

# Stillwater Catholic Community

*Serving the Parishes of St. Francis Xavier and St. John the Evangelist  
Part of the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma – Together, Our Faith Goes Further*

**We seek to spread the word of God and serve our community and  
the universal Church through the Pillars of Parish Stewardship:  
HOSPITALITY, PRAYER, FORMATION, AND SERVICE.**

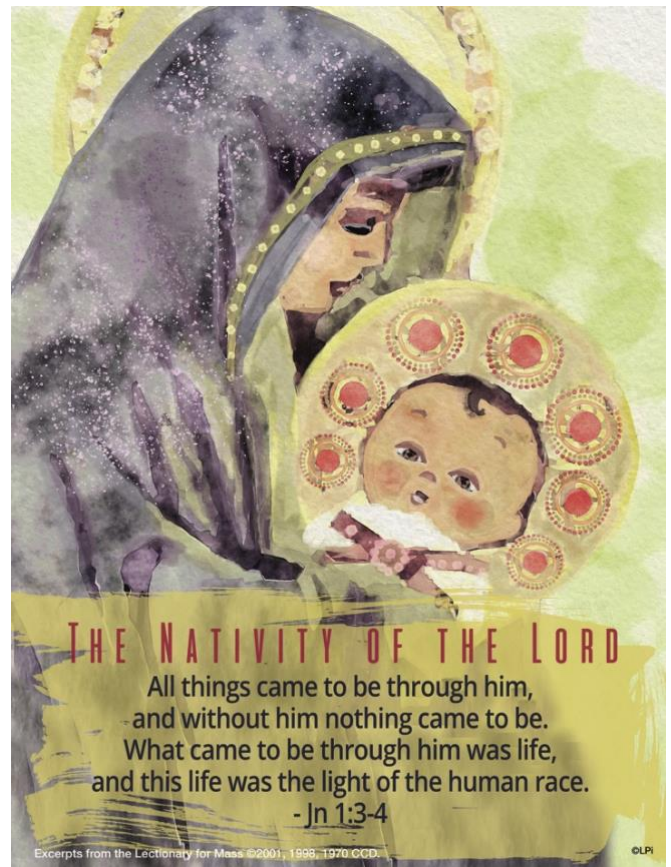
His Holiness, Pope Francis  
Bishop of Tulsa, David Konderla  
Fr. Ken Harder, JCL - St. Francis Pastor  
Fr. Emeritus Jim Greiner  
Fr. Kerry Wakulich - St. John Pastor  
Fr. Lawrence Nwachukwu – Assoc. Pastor  
Deacon Bart Brashears  
Deacon Glenn Collum  
Deacon Paul Govek  
Deacon Tom Haan

## December 25, 2017 The Nativity of the Lord

**Father Ken's Reflection:** Today we rejoice. Our celebration includes many things. Families gather at this time above all others. The anticipation of gifts, especially for children runs high. The cold outside is welcome for it means that we gather together close inside. Finally, and most importantly, we acknowledge the birth of our Savior. Now we have been taught from the earliest days to celebrate Christmas but what does it really mean. What does it mean that God in the person of his Son came among us? We know that it means that He calls us to the life of heaven, but there is more. The Son of God chose to become one of us. He embraced everything that is authentically human so that we could live our lives here in the authentic way. The only thing he did not embrace is that which leads to inauthenticity. He rejected pride, which leads a person to a false sense of self and is truly the mother of all sin. The Son of God, now called Jesus as well, lived the way we do; he grew and learned by experience. My friends, that is how our faith is done. I have seen too often people struggling under a false sense of faith. The great temptation is to reduce Christian faith to simply being good. However, we can't do that. Part of our real human experience is that we are weak at times at we do things that we know are wrong and bring us a sense of disharmony. We can feel hopeless, that we will never be better and therefore, a happy, authentic Christian life seems beyond us. Striving for good moral behavior is indeed part of our faith but it springs from something deeper; a relationship with God. That is what Christ came to bring us. Once we can accept that God loves us and knows that we struggle, then our faith can flourish. We may have weaknesses that we succumb to because they satisfy our human desires, or at least they seem to do so. All we need to do is to simply acknowledge in honesty before God that we will keep trying.

God who loves us is in the midst of our struggles and through them, he gives us wisdom and true understanding of his love for us and fosters within us a deeper love for him. My friends, may the blessing of Christ whose birth as one of us give make present in your everyday life, even in the midst of sin and weakness, the loving and consoling presence of God himself.

This feast of Christmas is followed immediately by the feast of the Holy Family. Joseph and Mary had planned to marry and most probably, planned a family as any good Israelite would do. The message of an angel to Mary upset those plans; then the message of an angel restored the relationship of Joseph and Mary, but it changed their lives. Whatever their plans had been before, they now had a new calling from God. Their love for each other would not produce children; it found its fulfillment in bringing the child who was God-made-man to birth and full manhood. The first Holy Family walked the Earth two thousand years ago; men and women with the same faith as Joseph and Mary continue to make the Holy Family present throughout the world as they bring into the world children whom they form into living images of Christ. May the blessing of God fill your life with abundance and form each of us more and more into members of the one Holy Family of God.



### **Second Collection is for Diocesan Priests' Retirement Fund**

This Christmas, you will be offered the opportunity to say thanks to the priests in our diocese that have dedicated their lives to the service of our Church. Those whom have been selfless sources of inspiration, wisdom and comfort to our families – from the joyous celebrations, to the mourning of our losses. Please share your many blessings. Please make checks payable to your Parish.

## Parish Office Christmas Hours

The Parish office of St. Francis and St. John will be closed December 25 – January 1.  
Have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! May God bless you and your family!

– Your Parish Staff

### **NEW THIS YEAR!!!! 2018 Contribution Envelopes or Automatic Donation for St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church.**

Envelopes will be mailed directly to your home this year on a monthly basis. If you had envelopes or automatic draft set up in 2017, you should have received your first set of 2018 envelopes already. If you would like to use the envelope system or set up an automatic donation, please contact the parish office at 405-372-6886.

**2018 Catholic Extension Calendars** should be available in the vestibule by the end of December. Thank you and have a blessed 2018!

**Christmas Flowers at our Parishes are in memory/honor of:** *Claude and Gertrude Ozenne, Walter Bays, Oceanline Ventris, Barbara Dubois, Mary Lou Klein, Barbara and Kenny Norman, Dick and Marie Wieder, Lee Roy and Mary Nelson, Christin Thomason, Ed Slovak, Doug and Carol Penix, Jay Penix, Robert Vitek, Bobby VitekGenne Iven, Fred and Ollie Iven, Tony and Alile Zaloudek, Carolyn Hight, Betsy Dale, Emil and Pauline Kastl, Julia Kastl, Martha Kastl Hill, Maxine Kastl, Tony Kastl, Bill and Jean Mauterer, Mary and Paul Galea, Orpha Frost, Stephen Frost, Judith Reynolds, Kristi Reynolds, Dennis H. Johnson, Bruce and Bonnie McGuigan, Ernest and Sylvia Henzel, Rosie Satterlee, Dolores Huerta, Knorad and Elizabeth Husmann, John and Rosalie Belusko, Carl Grover Sr., Peter Bastion, Fred C. Veatch, Eleanor A. DeGeorge, Carol Stangel, Rose Reynolds, Joseph Muriana, and all our parishioner family members.*

### **LIVE THE LITURGY - INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK**

A people who walked in darkness have seen a great light! Today is born our savior, Jesus Christ. As the image of the invisible God, he is the light that illumines the paths of our lives. He alone shows us how to be truly human and teaches us that humanity is blessed with the very presence of God. Fully human and fully divine, Jesus shows us how to order our relationships—our relationship with God, others, ourselves, and the world in which we live. Today he calls us to peace once again and to live with justice, mercy, and compassion on our lips and in our actions.

### **Everyday Stewardship**

Last year we waited much too long to buy our Christmas trees. We usually have one in the living room and then one by the large window in our room that sits at the front of the house. Essentially, there is one for us to see and then one for all the neighbors walking their dogs in the December cold. If you wait too long to buy a fresh tree you might just not find a tree. But last year I found one tree lot I had not bought from in the past. Luckily, they had some great trees. The price was a little higher than I was used to but a tree would be mine no matter what.

What I found interesting at the lot was a group of about nine young people sitting around a fire, laughing and drinking coffee. I wondered, "All of these people for a tree lot late at night and this late in the season?" What I found out was these weren't paid workers. These were recovering drug and alcohol addicts. This was their rehab's tree lot and this was their service and group therapy. I spoke to a couple of them and found they were the nicest people around. They were full of joy for the new life they had found and thankful for the people who helped bring them through the trial of their lives. Suddenly, that tree they sold me seemed more beautiful and majestic than it had when I first drove up.

This Christmas, may the Lord that slept in a manger provide for you rest. May the God that gives many gifts to all of us bless you abundantly. And may the Prince of Peace help you to find true gratitude for the gift of life. May you and yours feel the joy of the season, like a group of recovering addicts around a campfire on a cold December night.

