



**Saints Peter and Paul Chapel**  
*A Ministry of the Ecumenical Catholic Church+USA*  
**808 N. Mason Road**  
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**December 2022 Parish Bulletin**

Parish Web Site: [www.sspp-eccusa.org](http://www.sspp-eccusa.org) or [www.peterandpaulchapel.org](http://www.peterandpaulchapel.org)

Parish Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/ssppECCUSA](https://www.facebook.com/ssppECCUSA)

National Church Web Site: [www.ecc-usa.org](http://www.ecc-usa.org)

National Church Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/eccusa2001>

### **MASS SCHEDULE**

**LITURGIES ARE CELEBRATED AT 2:00 PM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**

December 4, 2022:	Second Sunday of Advent
December 11, 2022:	Third Sunday of Advent
December 18, 2022:	Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 25, 2022:	The Nativity of our Lord

### **Pastoral Staff:**

**Pastor:** +Fr. Bob Catlett, M.Div., 314.800.3456, [pastor@ssppaul-eccusa.org](mailto:pastor@ssppaul-eccusa.org)

## Prayer Intentions

If you would like us to remember a special intention for you at Mass, please contact one of our priests.

If you or someone you know is in need of spiritual assistance (prayers, Sacrament of the Sick, etc.), please contact one of our priests.

Inquiries regarding the administration of Sacraments or services (Baptisms, First Communion, Marriages, and Funerals) are welcomed.

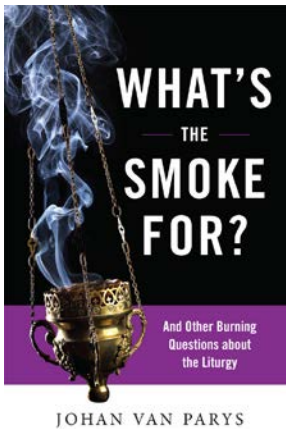
## **Sunday Scripture Reflections** **+Fr. Bob Catlett, M.Div.**

**December 4, 2022 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent:** Of the Messiah, Isaiah proclaims: “His delight shall be the *fear of the Lord*” – that same reverent awe that the prophet experienced in his first vision. Such reverence might well be one of the “good fruits” referred to by John the Baptist in today’s Gospel. St. Paul describes another virtue for us to consider as well: *thinking in harmony with others*. (Isaiah 11:1-10, Romans 15:4-9, Matthew 3:1-12)

**December 11, 2022 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday):** In today’s Gospel, Jesus fulfills Isaiah’s prophecy about the healing of the sick. During this Advent season, how can we serve the sick and bring them joy? Lord, help us to discern the way and to follow it with the patience that James extols in today’s second reading. (Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10, James 5:7-10, Matthew 11:2-11)

**December 18, 2022 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent:** All three of today’s readings concern faith. A few lines beyond the end of this passage, Isaiah’s prophecy concludes with the warning: “Unless your faith is firm, you shall not be firm.” In St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, he describes faith as obedience to God. In the Gospel, Joseph immediately places his faith in the angel’s message. When we have to confront difficulties, how strong is our faith? (Isaiah 7:10-14, Romans 1:1-7, Matthew 1:18-24)

**December 25, 2022 – The Nativity of the Lord:** (Mass During the Day) “The Lord comforts his people.” He speaks through his Son, “the very imprint of his being,” who *makes his dwelling among us*. Because *we have received from Jesus’ fullness*, we are called to also be an image of the Father. Do we always live as an image of God? (Isaiah 52:7-10, Hebrews 1:1-6, John 1:1-18)



**Dear Johan,**

Why do we celebrate Christmas on December 25? Is that really the day Jesus was born? I don't recall reading about it in the Scriptures.

### ***Gentle Reader-***

While December 25 is one of the most important celebrations of the year, it is good to remember that Christmas was not celebrated on December 25 until the fourth century. More important, it was not always very popular. Early Christian writers such as Origen (ca. 185–254) argued against celebrating the birth of Jesus, declaring birthday celebrations a pagan custom not to be imitated by Christians. Even in more recent times Christmas has been frowned upon. Puritans argued against the celebration of Christmas because of the lack of biblical references. This even led to the outlawing of Christmas by the General Court of Massachusetts Bay Colony between 1659 and 1681.

Though describing the circumstances of Jesus' birth, the Scriptures indeed do not give us any indication as to the actual date of his birth. As a result, when Christians were ready to start celebrating the birth of Jesus a date needed to be selected. Both January 6 and December 25 were contenders for the date. January 6 is the oldest date on which the incarnation was celebrated. Yet, in the end December 25 was adopted by most Christians.

There are two main theories for the selection of December 25 as the eventual date for Christmas: the *history hypothesis* and the *calculation hypothesis*.

The *calculation hypothesis* is based on the so-called whole-year theory, which holds that people of importance die on the same day they were born or conceived. Since some people believed that Jesus died on March 25; that would mean he was also conceived on March 25. Calculating nine months from March 25 lands his birth on December 25.

The *history hypothesis* posits that the celebration of the birth of Jesus was introduced on December 25 to supplant existing pagan festivities. In 274 Emperor Aurelian had restored the cult of *Sol Invictus*, the Invincible Sun. On December 25 the birth of the Invincible Sun was celebrated. This day was specifically chosen because it was the date of the winter solstice in the Julian calendar until it was moved to December 21 at the Council of Nicea in 325. Christians believed that Christ was the true Invincible Sun. The celebration of his birth thus happily coincides with the winter solstice.

In the end, I would not worry too much about the date of Christmas since it is nothing but a date. What is important, though, is what we celebrate on Christmas, namely, that God became one of us so we might become more like God. We can celebrate this on any date, really.

**From the Pastor's Desk**  
**+Fr. Bob Catlett, M.Div.**

**Congratulations and Best Wishes to members of our congregation who celebrate special days this month:**

**Birthdays:**

December 4:       Rosann Swaringim  
December 17:      Dr. Nathaniel Murdock

**Anniversaries:**

None this month