

January 2021



St. John Neumann Catholic Community

Staffed by Oblates of St. Francis de Sales

Temporary Mass Times

Saturday: 5 p.m.

Sunday: 9 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 2 p.m. (español)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 9 a.m.

[Sign up to attend a Mass in person](#)
[Watch a livestreamed or recorded Mass](#)

Confession

Saturday: 10-10:30 a.m. (English)

Sunday: 3-4 p.m. (español)

Visit our website

Pastor's Perspective

"Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections but instantly set out to remedying them. Every day begin the task anew." –St. Francis de Sales

The above quote from St. Francis de Sales has taken on more significance and urgency for me this past year as we have been dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions and limitations this unprecedented experience has placed on us. I have run out of patience with the pandemic, anxiously awaiting its disappearance.

As challenging as this time has been, however, I have also grown through it. I realize that I need to address some of my own imperfections, especially the lack of patience I sometimes have with myself and with others. Taking my daily struggles and imperfections to prayer has helped. This unique time allows me to see and experience life in a new light. I am learning not to take everything for granted and to appreciate the small things in life.

Reflecting on the past year, I am grateful for the support, love, and example that I experience from our parish faith community and from the oblates with whom I share life. The power of both personal and communal prayer has been uplifting for me, especially these past many months, and through this time, I have come to realize that I can deal with adversity and gain perspective. I am thankful to have the daily necessities to live a healthy and productive life that so many go without.

It has been heartening to experience how our parishioners and so many others in our community have been beacons of hope through their response to the needs of those who are suffering and hurting right now. Even in the midst of so much division in our country, our world, and even our church, the faith and response of so many gives me great hope.

As we begin the new year and discern some resolutions, perhaps we can reflect on what we have learned through these challenging times and how these lessons might give us some important perspective as we look forward in hope. How might we look out at the world and even just the small part that we occupy with new eyes and a new vision, as one who offers hope and a sense of real encouragement, especially to those in society who feel left out or alone?

One of the unfortunate consequences of the pandemic is that it has deprived many of those who are grieving lost loved ones of the type of mourning that often gives solace and comfort. Normally, at a time of loss, especially through the celebration of liturgical rites and the Sacraments and just the importance of having physical support from family and friends, people find strength in God's grace to continue on. Let us make one of our collective New Year's resolutions, as a faith community, to be open to and supportive of people who will need different ways and time to grieve.

For all of our resolutions this new year, whether they be communal or personal, let us focus on the hope that only God can give, based on his unconditional love and the gift of Eternal Life that he has given us through his son, Jesus Christ.

May 2021 bring much needed peace, joy, love, and hope to all of you and your loved ones.

Live Jesus,
Fr. Joe

Reflection Question

What did you struggle with last year that you can learn from this year?

Catechetical Corner

Finding God in the In-Between

By Mickie Abatemarco

We find ourselves post-Christmas, in the dark and cold of winter. This is usually a time of in-betweens, but this year it is especially true. We have hope for new beginnings, the vaccine and life back to some kind of normal. The question is: How do we live this in-between time in faith and trust? Take some time daily to recite this prayer and open yourself to God's presence in the in-between.

A Mid-Winter Prayer

From the rising of the midwinter sun to its setting
Scatter the darkness with the light of your love, O Lord.
Make me short on mean thoughts, long on offering words of comfort,
Make me short on being driven, long on paying attention,
Make me short on focusing only on my own, long on looking beyond,
Make me short on obsessive lists, long on spontaneous acts of kindness,
Make me short on mindless activity, long on time to reflect,
Make me short on tradition as a habit, long on re-discovery and re-owning,



Make me short on rushing and tiring, long on walking and wonder,
Make me short on guilt, long on being merciful to myself,
Make me short on being overwhelmed, long on peaceableness as I set forth this day.

-From "[*The Celtic Wheel of the Year: Celtic and Christian Seasonal Prayers*](#)" by Tess Ward

Catholic Mass Explained: Christmas Season Readings

By Fr. Don Heet, OSFS

The Sunday between Christmas and New Year's is the Solemnity of the Holy Family; there are a number of choices for readings. The first reading is either from Sirach about the relations that should exist in families or the story of the birth of Isaac. The second reading is either from Colossians, also about how members of the family should respect each other, or from Hebrews, celebrating the fact that we are children of God. With regard to Colossians, the option exists to omit the line about wives being submissive to their husbands; that's for us preachers who prefer not trying to explain its context (as I did once and was complimented, "Nice try, Father!"). The Gospel is a scene about the Holy Family: the flight into Egypt, the naming of Jesus, or the finding of Jesus in the temple.



The Octave of Christmas, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, always has the three readings celebrating both Mary and the beginning of a new year. Similarly, the Feast of Epiphany has the same readings every year, all dealing with the revelation of Jesus to the nations (that's us!). The Christmas season ends with the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord. The first two readings do not change: Isaiah prophesies that the Spirit will descend upon the servant of the Lord (as it does on Jesus) and in the reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Peter traces Christ's ministry starting with his baptism. There are three different accounts of John baptizing Jesus, taken from Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Reflection for the Feast of the Epiphany

By Loyes Spayd

Psalm 72

*R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.
For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,
and the afflicted when he has no one to help him.
He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;
the lives of the poor he shall save.*

Epiphany is a great feast! The main significance of this feast is the universality of the salvation Jesus Christ offers us. It is just not the Hebrews who are the chosen ones, but we all are. But the subtext of this psalm is that with this gift of salvation comes the responsibility for the poor, the disenfranchised, the hungry, for all who cry out for help. What God does for us, we must do for one another.

This feast and this psalm were particularly relevant this past year and in the new year because of the effects of the pandemic. People all over the world are hungry, unemployed, without adequate health care, grieving loved ones who succumbed to

the virus, missing the love and hugs of family members. Health care workers and first responders risk their lives every day to provide care for those who are sick and dying. Our country has one of the highest numbers of cases and deaths in the world. We cannot sit in our own bubble and be grateful that we are not sick or still have a job.

You have heard all this before, but God pleads with you to hear the cries of the poor, the hungry, the children, the lonely, the alienated, the elderly, and families. 2020 was a terrible year, but in the last 2,000 years since the birth of Christ, there have been many terrible years, but the call has not changed. Listen to the cries, reach out, and help, in whatever way you can. Jesus Christ will help you to help those in need.

Our actions are the manifestation or the epiphany of the great love God has for his people!

Reflection Question

What actions can you take, given your own resources, to help those affected by the pandemic and/or those in need of a helping hand?

This reflection is from a collection of Christmas season reflections written by SJN parishioners for this year. [Read all the reflections.](#)

“Support and excuse your neighbor with great generosity of heart.”

St. Francis de Sales

Staff Spotlight

Silvia Bustamante **Secretary in the Faith Formation Office**

How long have you worked at SJN?

I have worked at SJN since April 2013. I have been a parishioner for 20 years.

What is your favorite thing about being Catholic?

It brings me back to my childhood and the different traditions. It is universal, and we have the Virgin Mary and all the saints.

What is one thing that always makes you smile?

When I see little children. It is a joy to see the children from the preschool pass in front of my office every morning.

A fun fact about yourself:

I lived six years in Saudi Arabia. Although it was not easy to practice the Catholic faith there, God always showed me ways to enjoy life, practice my faith, and meet wonderful people.

How to contact Silvia: sbustamante@saintjn.org



Parish Events & Announcements

[Preschool enrollment](#) begins in January. [Donate to the Tuition Angel scholarship fund](#) to support families who can't pay full tuition.

[Exposition and Adoration](#): Contact Patty Bartnick (703-860-6151) or add your name to the sign-up sheet outside the chapel for a half-hour slot on Jan. 14.

SJN is supporting Fairfax County's Hypothermia Prevention Response from Jan. 17 to 24. [Find out how to donate money, time, or supplies.](#)

SJN will celebrate the Feast Day of St. Francis de Sales on Sunday, Jan. 24.

The Pro-Life Ministry is hosting a prayer service on Jan. 29 at 10 a.m. in the church, the day of the annual national March for Life.

Our parish recognizes two special feast days in January!




St. John Neumann, Jan. 5

St. John Neumann was born in present-day Czech Republic on March 28, 1811. He followed a calling to missionary work to the U.S., where he was ordained a priest in New York in June 1836 and joined the Redemptorists in 1840. He was named bishop of Philadelphia in 1852. He's known for his missionary work, especially among German immigrants, and his work in establishing and growing Catholic schools in the U.S., among other works. He died of a sudden heart attack on Jan. 5, 1860, and is buried in St. Peter the Apostle Church in Philadelphia. He was beatified during the Second Vatican Council, the first American



St. Francis de Sales, Jan. 24

St. Francis de Sales was born on Aug. 21, 1567, in France. He studied law but wanted to become a priest and began his priesthood in the Diocese of Geneva, where his pamphlets helped convert local Calvinists to Catholicism. When he was 35, he was made bishop of Geneva. He is well known for his writings, especially his books, the *Introduction to the Devout Life* and *A Treatise on the Love of God*, and he's the patron saint of authors, writers, and journalists. He also met and became spiritual director to St. Jane de Chantal, with whom he co-founded the Sisters of the Visitation of Holy Mary in 1610. Blessed Louis Brisson founded



bishop to be so, and canonized in 1977.

[Learn more about St. John Neumann](#)

[Pray a novena to St. John Neumann](#)

Image from USCCB

the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales in 1875 following the spiritual legacy of St. Francis de Sales.

[Learn more about St. Francis de Sales](#)

[Pray a novena to St. Francis de Sales](#)

Our parish newsletter is a year old! What do you think so far? What content do you enjoy? What content would you like to see more of? Email your thoughts to communications@saintjn.org.

“And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.”

Matthew 2:9

