

On Appreciating Christmas & Loving Enemies

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It is an understatement that the mystery we celebrate every Christmas is a BIG deal.

God could have redeemed man in any number of ways; but, in the economy of salvation that has been revealed to us, all we know is that unless God became Incarnate in the Person of Jesus, we would still be living in darkness under the shadow of death; a very sad plight.

The Incarnation changes EVERYTHING! As the third Mass of Christmas reads, "Grant, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that the new birth of Thine only begotten Son in the flesh may set us free, who are held by the old bondage under the yoke of sin." Albeit, this Christmas prayer is incomplete without considering the Passion, Death, Resurrection & Ascension of Christ, the Infant born on this Day remains a visible promise of GREAT things to come!

Understanding this, it is disappointing that the BOON of Christmas has been robbed, *somewhat*, of its AWESOME meaning by the world's meaningless phrases: "Season's Greetings" & "Happy Holidays." It is somehow worse, however, that Christians themselves complain so much about these & like petty things (i.e., any scandal) so as to forget the GIFT of Christmas: God has become man to save us from our sin! which deserves our greater attention & attachment, our source of joy & peace, not just now, but all year round.

The saints understand this WONDERFUL reality, so wonderfully as to produce wonderful results... which introduces our second topic: Forgiving Enemies.

The first three days of Christmas, Mother Church celebrates three wonderful Feasts: Dec. 26, St. Stephen, the proto (first) martyr; Dec. 27, St. John the Apostle (*the Beloved Disciple*); Dec. 28, the Holy Innocents.

Of these, the Feast of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, spotlights the life of a true Christian, as the prayer of that Mass reads: "Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, so to imitate what we revere, that we may love even our enemies: for we celebrate the heavenly Birthday of him who knew how to pray for his very persecutors to our Lord Jesus Christ..."

St. Stephen was one of the seven deacons chosen to help the apostles; he so worked miracles & preached Christ as to draw the ire of the Jews from 5 synagogues, who stoned him to death. While suffering this punishment, he pleaded on their behalf, "O Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

There are two wonderful miracles here: the act of dying for Christ & the act of praying for the forgiveness of the very men unjustly stoning him (even before they asked for pardon); of these, the more important seems prayer for enemies as it alone is advertised for our imitation.

"How could he do this?" Because he appreciated the STUPENDOUS mystery of Christmas.

God became man to rescue men from the yoke of sin. St. Stephen suffers from men while simultaneously praying for their pardon. This is awesome. Indeed, it is Christ again on His Cross crying out, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

We say that the acorn does not fall far from the tree. As a son resembles his father, so in Stephen we see a brother to Christ & another son of the Father.

"How did he do this?" He appreciated Christmas & lived its meaning, God became man not to judge the world, but to save it; which He did by laying down His life for it while, at the same time, pleading the pardon of sinners... even those then harming Him.

To end, of all religions, the Christian precept to love our enemies is truly unique & praiseworthy; but it is useless unless we practice it in thought, word & deed.

The more we appreciate Christmas, the more we will love our neighbor, even an enemy. This a "Happy Holidays" will never do; only a sincere "Merry Christmas" can change the world.



CHRIST THE KING Catholic Church

An apostolate of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter
preaching the Gospel & sanctifying souls
according to the liturgical books of 1962.

4th Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2024 A.D.

Pastor: Fr. Chris Hathaway, FssP

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Assistant: Fr. Vince Huber, FssP

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Secretary: Susan Hemeryck

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Church Office Hours: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm, Monday - Friday

Christ the King Catholic Church.

Office: 941-924-2777

1900 Meadowood Street

Sarasota, FL 34231

christthekingsarasota.org

The Daily Mass Schedule is:

Monday at 12 noon.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 7:00 am and 9:00 am.

Friday at 9:00 am and 6:30 pm. (On Friday, a 5:30 pm Holy Hour & confession time, precedes the 6:30 pm Mass.)

Saturday at 9:00 am.

Sacramental Emergency: 941-400-5415

The Sunday Mass Schedule is:

7:00 am low; 8:30 am low; & 10:30 am sung & a seasonal 12:30 pm low Mass.

Items on the "Blessing Table" in the hall are blessed after the last Sunday Mass.

Confessions are heard in the confessional box ½ hour before Mass.

"Lost & Found" is in the vestibule; if not there, check with the office.

In Ocala:

Sunday Mass at 4:30 pm

Monday Mass at 7 am.

1st Saturday Mass at 10:30 am.

Scan to give



Liturgical Calendar for the Upcoming Week

DATE	FEAST	CLASS/COLOR
Sun 12-22	4 th Sunday of Advent	1/V
Mon 12-23	Greater Feria of Advent	2/V Feria of Advent
Tues 12-24	Vigil of Christmas	1/V
Wed 12-25	The Nativity of Our Lord	1/W
Thu 12-26	St Stephen, <i>Deacon & Protomartyr</i>	2/R
Fri 12-27	St John the Evangelist, <i>Apostle</i>	2/W
Sat 12-28	Holy Innocents, <i>Martyrs</i>	2/R Ember Saturday of Advent
Sun 12-29	Sunday in the Octave	2/W

Mass Intentions for the Upcoming Week in Sarasota

Sun 12-22	(7 am) Fr Christopher Hathaway, FssP (8:30 am) Josephine Patterson (10:30 am) <i>Pro-populo</i> (12:30 pm) Carol Bamer+	rb M D Meadows rb D Thorssell rb Altar Servers
Mon 12-23	(12 noon) Judith D Broussard+	rb Steindorf family
Tues 12-24	(7 am) In honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary (9 am) All pregnancy center workers	rb a friend rb CtK Pro-Life Group
Wed 12-25	(12 am) Midnight Mass <i>Pro-Populo</i> (8:30 am) Dawn Mass <i>Pro-Benefactors</i> (10:30 am) Day Mass <i>Pro-Unborn babies</i>	rb Fr Hathaway
Thu 12-26	(7 am) Poor souls in Purgatory (not at CtK) (9 am) FssP Confraternity intentions	rb L de Saizieu rb JP Marchand
Fri 12-27	(9 am) Fssp Confraternity intentions (6:30 pm) Alexei Burns	rb N Truong rb B Rodriguez
Sat 12-28	(9 am) Unborn babies in danger of abortion	rb anonymous
Sun 12-29	(7 am) Thanksgiving to Jesus & Mary (8:30 am) Thanksgiving for conversion of a loved one (10:30 am) <i>Pro-populo</i> (12:30 pm) Gloria Flynn	rb anonymous rb anonymous rb M Pruitt

Today's 10:30 am Music: Entr: Creator of the Stars of Night, #799; Asperges, #567; Mass XVII, #762 & Credo I, #768; Exit: O Come O Come, Emmanuel, #797.

Fr. Perozich offers the 7 am Mass & hears Confessions from 8 am & into the 8:30 am Mass.

Christmas Midnight: Carols outside at 11 pm, Choir sings at 11:30 pm; Mass starts at Midnight: Entr: *Adeste Fideles*, #804; Mass II, #700; Credo III, #776; Exit: Angels We Have Heard on High, #812.

Christthekingsarasota.org website is now working!

This week, Monday, Novena, Vespers (4:30 pm); **Tuesday, Novena,** Holy Face devotions (10:15 am), no book Club; **Wednesday, Merry Christmas!**; **Thursday,** Vespers (4:30 pm), no Youth Catechism; **Friday,** wine blessing after both Masses, Vespers (4:30 pm), Holy Hour (5:30 pm), Mass (6:30 pm); **Saturday, Novena,** no Youth Group or potluck, Vespers (4:30 pm).

Last Sunday's Collection: cash \$5,041.25; on-line \$2,674.00; CFA \$3,235.00.

Do This in Memory of Me: cash \$24,818.00; online \$1,015.00.

Total souls: 475; 7 am-57; 8:30 am-137; 10:30 am-200; 12:30 pm-81; **Ocala-357.**

Please pray for: Piotr Gier, Mendez family (12/15); baby Gardner, Amanda Smith (12/8); Richard Wallace (12/01), McNamara family, Leonard West, & Markus Dixon (11/24).

Please know only Catholics who practice the faith e.g., attend Mass every Sunday, & are unaware of any grave sin on their soul, may receive Holy Communion.

2024 CFA status at CtK as of Dec. 14, 2024: \$113,000 owed the diocese; \$89,657.27 pledged (79.34% of goal); from 38.89% of 216 households; \$88,116.38 paid. (from dioceseofvenice.org). Thank you for your support!

Regarding the CFA, if you have not yet donated to this tax CtK owes the diocese, please do so. The greater number of parishioners who donate, lets the bishop know we appreciate his support. Currently, CtK ranks 6th highest in parishioner participation out of 69 diocesan church entities. Make checks payable to Catholic Faith Appeal; on the memo line write "Christ the King, Sarasota" so that CtK can be credited.

If you wish to gift Fr Hathaway a gift card, please know he primarily shops at Lowe's & Publix; in the past, he has received cards which he gives away. On this note, he has two \$50 gift cards to Outback Steakhouse; he will give one to you if you give CFA \$40!

Dear Faithful of Christ the King,

12/22/24

Thank you for your continued prayers & donations for the success of our building project, "**Do This in Memory of Me.**"

We will soon have a video presentation to explain & promote our project. But please don't wait for this to make your sacrificial pledge; see the pledge envelopes in the church & vestibule.

Thank you & God bless you. Fr Hathaway

2024 Christmas & 2025 New Year Mass Schedule:
In Sarasota, (frh)

Carols: Tues., Dec. 24 at 11 pm & choir at 11:30 pm
Midnight sung Mass: Wed., Dec. 25 at 12 am.
Dawn low Mass: Wed., Dec. 25 at 8:30 am.
Day low Mass: Wed., Dec. 25 at 10:30 am.
Octave Day: Wed., Jan. 1, 8:30 am, 10:30 & 6:30 pm.

In Ocala, (frv)

Midnight Mass at 12 am.
Dawn Mass: 1 pm
Day Mass: 1:30 pm (Holy Communion given only at the Day Mass)
Octave Day: no Mass