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VISITATION PARISH MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME _____ PHONE _____

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Check One: ☐ New Registration ☐ Change of Address ☐ Moving Out of Parish ☐ Want Envelopes

Please drop Membership Form into the offertory basket or mail to Rectory. 814-536-6110

Church of the Visitation
of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Rectory Phone: 536-6110
E-Mail: visitationjtown@dioceseaj.org
Website: www.visitationbvmchurch.com
Fax: 536-3709

Fourth Sunday of Advent,
December 22nd, 2024

MASS SCHEDULE	
MONDAY -	Advent Weekday Private Mass James Rován (Req. by Paul & Sandy Beiter)
TUESDAY -	Christmas Eve 4:00 PM - Deacon John & Sally Sroka (Req. by Family)
6:00 PM -	Charlie Kerrigan (VPM) (Req. by Shirley Machowski)
WEDNESDAY -	The Nativity of the Lord 9:00 AM - Living and Deceased Members of Visitation Parish
THURSDAY -	2nd Day Within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord Private Mass Vickie Schmidt (Req. by Theodore Tomera)
FRIDAY -	3rd Day Within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord 12:05 PM - Francis John Beaujon (Req. by Family)
SATURDAY -	Vigil of The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph 4:00 PM - Edward Molchany (Req. by Pauline Molchany)
SUNDAY -	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph 9:00 AM - Pro Populo

SANCTUARY CANDLE
Merry Christmas to Frank & Elizabeth Mateljan
Req. by daughter, Barbara Vedock

1127 McKinley Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15905

Rev. John J. Slovikovski, PhD, Pastor
Mrs. Maureen Clark, DRE
Mrs. Kathleen Bumbernick, DMM
Mr. David Kozak, Chairperson, PC
Ms. Catherine Bennett, Secretary
Mr. Joseph Martella, Vice-Chairperson, PC
Mr. Steve Myers, Chairperson, FC
Ms. Chris Houghton, Maintenance

Rectory Office Hours: Monday through
Friday, 9:00AM - 3:00PM

IN LOVING MEMORY: The Sanctuary Lamp is available for your intentions by calling the parish office. Please attempt to request your intentions as early as possible. A \$10 donation is suggested.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE: Beginning in Advent, Confessions will be heard from 6:30 until 7:00 PM on Wednesday Evenings. DURING THE JUBILEE YEAR, CONFESSIONS WILL BE HEARD FROM 3:00 PM until 3:40 PM THE FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH. Confession may ALWAYS be arranged with Fr. John personally by calling the rectory office. Please avail yourselves to this life-giving sacrament!

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE: Scheduled no less than nine months prior to the date of marriage. Four preparation sessions with the pastor, as well as all diocesan requirements, must be met. All Catholic candidates for Marriage must be registered, practicing members of a parish at least 6 months prior to scheduling the wedding. There are NO EXCEPTIONS.

INFANT BAPTISM: Baptisms are generally celebrated during one of the Sunday Liturgies. Pre-baptismal instructions must be completed by the parents at least 3 weeks prior to the celebration of the sacrament. Catholic godparents must obtain a letter of eligibility from their pastors four weeks in advance. Baptisms are never celebrated during the Season of Lent. ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Celebrated after any Sunday Mass as requested and as a parish during the Easter Season.

MEMBERSHIP: Forms are located on the back page of the bulletin (or on the parish website) to be filled out and sent to the parish. Registrations are also welcome by phone.

\$\$\$ INCOME \$\$\$
 Collection - December 15, 2024

Loose Money.....	\$335.00
Sunday Collection.....	\$2534.00
Immaculate Conception.....	\$122.00
Christmas Flowers.....	\$942.00
Sanctuary Candle.....	\$30.00

TOTAL: \$3963.00

Let us continue to pray for the members of our parish community who serve in the military, as well as for the sick, elderly and homebound members of our parish especially:

Anonymous Petitioners, Pat Balagusz, Ralph Blair, David Clark, Ronald Cleaver, Dolores Danner, Francis Dietz, Dorothy Fisher, Barbara Fox, Paul Harnish, Catherine Heinlein, Mary Carol Hill and children, Donna Johnson, Gianna Kniss, Karen Kohan, Betsy Konar, Marylee Konicky, Madeleine Krueger, Gaile Krumenacker, Victoria Leflie, Michael Letzo, Joanne Macri, Patricia Mainhart, Marianne Mangiafico, Pat Meagher, Myla Minner, Pauline Molchany, Larry Oravetz, Anna Petro, Francis Petro, Jean Petroro, Anna Marie Pfeil, Maria Petro-Sanders, Mia Bella Rastall, Stacy Roberts, Sean Rován, Leonard Russell, Stephen Sanders, Jennifer Schellhammer, Rose Sigg, Allegra Slick, Father John Slovickovski, Shirley Slovickovski, Megan Varnecky, Christi Vavrek, Carrie Young

Please join us in remembering members of our parish family who celebrate their birthdays the week of December 23rd to December 29th:



Scott Lorditch	Phillippa Kraft
Patricia Bernardo	Noah Rastall
Lois Slivinsky	Charles Stephens
Ava Bolinger	William Fagan
Janice Percosky	Stephen Smitley

For the Good of the Vineyard and Our Particular Part of It

The 2025 Yearly Calendars of Prizes are now available! Beginning this weekend and through the end of December, we will be selling them in the main vestibule of the Church. This is our last yearly fundraiser and IT IS ESSENTIAL TO DO WELL IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN OUR FINANCIAL STABILITY. Please

consider purchasing at least one for yourself, perhaps others as gifts (Christmas, birthday, etc.) It would also be helpful if you would consider taking an (some) additional calendar (s) to sell. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS LAST IMPORTANT FUNDRAISER FOR 2024).

Home Visits with the Eucharist - If you or someone you know cannot come to Church and would like to receive the Eucharist, please either fill out the form on the parish website or call the parish office and give your name to the secretary. We will be certain that you or your friend or loved one will receive the Lord regularly as you rightly deserve.

Polish Christmas Carols - All Saints Parish in Boswell will host their annual singing of Polish Christmas Carols on Sunday, January 5th, at 2:00 PM at the church (325 Quemahoning Street, Boswell). The hymns will be sung by their Polish choir. Following the singing of hymns by the parish Polish choir, there will be benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and refreshments. For more information, please call the parish office at 814-629-5551.

Unique Ethnic Bus Tour - Queen of Angels Parish in Central City will host a bus pilgrimage on Saturday, January 11th to visit the Nationality Rooms at the University of Pittsburgh as well as two historic ethnic parishes. The Nationality Rooms, uniquely adorned with accurate architecture and furnishings from thirty-one different nationalities, are a true treasure of Western Pennsylvania. Following the tour, Mass will be celebrated at the “Polish Cathedral of Pittsburgh,” Immaculate Heart of Mary Church after which there will be a tour of historic St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church in Pittsburgh’s Greenfield neighborhood. The cost is \$70 per person and includes dinner. Bus pick-up locations are in Central City, Boswell and Latrobe. To register, please call the parish at (814) 754-5224.

Jumpstarting Jubilee 2025 – Advent Love

The fourth Advent candle symbolizes love. Our renewed sense of hope that accompanies the Jubilee Year results in a commitment to love one another. The Jubilee Year offers the opportunity to be “ambassadors of hope” through loving service. Join in the efforts to serve the

poor offered by your parish. See what outreach ministries such as Catholic Charities have to offer.

The parish office will be closed from 12:00 PM on Monday, December 23rd until 9:00 AM on Friday, December 27th, in observance of the Christmas holiday.



From the Pastor's Desk:

This week we begin the Fourth week of Advent which runs very short since the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord falls on Wednesday this year. This not a reason to grow lazy in terms of the our commitment to Advent preparation in a spirit of eager expectation. The fourth Advent candle represents love, the love that we are expecting in the Incarnation, that is, the “Word made flesh” in Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem. It is also the love that we show toward one another, especially now that we are so very proximate to our celebration of Christmas. Of course we imagine the warmth of the hearth and the loving gatherings in homes around our Christmas trees and Christmas feasts; however some persons are not so fortunate. Some people do not have a place to call home, some find themselves alone at Christmas. The suffering of aloneness can take many forms: A poor widow who has no one to celebrate with, a family that is broken due to some unresolved hurt feelings, a young man unemployed and on the street suffering in the cold, a woman victimized from a fragmented relationship who finds herself in a shelter, a twelve year old girl who is responsible for caring for her seven brothers and sisters because her father, a single parent, is away working two jobs to provide for their most basic needs, the old man who snarls if you trespass his lawn or turn around in his driveway, the person beside you at Church to comes alone and leaves alone whom no one ever addresses...you know the list could go on and on. How we would like to forget these disturbing images, but they are more than that – they are realities that exist right under our noses. But if we are to be Advent people of hope, we need to bring hope into the lives of these vulnerable and less fortunate people. We may not be able to reach out to them in a physical way *right now*, but as we pray in these coming days, and on the feast of Christmas itself, we can remember them, and ask the Lord Jesus Christ to bring hope into their lives. It is then that we truly share the gifts of hope, joy, peace, and love that we have been given during this Advent season. It is then the “Joy to the World” that we sing on either Christmas morn or its eve will be authentic. I ask you my dear friends of Visitation Parish, to take these words to heart as you prepare to welcome the Christ child into your hearts and into your lives – not as just a symbol, but as a truly loving presence.

From Pope Francis to the Pew:

Last week, in his *Sunday Angelus* message, Pope Francis prayed with the bishops, priests, seminarians, deacons, consecrated persons, and seminarians during his Apostolic Journey to Ajaccio on the occasion of the conference: “LA RELIGIOSITÉ POPULAIRE EN MÉDITERRANÉE.” During his reflection he asked the group to reflect upon the question: How can I live out my discipleship?” Although his response was geared toward their unique religious vocation, I do believe that two of his insights are helpful for all us. Therefore I would like to share them with you in a modified fashion. First, the pope instructed the group to “care for yourself.” This is extremely important for all of us. This includes a time set aside daily for prayer (with the Lord, his blessed Mother and the Saints) and the Eucharist and for dialogue with the Lord, each one according to his or her own spirituality and style. Also, one should set aside some moments of solitude, have a brother or sister with whom you can freely share what is in your heart – for some this is a spiritual director, for others this is a trusted friend, spouse, sibling, etc. Also, one should be certain to make certain that one avails oneself to the

Sacrament of Reconciliation (go to a regular basis). I believe that EVERYONE should receive the sacrament of Penance AT LEAST once every three months. We should also care for ourselves by spending time with each other– we must never isolate ourselves. Community is important. Second, the pope instructed the group to “care for others.” We must always be a source of consolations to others, sharing the compassion that Christ has shown to us. We must always listen to others and be close to them We must encounter people where they are and celebrate them for who they are. Also, and perhaps most importantly, we should always be merciful, sharing the forgiveness that we ourselves have received from God. The Pope concluded by reminding the group that their lives (as should ours) should always be filled with Joy. ***This week the **Wednesday Audience** was very simple and conveyed by another official within the Vatican. The test read as follows: Dear brothers and sisters: We now begin a new series of catechesis for the Holy Year on the Jubilee theme of “Jesus Christ our Hope.” Today we reflect on the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ genealogy, which remind us that his life and identity belong to a greater history that embraces his ancestry, his family and the faith of the entire people of Israel. The presence of four Gentile women in Matthew’s genealogy reminds us that Jesus was ultimately sent to be the Savior of all peoples. The birth of Jesus from the Virgin Mary is itself a sign of a new beginning for our human family. As Christmas approaches, let us give thanks for our own genealogy, and renew our commitment to embody the gifts of reconciliation, peace and hope which our Lord brought into this world by his Incarnation.

WELCOMING NEW AND FORMER MEMBERS TO OUR SUNDAY LITURGIES: This Advent we hope to increase our identity as a welcoming parish by inviting parishioners who have not been with us for a while especially since COVID to come home to pray with us again AND if we know of anyone who is searching for a parish to join our family. A family is only as strong as is its weakest member, **BE A STRONG AMBASSADOR FOR OUR PARISH BY INVITING SOMEONE TO PRAY WITH US ON A REGULAR BASIS.** Remember, the future life of our community is in YOUR hands.

Jubilee 2025 – News and Notes: Ministers of Hospitality are being recruited currently. Remember, we have been designated a HOLY SITE for the Jubilee YEAR and we need to make potential pilgrims feel welcome at our weekend liturgies. If you are interested, please contact Fr. John. **We really need you. - especially fo the 4:00 PM Mass. Can you spend just 15 minutes before / after Mass to welcome vistors to pray with us! PLEASE!!!** **Opening Liturgy for the Jubilee Year:** The opening liturgy for the Jubilee Year will be held at 2:00 PM on Sunday, Dec. 29, 2024 at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona. All parishes in the diocese have been asked to send representatives to this Mass. If you are interested in being part of the car pool to attend this memorable liturgy, please contact Fr. John. ***This Mass is very important to me personally, you won’t be disappointed if you attend.*** Attendees need to let us know no later than Monday, December 23rd. Thank you.