little, without any marketing strategy or advertising, but only by word-of-mouth, the radius grew to include about fifty kids and a handful of adults.



EDUCATION
IS POSSIBLE
DECEMBER 2022

THE STRENGTH OF A
COMPANIONSHIP THAT
EDUCATES US

To educate means to help children build their own relationships with reality: a testimony from Fr. Stefano, a teacher in Fuenlabrada, Spain

I have been in mission for about seven years in Fuenlabrada, near Madrid, where I arrived when I was still a deacon. Now, beyond helping out at our parish, I am the chaplain and a religion teacher at a school with about eight hundred students. When parishioners hear me speak about my work at school, since I teach middle and high

school kids, I often hear them say, "You poor thing! That's the most difficult age," or, "It must be difficult with all those adolescents." Actually, my experience is different. I am beyond happy to spend so much time with the kids and to be able to educate them, or at least to try. The observations made about adolescents are almost always true: they do their own thing, are instinctive, reactive, and many have addictions of various types. But they also have a quality that tends to be reduced with age: they are transparent. One understands easily if they are happy or not. When they are passionate about something, they don't hold back but dedicate time and energy without keeping anything in reserve. I'll give some examples by telling about some of my students, using invented names for discretion.

Juan

Teaching religion, it is common to touch on burning issues and the deep questions of the kids' lives. When it happens, they begin to ask lots of questions. They are golden moments for which I always try to leave space. [...] Two years ago, I was

TO BE CONTINUED



"THE CRUCIFIX, WELL-SPRING OF HOPE"

CATECHESIS OF POPE FRANCIS
GENERAL AUDIENCE | APRIL 5, 2023

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

This past Sunday, the Liturgy had us listen to the Passion of the Lord. It ended with these words: "They sealed the stone" (cf. *Mt* 27:66). Everything seemed over. For the disciples, that boulder signified the final end of their hope. The Teacher was crucified, killed in the cruelest and most humiliating manner, hung upon the infamous gallows outside the city – a public failure, the worst possible ending, it was the worst at that time. Now for us today, there is nothing entirely strange regarding the discouragement that oppressed the disciples. Gloomy thoughts and feelings of frustration accumulate in us as well. Why is there so much indifference toward God? This is interesting: Why is there so much evil in the world? Well, look, there is evil in the world! Why do inequalities continue to increase and why is that long-awaited peace not arriving? Why are we so attached to war, to treating each other badly? In each person's heart, how many expectations have faded; how many delusions there are! And again, there is that feeling that times gone by were better and that in the world, perhaps even in the Church, things are not going the way they once did.... In short, even today, hope sometimes seems to be sealed behind the stone of mistrust. And I invite each one of you to think: Where is your hope? Is your hope alive, or have you sealed it up there, or have you put it there in a drawer, like a memory? Does your hope push you to walk or is it a romantic memory, as if it is something that doesn't exist. Where is your hope today?

One image remained fixed in the minds of the disciples: the cross. That is where everything ended. That is where the end of everything was centred. But in a little while, they would discover a new beginning right there, in the cross. Dear brothers and sisters, this is how God's hope germinates. It is born and reborn in the black holes of our disappointed expectations – and hope, true hope, instead, never disappoints. Let us think precisely about the cross: out of the most terrible instrument of torture, God wrought the greatest sign of his love. Having become the tree of life, that wood of death reminds us that God's beginnings often begin with our ends. Thus, he loves to work wonders. So today, let us look at the tree of the cross so that hope might germinate in us – that everyday virtue, that silent, humble virtue, but also that virtue that keeps us on our feet, that helps us move forward. It is not possible to live without hope. Let us think: Where is my hope? Today, let us look at the tree of the cross so that hope might germinate in us...that we might be healed of our sadness. And how many sad people there are. When I used to be able to go out onto the streets, I cannot do it now because they do not allow me, but when I could go out onto the streets in another diocese, I used to like watching people's faces. How many sad faces! Sad people, people talking to themselves, people walking alone with their cell phones, but without peace, without hope. And where is your hope today? It takes a bit of hope, right? to be healed from the sadness that makes us ill – there is so much sadness – to be healed from the bitterness with which we pollute the Church and world. Brothers and sisters, let us look there, at the crucifix. And what do we see? We see Jesus naked, Jesus stripped, Jesus wounded, Jesus tormented. Is it the end of everything? That's where our hope is.

In these two aspects, let us then grasp how hope, which seems to have died, is reborn. Firstly, let us see Jesus stripped of his clothing. In fact, "And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots" (v. 35). God is stripped – He who has everything allowed Himself to be stripped of

everything. But that humiliation is the path of our redemption. This is how God overcomes our appearances. Indeed, we find it difficult to bare ourselves, to be truthful. We always try to cover the truth because we do not like it. We clothe ourselves with outward appearances that we look for and take good care of, masks to disguise ourselves and to appear better than we are. This is a bit like the "make-up" attitude: interior make-up, to seem better than others.... We think it is important to show off, to appear like this so others will speak well of us. And we adorn ourselves with appearances, we adorn ourselves with appearances, with unnecessary things. But we do not find peace this way. Then the make-up goes away and you look at yourself in the mirror with the ugly, but true, face you have – the one that God loves – not the one with make-up on. And stripped of everything, Jesus reminds us that hope is reborn by being truthful about ourselves – to tell ourselves the truth – by letting go of duplicity, by freeing ourselves from peacefully co-existing with our falsity. Sometimes, we are so used to telling ourselves lies that we live with the lies as if they are truth, and we end up being poisoned by our own falsity. This is what is needed: to return to the heart, to the essentials, to a simple life, stripped of so many useless things that are surrogates of hope. Today, when everything is complex and we risk losing a sense of meaning, we



need simplicity, we need to rediscover the value of sobriety, the value of renunciation, to clean up what is polluting our hearts and makes them sad. Each one of us can think of something useless that we can free ourselves from to find ourselves again. Think about how many things are useless. Here, fifteen days ago at Santa Marta, where I live – it is a hotel for a lot of people – the idea circulated that for this Holy Week it would be good to look in our closets and get rid of things, to give away the things we have that we don't use. You cannot imagine the number of things! It's good to get rid of useless things. And this went to the poor, to the people in need. We too, how many useless things we have inside our hearts – and outside as well. Look at your closets: look at them. This is useful, this is useless...and do some cleaning there. Look at the closet of your soul – you laugh, right? It's true, it's true. Look at the closet of your soul – how many useless things you have, how many stupid illusions. Let us return to simplicity, to things that are true, that don't need to be made-up. What a good exercise!

Let us direct our second glance to the Crucifix and we see Jesus who is wounded. The cross displays the nails that pierce his hands and feet, his open side. But to the wounds in his body are added those of his soul. How much anguish, Jesus is alone, betrayed, handed over and denied by his own - by his friends and even his disciples - condemned by the religious and civil powers, excommunicated, Jesus even feels abandoned by God (cf. v. 46). In addition, the reason for his condemnation appears on the cross: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (v. 37). This is a mockery: He, who had fled when they wanted to make him king (cf. Jn 6:15), is now condemned for having made himself king. Even though he had committed no crime, he was placed in the middle of two criminals, and they prefer the violent Barabbas over him (cf. Mt 27:15-21). In the end, Jesus is wounded in body and in soul. I ask myself: In what way does this help our hope? In this way, what does Jesus, naked, stripped of everything, of everything, say to my hope, how can this help me?

We too are wounded - who isn't in life? And they are often hidden wounds we hide out of embarrassment. Who does not bear the scars of past choices, of misunderstandings, of sorrows that remain inside and are difficult to overcome? But also of wrongs suffered, sharp words, unmerciful judgements? God does not hide the wounds that pierced his body and soul, from our eyes. He shows them so we can see that a new passage can be opened with Easter: to make holes of lights out of our own wounds. "But, Your Holiness, you are exaggerating", someone might say to me. No, it's true. Try it, try it. Try doing it. Think about your wounds, the ones you alone know about, that everyone has hidden in their heart. And look at the Lord and you will see, you will see how holes of light come out of those wounds. Jesus does not incriminate on the cross, but loves. He loves and forgives those who hurt him (cf. Lk 23:34). Thus, he converts evil into good; thus, he converts and transforms sorrow into love.

Brothers and sisters, the point is not whether we are wounded a little or a lot in life, the point is what to do with my wounds - the little ones, the big ones, the ones that leave their mark forever on my body, on my soul. What can I do with my wounds? What can you, you, you, do with your wounds? "No, Father, I don't have any wounds" - "Be careful, think twice before saying this". And I ask you: what do you do with your wounds, with the ones only you know about? You can allow them to infect you with resentment and sadness, or I can instead unite them to those of Jesus, so that my wounds too might become luminous. Think of how many young people, how many young people, do not tolerate their own wounds and look for a way of salvation in suicide. Today, in our cities, so many young people see no other way out, they have no hope, and prefer to get high using drugs, to forget...poor people. Think about this. And you, what is the drug you use to hide your wounds? **Our wounds can become springs of hope when, instead of feeling sorry for ourselves or hiding them, we dry the tears shed by others; when, instead of nourishing resentment for what was robbed of us, we take care of what others are lacking; when, instead of dwelling on ourselves, we bend over those who suffer; when, instead of being thirsty for love, we quench the thirst of those in need of us. For it is only if we stop thinking of ourselves, that we will find ourselves again. But if we continue to think of ourselves, we will not find ourselves anymore. And it is by doing this, the Scriptures say, that our wound is healed quickly (cf. Is 58:8), and hope flourishes anew. Think about this: What can I do for others? I am wounded. I am wounded by sin, I am wounded by my past, everyone has their own wound. What can I do? Lick my wounds for the rest of my life? Or can I look at the wounds others have and go with the wounded experience of my life to heal, to help others? This is today's challenge for all of you, for each of you, for each one of us. May the Lord help us move forward.**

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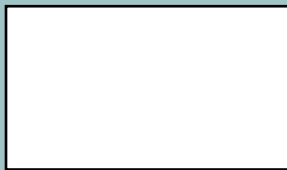
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