

Fr. Joseph's Corner "A Christmas Story"

THIS IS A STORY of a man who couldn't accept that Jesus was the Son of the True living God, and that He came as a living sacrifice, so that we could have eternal life in heaven with God the Father.

Andrew Sanford was a man of his word—a man who did not consider himself to be a hypocrite. And he was basically a good person. He was the husband of a Christian woman but did not consider himself to be a Christian. As usual, on Christmas Eve, his wife and children went to Midnight Mass. He told his wife he would wait up for them. As his family got into the car and left, he stayed looking out the window, watching the snow flurries come down, covering the ground in a white blanket, as they drove off. He then turned and went to sit in his favorite chair and began to read.

As he read, he heard a thumping sound at the big bay window. It sounded like someone was throwing snowballs at it. He got up to look, and to his surprise, he noticed some birds rolling around in the snow. It appeared that they could not see their way through all the snow and were trying to fly through his window to what seemed to be shelter—but only to bounce right off and land in the snow.

As Andrew realized why they were hopelessly scrounging around in the snow, he thought that if he could only get the birds into his barn, they could have shelter for the night. So, he put on his hat and coat, opened the barn doors, and put the big bright light on in the barn. Then he went out to see how he could steer them toward the light. He tried waving his arms, going around them in a circle, and pointing them toward the barn, but it only frightened them. Then he thought to get some breadcrumbs and placed them in a line, hoping they would follow it right into the barn where it was safe and warm. But they paid no attention to him or the crumbs.

Andrew then thought if only he could speak their bird language, they would understand. If he could be like them, then he could talk to them—feel what they were feeling—then they would understand, and he could show them the way into the place where they could live, and not die.

Just as he pondered on that thought, he heard the church bells ringing! He got down on his knees and thanked the Lord for finding a way to show him what He did for us.

You see, Andrew finally realized that God knew we would not respond to Him unless He came down to us as a man who was able to feel all that we feel—and offer Himself as a living sacrifice, loving us unconditionally.

Only by our acknowledgement that Jesus gave Himself willingly to die on the cross a physical death—and, more importantly, be resurrected on the third day to purchase a place for us in Heaven—could we have that relationship with the Father that we once had (before the fall of man).

This gift from God is absolutely free! There is nothing we can do to earn it or deserve it. All we have to do is accept Christ as our Savior, confess our sins, and invite Him into our hearts. Only then we can have eternal life—only through the Son can we come to know the Father.

—Prayerful wishes, Fr. Joseph



Please Pray for Those on Our Prayer List:

David Leonard ♦ Steve Forrester ♦ Carl Johnson ♦ Dolores Koivisto ♦ Anita Marquez
Ben Guyer ♦ Georgia Fitzgerald ♦ Lloyd Rodgers ♦ Pierre Jones ♦ Sammi Pedersen
Steven Clifton ♦ Jordan Ortega ♦ Chuck Renwick ♦ John Huthmacher
Ed McNamara ♦ Duncan Osgood ♦ Doni Bachand

St. Joseph Catholic Church

150 E First St., P.O. Box 1315, Prineville OR 97754

December 24, 2023 † 4th Sunday of Advent and Christmas

Vigil Mass Saturday	5:00 p.m.
Sunday Mass (English)*	9:00 a.m.
Sunday Mass (Spanish)	12:00 p.m.
Holy Days	8:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Mondays • Tuesdays • Thursdays	8:00 a.m.
Wednesdays • Fridays	12:00 p.m.

*Coffee and Donuts are served after the 9 a.m. Mass.

Pastor ♦ Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Kunnelaya T.

Secretary ♦ Darlene Counts

Parish Office Hours ♦ Monday – Thursday ♦ 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Parish Office Telephone: (541) 447-6475

Fr. Joseph: 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. ♦ (541) 420-4458

Parish Website: <https://stjosephsprineville.org>

Email: stjosephparish@bendbroadband.com

Pastor: fatherjoseph@bendbroadband.com / joekunel55@gmail.com

Facebook: St. Joseph Parish / Instagram: st._josephparish

Director of Religious Education ♦ Barbara Dalton

RCIA ♦ Jim Friese



Confessions

Wednesdays: 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Saturdays: 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

(other times by appointment)

Anointing of the Sick

Contact Fr. Joseph for this Sacrament

- ♦ DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET AND CENACLE GROUP: Every Monday after the 8 a.m. Mass.
- ♦ FRIDAY ROSARY at 11:30 a.m., MASS at 12:00 p.m., EXPOSITION of the Blessed Sacrament immediately following Mass, EUCHARISTIC ADORATION 1–2 p.m., BENEDICTION AND REPOSITION



Baptisms

Baptisms will be held on Saturdays.

Parents of children to be baptized must be registered members of the parish 6 months prior to baptism.

A Baptismal Preparation Class is mandatory for both parents and godparents.

For more information, call the Parish Office.

Marriages

Couples need to make an appointment with Fr. Joseph 6 months before the proposed date.

A Marriage Preparation Course is mandatory.

MASS INTENTIONS / DAILY READINGS

The practice of requesting a Mass to be offered for loved ones, living or deceased, is a beautiful and wonderful part of our Catholic tradition.

👉 Please Call the Parish Office to Have a Mass Intention Reserved 👈

Monday	12/25/2023	9:00 a.m.	Stuart MacDonald (D)	Is 52:7-10; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18
Tuesday	12/26/2023	8:00 a.m.	No Daily Mass	Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22
Wednesday	12/27/2023	12:00 p.m.	No Daily Mass	1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Thursday	12/28/2023	8:00 a.m.	Dolores Myers (D)	1 Jn 1:5-2:2; Mt 2:13-18
Friday	12/29/2023	12:00 p.m.	Jim Friese (L)	1 Jn 2:3-11; Lk 2:22-35
Saturday	12/30/2023	5:00 p.m.	Anne MacDonald (D)	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Col 3:12-21; Lk 2:22-40
Sunday	12/31/2023	9:00 a.m.	Andrea Vandehey(D)	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Col 3:12-21; Lk 2:22-40
Sunday	12/31/2023	12:00 p.m.	Parishioners of St Joseph (L)	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Col 3:12-21; Lk 2:22-40

(L) Living ♦ (D) = Deceased

Today's Homily: A "Christmas Message"

More than 2,000 years ago, the world lived its first Christmas. The Messiah whose coming was announced for thousands of years had finally arrived but not showing His majesty and power as was expected. Instead, He arrived clothed in poverty in a stable in a manger. When Jesus was born, the local authorities didn't even know that the King of Kings had been born into the world. All four weeks of Advent we have been waiting and praying and preparing ourselves spiritually for the coming blessings of Christmas. And now Christmas is here.

Christmas is finally here. Today the angels are bringing us the good news of great joy for all the people, for to us is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Christmas is the meeting of heaven and earth, the moment when the eternal God enters our broken world as both fully God and fully human—the fulfillment of the hopes and prophecies of millennia.

We celebrate Christmas with great rejoicing because Christmas is the Feast of God's sending us a Savior: God undertook the Incarnation of Jesus as God-Man to save us from the bondage of sin. The purpose of the incarnation is given in John 3:16: **"God so loved the world that He sent His only Son so that everyone who believes in Him may not die, but have eternal life."**

Christmas is the Feast of God's sharing His love with us: Jesus, as our Savior, brought the "good news" that our God is a loving, forgiving, merciful and rewarding God and not a judgmental, cruel, and punishing God. He demonstrated by His life and teaching how God our Heavenly Father loves us, forgives us, provides for us and rewards us. All His miracles were signs of this Divine Love. Jesus' final demonstration of God's love for us was His death on the cross to atone for our sins and to make us children of God.

Each Christmas reminds us that sharing love with others is our Christian duty and every time we do that, Jesus is reborn in our lives. Hence, let us allow Jesus to be reborn in our hearts and lives, not only during Christmas, but every day, so that he may radiate the light of His presence from within us as sharing and selfless love, expressed in compassionate words and deeds, unconditional forgiveness, the spirit of humble service, and overflowing generosity.

Christmas is the Feast of the Emmanuel (God living with us and within us): Christmas is the feast of the Emmanuel because God in the New Testament is a God who continues to live with us in all the events of our lives as the "Emmanuel" announced by the angel to Mary.

God humbles Himself to become one of us, to teach us about Himself and show us how to live, love, and serve Him. In doing so, the eternal Son revealed the Father to us. Jesus lowered Himself to bring us something we could never reach for ourselves.

We celebrate the Incarnation of God as a baby today as good news because we have a Divine Savior. As our Savior, Jesus liberated us from slavery to sin by His suffering, death and Resurrection, and He atoned for our sins.

We live in a broken world. So, every Christmas reminds us that **we need a Savior every day,** to free us from our evil addictions and unjust, impure and uncharitable tendencies. This Christmas also challenges us to accept Jesus in the manger as our saving God and personal Savior and to surrender our lives to Him, allowing Him to rule our hearts and lives every day in the New Year.

Our God, the true savior, is with you and me. Therefore, let us sing praises and say, "Glory to God in the highest." Let your life and mine bring peace to all people of good will. Have a merry Christmas!

December—Month of the Immaculate Conception

Advent



The fourth week of Advent we light the final purple candle, symbolizing Love. It is also known as the "Angels Candle." It reminds us of the message of the Angels: "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men." This marks the final week of prayer and penance as we wait for the birth of our Savior.

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Daily Mass

There will be no Daily Mass on **Tuesday, December 26th, and Wednesday, December 27th.** Daily Mass will resume on **Thursday, December 28th.**

A decorative graphic for Christmas and New Year's Mass Times featuring a garland of red and white ornaments and greenery at the top and bottom. The text "Christmas & New Year's Mass Times" is centered in a bold, black font.

Sunday	December 24th	5 p.m.	Family Vigil Mass
Sunday	December 24th	7 p.m.	Spanish Vigil Mass
Monday	December 25th	9 a.m.	Christmas Mass
Saturday	December 30th	5 p.m.	Vigil Mass
Sunday	December 31st	9 a.m.	Sunday Mass
Sunday	December 31st	12 p.m.	Spanish Mass
Monday	January 1st	8 a.m.:	Daily Mass

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Knights of Columbus

As everyone knows, The Knights of Columbus have a raffle during their 1st Sunday Pancake Breakfast. Please keep them in mind for donation of your gently used items. You can drop them off at the Parish Office, or contact **George Gerke.**

Calendars

The 2024 Calendars are available in the Narthex. Thank you to **Prineville Funeral Home** and the **Edgerly Family** for supplying these for the Parish.

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Offertory Envelopes

Offertory envelopes for 2024 are in the Narthex. If you do not currently receive envelopes but would like to, please contact the Parish Office.

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A Christmas Gift From Fr. Joseph

For Christmas, Fr. Joseph is gifting parishioners the books *The Rocking Chair Prophet* by Matthew Kelly and *Beautiful Eucharist*, a collection of stories and reflections about Jesus truly present in the Eucharist and present in our lives. These are available in the Narthex.



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A Lifeline for Marriage

Retrouvaille helps couples through difficult times in their marriages. It is designed to provide the tools to help get your marriage back on track, the opportunity to rediscover each other, and examine your lives together in a new and positive way.

This program has helped tens of thousands of couples. Retrouvaille is for any couple who would like to rediscover their marriage and improve communication.

Visit www.helpourmarriage.org for program information and emotional testimonials.

For confidential information or to register for the January 26–28, 2024 weekend at Our Lady of Peace Retreat Center in Beaverton, Oregon, call (503) 225-9191.

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Inviting All Young Adults:

Diocesan Lenten Retreat, February 17–18, 2024

Sacrificial Love:

The Redemption of Suffering, Featuring Bishop Liam Cary

Registration fees: \$85/Single; \$125/Married Couple. Registration Deadline: **February 11, 2024 at the** Cascade View Retreat Center, in Powell Butte, OR. For more information or to register, go to: DioceseofBaker.org. (Supported by the Bishop's Annual Appeal.)

