

JAN 4-5, 2020



OUR LADY, QUEEN OF THE YOUGH CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Pennsylvania Charitable Trusts

*Our vision is to lead all whose lives we touch
into a living relationship with the person of
Jesus Christ through Word and Sacrament,
Service and Fellowship.*

www.youghcatholic.org



**THEN THEY OPENED THEIR TREASURES
AND OFFERED HIM GIFTS OF GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, AND MYRRH.
MATTHEW 2:11**

To our visitors... If you are just passing through, we are glad you chose to worship with us. If you are seeking a new church home, please know there is always room in our pews and a place in our hearts for you.

DEVIVO CENTRE

116 South 2nd Street
Connellsville, PA 15425

724.628.6840 (f) 724.628.0838

MON-THU 8:30am-noon / 1-4pm
FRI 8:30am-1pm

BRADY CENTRE

459 Ranch Road
Dunbar, PA 15431

724.277.4236 (f) 724.277.8954

MON, TUE, THU, FRI 9am-3pm

SATs 5:15-5:45pm at IC

Confession

and by appointment

We work with the Holy Trinity Conference of Saint Vincent DePaul to help our neighbors in need. Their number is 724.562.3341.

We are grateful for the advertisers who cover the cost of printing our bulletins.

Please frequent their businesses in support of them.

This week's featured advertiser is COUNTRY MOTOR SALES.

Our Faith Community consists of the Parish Families of Immaculate Conception, Connellsville (1869), Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, Dunbar (1874), Saint John the Evangelist, Connellsville (1895), and Saint Rita of Cascia, Connellsville (1915).



We also embrace the former Parish Families of Saint Vincent de Paul, Leisenring (1888-2008), Sacred Heart, Dawson (1889-2007) Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Connellsville (1901-1913), Saint Emory, Connellsville (1903-1970), Holy Trinity, Connellsville (1903-2008), Saint Polycarp, West Leisenring (1917-1997).

OUR STAFF - WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

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SAT-SUN, DEC 21-22, 2019 STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Adult	\$6,116.00
Loose	342.00
Maintenance	37.00
Total:	\$6,495.00

Cemetery	\$119.00
Christmas Flowers	\$75.00
Immaculate Conception	\$35.00
Christmas	\$15.70
Accent	\$14.00
Catholic Relief	\$1.00
Children/Family Services	\$30.00



ST. ALOYSIUS

Adult	\$3,172.00
Loose	208.00
Children/Young Adults	16.00
Parish Improvements	45.00
Total:	\$3,441.00

Christmas Flowers	\$20.00
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ST. JOHN

Adult	\$2,825.00
Loose Collection	131.00
Total:	\$2,956.00

Cemetery	\$76.00
Thanksgiving	\$3.00
Christmas Flowers	\$32.00
Immaculate Conception	\$50.00
Accent	\$2.00
Catholic Relief	\$10.00



ST. RITA

Adult	\$3,556.00
Loose	302.00
Maintenance	20.00
Total:	\$3,878.00

Cemetery	\$105.00
Thanksgiving	\$3.00
Christmas Flowers	\$50.00
Immaculate Conception	\$98.00
Christmas	\$305.00
Accent	\$12.00
Children/Family Services	\$5.00

The STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE report for SAT-SUN, DEC 28-29 will be in an upcoming bulletin.



Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6 SECRET PLAN

The birth of Jesus became the worst-kept secret in the history of the world. All along, people knew God had a plan. God had told everyone from Adam and Eve, to Abraham and Sara, to Moses and Miriam, to David and Bathsheba, to Hosea and Gomer, to Mary and Joseph that there was a plan. Nobody fully understood it. Nobody knew how God would bring the plan to fulfillment. But they all believed. They had seen God work mighty deeds in their lives, and they believed that one day the promise of redemption would be fulfilled.

Jesus was God's secret. When Jesus was born in humble surroundings outside of royalty and pageantry, only a handful of people

even began to realize what God had done.

But the secret got out. Angels appeared in the sky. Shepherds showed up. And Magi traveled from a faraway land. Everyone was finding out God's two great surprises: Jesus was born as the promised Messiah, and he came not just for his own race but for all the people of the world.

The Letter to the Ephesians says, God's mystery "was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Jesus was born, and he came to save each of us, no matter what family we come from, what we believe, or how we behave. The mystery of God's love is open now to the whole world. That is the epiphany, the revelation of God's secret.

Lectionary Bulletin Inserts: Reflections on the 1st/2nd Readings, Year A © 2019 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. All rights reserved. Written by Paul Turner. Lectionary for Mass © 2001, CCD.

A PRAYER TO THE INFANT KING. Jesus, the Magi offered you revealing gifts: gold because you are Our King; frankincense because you are Our God; and myrrh because you are our Redeemer.

Like the Magi, I offer you my gifts: the gold of my earnest love as your faithful subject; the frankincense of frequent prayer as your creature; and the myrrh of a generous self-sacrifice as a sinner.



SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

MON: 1 Jn 3:22 - 4:6; Ps 2:7bc-8, 10-12a;

TUE: 1 Jn 4:7-10; Ps 72:1-4, 7-8; Mk 6:34-44

WED: 1 Jn 4:11-18; Ps 72:1-2, 10, 12-13;

THU: 1 Jn 4:19 - 5:4; Ps 72:1-2, 14, 15bc, 17; Lk 4:14-22a

FRI: 1 Jn 5:5-13; Ps 147:12-15, 19-20; Lk 5:12-16

SAT: 1 Jn 5:14-21; Ps 149:1-6a, 9b; Jn 3:22-30

SUN: Is 42:1-4, 6-7; Ps 29:1-4, 3, 9-10; Acts 10:34-38; Mt 3:13-17

What's Happening at home

Our next session for Foundations of Faith is this **WED, JAN 8 at Geibel, 6-8pm.**

This is a K-5th grade children's

ONLY session. There is no meal. Please have your child bring their textbook.

THU night RCIA will be held on JAN 9 in St. John's Moravek Hall, from 6:30-8pm.

St. Al's FRI study on the Gospel of John resumes JAN 10 after 8:30am Mass in the social hall.

Our Lady, Queen of the Yough Catholic Community Children's Choir will rehearse on SAT, JAN 11 in IC's choir loft, beginning at 11am. Children in grades 3-6 from all 4 parishes are eligible for membership. Additionally, junior/senior high students are invited to serve as leaders and cantors for the Children's Choir.

St. Rita Holy Name will meet in Bucci Hall on SUN, JAN 12 after 8am Mass. Coffee and donuts will be served. New members are welcome. **Dues of \$3 for 2020 can be placed in the collection basket.** Please mark Holy Name on the envelope.

Our final mandatory 2nd grade parent/child meeting for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be SUN, JAN 12 at Saint Al, beginning with 9am Mass. The Sacrament of Reconciliation for our 2nd grade class will take place on JAN 18 at St. Rita at 9:30am.

St. Rita Holy Name will have a pancake, buckwheat and sausage breakfast on SUN, JAN 19 in Bucci Hall, 7am-noon. Try their famous buckwheat sandwich! Adults \$6, children under 12 \$2.

St. Al's Altar Rosary Society will meet on MON, JAN 20 at 6:30pm in the social hall. Meetings are held monthly on the 3rd MON, SEP-MAR (not DEC).

Fr. Dan will discuss the topic "WOMEN PRIESTS AND MARRIED PRIESTS, WHY OR WHY NOT?" in his talk on MON JAN 20 at St. Rita church, beginning at 7pm.

Those who donated \$125 or more for St. John's Silent Festival can pick up their appreciation set of 4 keepsake glasses on SUNs, 10:30-11:15am or after Mass in the social hall. Additional glasses are available for \$25/set and \$45/2 sets.



Anniversary Christmas ornaments are available for purchase, \$15 each or 2/\$25.

Tom Severin's Bible study will resume during Lent.



TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD.

This feast is an important event in Christ's life which brought about a change in the world which affects our lives today. It's hard to talk about Epiphany without sounding like we're exaggerating. Today is a day of superlatives. Epiphany is the grandest, merriest and best day of the Christmas season.

According to legend, the Wise Men were considered royal personages. The names were traditionally given as Melchior, Casper and Balthazar. Melchior was supposedly an old man with a white beard. His gift of gold was said to be testimony to the royalty of Christ. Casper is usually pictured as young. Tradition says his gift

of incense was a token of Christ's divine nature. Balthazar is pictured with a black complexion and a full beard. The myrrh he held is said to have prefigured the death of Christ.

Epiphany means "appearance" and "revelation" and "manifestation". In the Gospel stories of Epiphany, we hear that God appears in creation; he is revealed in a star, in the waters of the river, in the shining skies, on the wings of a dove, in stone jars of everyday water.

In many families, a famous Epiphany tradition is to have a party in honor of the visit of the Magi. A special cake in which a bean or coin has been hidden is served. The lucky person who finds the bean or coin in their slice of cake is crowned queen

or king for the evening. This person leads everyone in the dancing procession that tops off the fun.

The head of a house has two major responsibilities. One is to host the carnival party before Lent begins. The other is to lead the blessing of the home for the new year. The numerals of the year are written with chalk over the front door. The initials of the legendary names of the Magi are added. The home is dedicated to hospitality.

In a sense, at Epiphany all of us are queens and kings. In Baptism, we were anointed to be God's royal people. Now the star shines over us, we who are baptized, we who bear the name of Christ.

CHILDREN ARE WELCOME HERE! Parents do a wonderful task every Sunday in guiding their children from infancy to be aware of the wonderful surroundings of the Church, as they teach their children to be attentive at Mass. Sure, there are times when a parent has to temporarily walk out of Church with a crying baby or a squirming toddler, and come back shortly, after the child is settled - this is normal. I would encourage families with young children to sit closer to the altar so that they can "see up close". Young children become fascinated with watching, praying and singing at Mass, and therefore they are learning that they and their family are a part of God's family. *Fr. Paul*

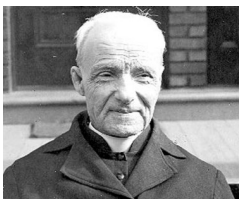
STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAM 10-14 is a free, evidence-based program for 10-14 year olds and their families happening in the Connellsville Area.

Families will participate in fun activities and games, solve problems together and set goals for themselves. This program runs 1 day/week for 7 consecutive weeks from 5:30-8pm. For more info or to register, please call/text Mel at 970-8679 or email her at mbrownfield@fcdaa.org.

Free meals, gas cards and giveaways for every week of the program!

JAN 30-MAR 12 (THUs) Connellsville Area Middle School	FEB 24- APR 6 (MONs) Connellsville Area Middle School	MAR 19-APR 30 (THUs) Springfield CNP Elementary	APR 14- MAY 26 (TUEs) Dunbar Twp Elementary
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MON, JAN 6 is the feast day of St. André Bessette (religious/1845-1937).



Brother André Bessette failed at many things that he tried. He was unable to manage as a shoemaker, baker, blacksmith or tinsmith. But he did have one amazing talent: When he prayed for the sick, they got well.

Born to a poor family in Quebec, André (or Albert as he was called in childhood) was a frail boy. He was barely able to read. He and his nine brothers and sisters were left orphans when Andre was only 12 years old. That's when he began looking for a trade. He needed work to support himself.

After some time André found a job as the doorkeeper at a high school for boys in Montreal. He became a religious brother of the Congregation of the Holy Cross. For 40 years he cheerfully did his chores as a janitor and handyman during the day. But at night, great numbers of crippled, blind and dying people who had heard about his gift of prayer, sought him out.

By the time he died at age 91, Brother André was known all over Canada. Half a million people are said to have filed past the coffin of this humble man. He always said that he was living proof that "it is not necessary to have spent many years in college to love the good God".

One of the most beautiful traditions of our Catholic heritage is the **BLESSING OF OUR HOMES**, which is done near Epiphany Sunday. Below is a blessing you can use for your own home:



Lord, God of heaven and earth you revealed your only-begotten Son to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this house and all who inhabit it. Fill them with the light of Christ, that their concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

After praying, if you have holy water, sprinkle some in each room, then place the following above your doorway:

20 + C + M + B + 20

This marking means your home was blessed in the year 2020. The letters represent the traditional names of the 3 wise men: Casper, Melchior and Balthazar.

Nar-Anon meetings will resume on WED, JAN 8 in St. John's Moravek Hall, 7-8pm.

IMPORTANT If you have completed high school or are over 18 years of age, you must register at your home parish as an adult.

If you are asked to be a sponsor or Godparent, you must present proof of membership in a parish. Your membership will not be verified if you are still listed as a child on your parents' registration.

Please call the DeVivo Centre at 628-6840 or the Brady Centre at 277-4236 or pick up a church registration form in the back of your church if you need to take care of this detail.



Hank Adair, Baby Alona, Victoria Altimus, Arlene Argiro, Scott Aronhalt, John Auer, Maureen & Stephen Austen, Peter Babyak, Janice Bailey, Al Balow, Heather Bardin, Meghan Bayer, Scott Bell, Lorena Beni, Maya Bennett, Marissa Bercik, Serrick Beucher, Seth Beveridge, Scott Bigley, Anise Black, Betty Blacka, Jeffery Blystone, George Bordas, Gail Boucher, Devin Brad-dock, Mary Bredesen, Brian, Michael Brienza, Elizabeth Brown, Quinn Bu-kovac, Divinia Calinao, Bob Camilli, Jamey Camp, Joanne Camp, Margaret Carbonara, Kay Caringola, Grace & Larry Carroll, Cecil Casini, Anthony Cecchini, Toni Cellurale-Kuhlman, Mallory Chaikcic, David Coldren, Heather Collins, Mason Collins, Jack Conko, Steve Conko, Cindy Costello-Ford, Rose Cowan, Cody Cross, Glo-ria Cross, Ron & Donna Cross, Rob-ert Cumberland, Pat DeCara, Frank Decker, Debbie Del Sordo, Aidan De-Marco, Lavonne Dillinger, Albert Dis-son, Joyce Doppelheuer, Agnes Dowling, Sandy Drury, Mike Dunaway, Cathi Dunn, E.J. Duritza, Alberta Du-sha, Melody Dynes, Ronald Egnot, John Emanuel, Charlotte Eutsey, Ron Farina, Michael Farris, Michelle Farris, Father Bob, Joan Fattori, Sandra Fletcher, Frankhouser & Hager Fami-lies, Cameron Frame, Sr., John Frick, Jason Friguglietti, Nicholas Gaborko, Sophia Gaffey, Christopher Galik, Marge & Ralph Galley, Robert Gallo, Sr., Jean Gallo-Ciscon, Machaela Gar-lowich, Greg Garred, Sr., Timmy Gibbs, Barry Glotfelty, Tanya Gray, Allie Guilian, Garrin Haggerty, Paul Ham-maker, Jim Haney, Lola & Bill Hardy, Betty Healey, Nancy Heinbaugh, Paul

Helinsky, Frederick Helms, Alexia Herchko, Bill Herman, Angela Hill, John Hohmann, Arlene & Jay Hon-eycutt, Dennis Hough, Ruthie Hough, Herk & Connie Hubbard, Barry & Marsha Huey, Grady Humbert, Domi-nic Ianello, Dolores Iaquina, Brittany Johnson, Jackie Johnson, Darlene & Donnie Johnston, Kevin Jones, Karen, Rich Kazmierczak, Chase Kemp, Larry Kennison, Larry Kent, Lora Keslar, Joann Kieta, Carol King, Jeff King Lor-raine Kinnick, Alcuin & LaRena Kirsch, Zachary Knabenshue, Judie Kosisko, Kathy Kovac, Trish Koval, John Kuzyck, Bernadine Lafko, Susan Lake, Kevin Lape, Bill Lentz, Sean Lewan-dowski, Michaelene Lint, Michael Lit-man, Anita Grasso Lizza, Maryann Lloyd, Justin Loncala, William & Adina Long, Alvera & Michael Long, Savannah Longanecker, Ruth Lonigro, Shannon Lown, Donald Lowry, Jeffrey Madarish, Barb Madore, Koochie Maiese, Noah Manges, James Marnell, Roger Mar-shall, Christine Martin, Daniel Martin, Marie Martin, Ted Martin, Theresa Martin, Kim Mari, Bret Martucci, Ann Matthews, Betty Mazurik, Robert Ma-zurik, Jean McCormick, Janet McCune, Dave McMullan, Jeanne Meagher, Hunter Meese, Michael, Justin Miller, Kayia Miller, Sarabeth Miner, Terri Molinaro, Barb Molitor, Kay Molnar, Diane Monaco, Stephen Monaco, Fo-tenie Mongell, Adam Morgan, Kimberly Morrell, Edward Mulhorn, Tom Mul-len, Carmella Mullins, Irene Nakles, Anna Newton, Fred Niemits, Eugene Onusko, John Orazi, Sr., Mike Ozor-owski, Caroline P., John Pessamato III, Jonathan Philburn, Tom Pierce, Frank Pilla, Daniel Piper, Doug & Joyce Pirl, Velda Plesz, Sylvia Pockstaller, Barry

Premoshis, Gemma Premus, James Price, Marisa Primoizic, Scott Prinkey, Ruth Ann Puskar, Theresa Ranker, Susan Reagan, Dexton Reed, Imogene Rega, Joe Rega, Maryann Reid, Freda Rennick, Tammy Renzi, Jeannette Roley, Ellen Romanko, Terry Rose, Terry Ross, Ronald Rozell, Mary Mar-garet Ruck, Robert Ruck, Jay S., Joe Sages, Lorelai Santangelo, Betty Schott, Theresa Schott, Gavin Schull-er, Brennan Sechrist, Susie Seman, Lisa Sezawick, Ray Shamberger, Mary Ann Shandorf, Steve Shandorf, Linda Shank, Martha Sheets, Kelly Huffman Sherbondy, Gen Sherwood, John Shields, Michele Sholtas, Jackie Shrum, Lester Shultz, Sr., Jeff Sigado, Erin Sigwalt, Breanna Silbaugh, Gunnar Skrobacz, Kendal Skrobacz, Eric Smearman, Mattie Smith, Thomas So-berdash, Dennis Soisson, Mark Sois-son, Marian Soldano, Sonya Spaw, Heather Spennati, Evelyn Sperry, Charles Spicola, David & Lori Stofan, John & Janet Stroncheck, Sadie Swank, James Thompson, Stephanie Tober, Michael Tonarelli, Karla Tressler, Car-ol Trimbath, Turner Trimbath, Amy Tungate, Ronnie Umble, Shaun Valen-te, David Voda, David Voda, Jr., Den-ise Voda, Ursula Vozar, Carol Ward, Doug Ward, Millie Warnick, Melvin Washington, Chuck Watson, Nancy Watson, Lois Weibl, Henry Whipkey, Marcella Wilburn, Evelyn Williams, Lee Williams, Roianne Wilson, Teri Winterhalter, Barbara Wisilosky, Beth Ann Wisniewski-Lee, Bernie Wolfe, Becky & Bob Wurst, Frank & Margaret Zadell, Sr. Mary Mark Zavatsky, Anita Zentarsky, Esther Ziska, Sammy Zorichak, John Zurich, Amy Zvara.

Please pray for the repose of the souls of NUNCIA "NANCY" DOMINA, JAMES FLYNN, MARY ELLEN LOWERY and RICHARD WICKER (brother-in-law of Ron Lazor), who died recently. May their souls and the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in eternal peace.



Epiphany can be understood as an extension of the Nativity of the Lord that we celebrate on December 25. While at Christmas we celebrate Jesus' coming as the long-awaited king and Messiah of the Jewish people, on Epiphany we celebrate the revelation that Jesus is the Savior and Light of all nations - Jews, Gentiles, and all people.

2020 Calendars are now available at the entrances of our churches.

Thanks to the following:
 Brooks Funeral Home, Inc.
 Burhans-Crouse Funeral Home
 Paul G. Fink Funeral Home, Inc.
 Stephen R. Haky Funeral Home, Inc.
 Richard Kucera Funeral Home
 Vito C. Martucci Funeral Home



TUE & THU Masses will be held at ST. RITA if the Connellsville School District has a delay or cancellation for winter weather.

Watch the news on TV or listen to your favorite radio station if the weather is bad.

FYI ... If your schedule does not allow you to make our regular Mass times, Regional Masses are celebrated on SUNs at 5:30pm at SS Cyril/Methodius in Fairchance and 7pm at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral in Greensburg.

MINISTERS: Please call/email Chris Sparks ASAP at 628-7510 or crsparks1@zoominternet.net with any JAN/FEB dates you are UNable to serve.

MASS SCHEDULE & INTENTIONS

MON, JAN 6		ST. ANDRÉ BESSETTE, RELIGIOUS
8:00am	St. Rita	Robert Tissue (Children)
8:30am	St. Al	Msgr. J. Edward McCullough (Dennis & Rita Martin)
TUE, JAN 7		ST. RAYMOND OF PEÑAFORT, PRIEST
8:00am	St. John	Hilda Onusko (Lorraine Onusko)
8:30am	St. Al	James DeMarco (Bedy Lizza)
WED, JAN 8		CHRISTMAS WEEKDAY
8:00am	St. Rita	Joe Rega (Kevin Eicher & Family)
THU, JAN 9		CHRISTMAS WEEKDAY
8:00am	IC	Holy Souls in Purgatory (Kevin & Lou Ann Lauffer)
8:00am	St. Al	Prayers for Priests & Padre Pio Devotions
8:15am	St. Al	Divine Mercy Chaplet
8:30am	St. Al	Patricia Check (Anna Bell)
FRI, JAN 10		CHRISTMAS WEEKDAY
8:00am	St. Rita	Porada & Conko Families (Steve & Eleanor)
8:15am	St. Al	Sturge Hughes (The John Leonbruno Family)
9:30am	IC	Connie Hatter (Ladies of Charity)
		Conn-Area
SAT, JAN 11		VIGIL
4:00pm	St. Rita	Angela Marie Phillips (Family)
5:00pm	St. Al	Mary & Albert Opst (Son, Bob & Family)
6:00pm	IC	Pro Populo
SUN, JAN 12		BAPTISM OF THE LORD
8:00am	St. Rita	Rita Griglak (Children)
9:00am	St. Al	Edward Hardy (Wife & Family)
9:30am	IC	The William W. Foley Family (Wife, Theresa & Family)
11:30am	St. John	Barbara & Joseph Whoric, Mass of Thanksgiving (Family)

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, always pondering spiritual things, we may carry out in both word and deed that which is pleasing to you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

MINISTRY SCHEDULE - JAN 11				MINISTRY SCHEDULE - JAN 12			
	SR-4PM	ST. AL-5PM	IC-6PM	ST. RITA-8AM	ST. AL-9AM	IC-9:30AM	ST. JOHN-11:30AM
ACOLYTES/ SERVERS	S Bandemer A Bandemer	C Baldwin C Baldwin	M Sabatini A Lincoln	M Waggett E Armstrong	R Trimbath J Hustosky	R Sebek H Bechtold	D Piasecki A Piasecki
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS	D Grenaldo M Sabatula K Grenaldo	K Andolino M Vinoverski T Nedrow	N Holonich P Daniels J Geary	C Waggett G Bohinski L Kozel	S Smith J Goodwin Joy Wallace	S Reagan R Lazor D Gephart	J Speeney J Kosinski I McKenna
CROSS BEARERS	J Domer	W Trimbath	G Holonich	E Kozel	A Mongell	A Zavatchan	D Firestone
LECTORS	A Davin	J Dunaway	L Grinko	J Malone	J Grover	M Lazor	C Petrasun
ROSARY		Volunteer			E & D Gmitter		



One of the most popular and contemporary understandings of God in our world today is one that sees God as an all-encompassing spirit who is in all

things and connects all people together. This spiritual being loves all people and is present in all times, places, and cultures. It is not connected to any one religion but is present in all religions, uniting them all in a tapestry of human spirituality. I think the reason this theology is so popular in our day is that it fits in quite nicely with our secular and pluralistic culture. With this spirit underlying everything, we can appreciate all faith beliefs and backgrounds and find something good and beautiful in them without needing to critique them because they all equally participate in God. It also means that we can simply ignore discussing religion because this spirit is present to everyone in their own way and cannot really be discussed using objective language or criteria – it simply *is* and is content to let people “live and let live”.

As nice and convenient as this sort of understanding of God is and as many interfaith problems as it would solve, there is one glaring problem: This does not correspond with our experience of love. Parents who love their children above all want them to have a relationship with them – one that blossoms and matures as they get older. One could say that the first step of love is in knowing the name

of the other, which is why so often the first words of a child are “Mama” or “Dada”. When a child is upset and parents cannot fix the problem immediately, they pick up and embrace their child with comforting and soothing words, assuring them that it will be okay. Furthermore, parents who have more than one child would never be content to be with the children only one at a time – they gather their children together, speak to them lovingly as a family, and ask them to love each other and stick together. There is nothing more natural than a parent’s love expressed in this way.

This is where the all-encompassing spirit idea seems to fall apart. If we believe that God is love and that He loves us each personally, we cannot then also believe that He would not want us to know His name or to hear His voice. We cannot believe that He would not share his message with us, that He would not want us to know Him and why He made us, and that He would not want us to be united in our knowledge of Him and love for one another.

The profound act of God revealing Himself to His people is what we celebrate on this feast of the Epiphany. God desires that all of His children should come to know him – in every time and place. This is why He gives us His Word in the Scriptures and His Church to interpret them and to keep us together as one family throughout the course of history. But the most powerful revelation of all took place when God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world.

Three biblical events have traditionally been highlighted as a part of this Epiphany celebration. The

first is the three wise men arriving at the humble stable where Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were – the moment symbolizing Jesus as God being revealed to the entire world. The second is Jesus’ baptism – the moment when the Spirit comes down on Jesus and we hear the Father’s voice saying “This is my beloved Son.” The third is the wedding feast at Cana, where Jesus performed his first miracle by turning the water into wine and began his earthly ministry.

All three of these events show how God reveals Himself to us definitively, as we would expect a parent to do with a child. It is the greatest manifestation of God’s love for us that he chooses to share His Son with us. Jesus came to be with us, to live among us, to speak with us. He longs for a true personal relationship with us. And He invites all of us as brothers and sisters to be baptized into this family of love, giving us a new commandment to follow (“love one another” – Jn 13:34) and praying that we would be united in that love (Jn 17:20-23). This is what it means for God to be love itself (1 Jn 4:16).

While it is true that this definitive and objective revelation of God in the person of Jesus makes it more difficult to appreciate and interact with those who do not believe as we do, it is much more comforting to know that God desires us to know who He is and is not content to remain distant in the heavens or hidden behind a veil. His speaking to us is a sign of his deep and abiding love for us – a love that we should not take for granted.