

Welcome to *St. James Catholic Parish!*
 We are very glad you have joined us for the
 public work of the People of God—
 to worship God.
 Ask if you need anything.

Saint James Catholic Church of Cortland

Church Street Address: 500 W 1st St.
 Mailing/Rectory: 155 N Lincoln Ave.,
 Cortland, NE 68331.
 Rectory Phone: 402-798-7335.
 Church Office Phone: 402-798-0255.
 Office e-mail: stjamescortland@gmail.com
 Website: www.stjamescortland.com
 Facebook: [St James Catholic Church of Cortland](https://www.facebook.com/StJamesCatholicChurchofCortland)

Fr. Thomas Lux, Pastor -
 Urgency: 308-991-4991

Deadline for bulletin announcements/
 schedule requests: **Wednesday 12 pm (N)**
 to bulletinstjames@gmail.com.

Eucharistic Exposition Adoration
Thursday evenings, 7:00pm to 8:00pm.
 Please **Sign up** in the Church entryway.
 7:00 pm- Exposition.
 7:15 to 7:45 pm- Adoration.
 7:50 pm— Simple Reposition.



NATIONAL
Eucharistic Revival

Blessed Epihany!
 The wise person seeks Him who
 invites them with His Love.





EPIPHANY OF THE LORD + JANUARY 7, 2024

*We saw his star at its rising
 and have come to do him homage. - Mt 2:2*

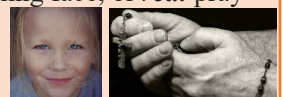
Sunday Obligation Masses- Saturday 5:00 pm Sunday 8:00 & 10:30 am	Weekday Masses- Check the current bulletin for changes. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday @ 7:00 am. Wednesday @ 6:30 pm. Saturday @ 8:00 am Holy Day of Obligation Masses: See the bulletin.
Confessions 30 min. before Sunday & Holy Days Masses 20 minutes before Daily Masses & by Appointment Call to schedule 308.991.4991.	
CCD- (Religious Education)- Sundays 9:00 to 10:15am during school year Kindergarten thru 8 th Grades Classes in the Parish Hall. High School Class in North Building.	
ST. JAMES EMERGENCY SUPPLIES: A duffle bag on top of the coat rack shelf, by the women's restroom, contains basic medical supplies for use in case of an emergency. Equipment & supplies checked monthly. Questions: Lori Johnson. The AED is in a cabinet near the <i>Holy Family</i> & <i>St. Joseph</i> statues.	



MASS INTENTIONS					MASS READINGS— Follow the Church's liturgical life. Read the scriptures before Mass. Try to join 1 or more weekday Masses.				
SJ= St. James Church. GCRC= Gold Crest Retirement Community-Adams									
EPIPHANY OF THE LORD									
Sat.	Jan 6	5:00 pm	SJ	Healing of Micki Hartman	EPIPHANY OF THE LORD, S				
Sun.	Jan 7	8:00 am	SJ	Gary Wagner+	Is 60: 1-6/ Ps 72: 1-2. 7-8. 10-11. 12-13/ Eph 3: 2-3a. 5-6/ Mt 2: 1-12				
		10:30 am	SJ	For the People of St. James Parish					
Mon.	Jan 8	7:00 am	SJ	All Souls Day Intentions +	BAPTISM OF THE LORD, F:				
		11:15 am	Villa	Marie Home & School Students & Staff	Is 55: 1-11 or 1 Jn 5: 1-9/ Is 12: 2-3. 4bcd. 5-6 (3)/ Mk 1: 7-11				
Tue.	Jan 9	7:00 am	SJ	Ben Amen	Ord. Wkdy. (W/ Bap. of the Lord on Mon. of 1 st Wk. in Ord. Time the Mon rdgs. to may be joined to those of Tue. so that the opening of ea. book will be read. Mon.: 1 Sm 1: 1-8/ Ps 116: 12-13. 14-17. 18-19/ Mk 1: 14-20. Tue.: 1 Sm 1: 9-20/ 1 Sm 2: 1. 4-5. 6-7. 8abcd/ Mk 1: 21-28				
Wed.	Jan 10	4:00 pm	GCRC	Bass Family	Ordinary Weekday:				
		6:30 pm	SJ	Pfingstein Family Members	1 Sm 3: 1-10. 19-20/ Ps 40: 2 & 5. 7-8a. 8b-9. 10/ Mk 1: 29-39				
Thu.	Jan 11	7:00 am	SJ	All Souls Day Intentions +	Ordinary Weekday: 1 Sm 4: 1-11/ Ps 44: 10-11. 14-15. 24-25/ Mk 1: 40-45				
Fri.	Jan 12	7:00 am	SJ	All Souls Day Intentions +	Ordinary Weekday: 1 Sm 8: 4-7. 10-22a/ Ps 89: 16-17. 18-19/ Mk 2: 1-12				
Sat.	Jan 13	8:00 am	SJ	Phil & Rita + Baumel	Ord. Wkdy./BVM/Hilary , bp, dr: 1 Sm 9:1-4. 17-19; 10: 1/ Ps 21: 2-3. 4-5. 6-7/ Mk 2:13-17				
SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME									
Sat.	Jan 13	5:00 pm	SJ	Chief Grace Adeyeye+	SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME:				
Sun.	Jan 14	8:00 am	SJ	For the People of St. James Parish	1 Sm 3: 3b-10. 19/ Ps 40: 2. 4. 7-8. 8-9. 10 (8a. 9a)/ 1 Cor 6: 13c-15a. 17-20/ Jn 1: 35-42				
		10:30 am	SJ	Thomas & Josephine Grof +					

“...THE NAME THAT IS ABOVE EVERY OTHER NAME...”
  In the computer world, we receive a feeling from an **icon** that expresses to our imagination what the printed words cannot do, such as a “smiley face” or “praying hands”; but we are even more affected by seeing the actual thing, a *real* smiling face, or *real* praying hands. These real “icons” affect us so deeply & personally, seeing them in others incites us to recreate them for all around us to see.

As I write this, on the **Feast of the Holy Name** (1/3), Paul's entire verse is:
 “Because of this, God greatly exalted Him & bestowed on him the name that is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven & on earth & under the earth,that Jesus Christ is Lord.....” (Phil 2:9-11)
 When I was a child in Catholic school, the nuns taught us to **bow our heads** whenever we heard the **name of Jesus**. As an adult, I still do. Help me to ‘recreate’ this icon at every Mass you attend, bowing your head, showing that the power, the glory, & the love & friendship of God are completely bound up in that name: **JESUS!** *Love in the Spirit. -Diana M., St. James Parish Eucharistic Revival Parish Point Person*



AROUND THE LINCOLN DIOCESE (See www.lincolndiocese.org) **& BEYOND:**

Religious Sisters Vocation Prayer Calendar 2023 - Jan 7 - 13

Sr. Mary Cecilia from **Philippines** Professed *Holy spirit Adoration (Pink) Sisters*

Please pray for young women discerning a call to the Sisterhood in Motherhouses in the **Diocese of Lincoln**.

Pray for the Seminarian of the Week - Jan 7 - 13

Rev. Mr. Jonah Brox *St. Gregory the Great Seminary* Theology 4
Parish: *St. Teresa, Lincoln*

Please pray for young men discerning a call to the priesthood in the **Diocese of Lincoln**.



HOPE OF THE POOR



Each month Hope of the Poor gives a box of food to each family at the dump. Shortly before giving out the boxes they gather the people together and build them up, show them their dignity, and remind them that their life matters and God loves them.

You may put the monies you have collected (or convert your collected monies into a check) in the **Hope of the Poor** cardboard boxes or in an envelope marked **HOPE OF THE POOR** in our regular collection.

Thank you! Check out : <https://hopeofthepoor.org/>.

The **Diocesan Pilgrimages to Mexico City** have worked w/ those served by *Hope for the Poor*. If you would like to join one of the Diocese of Lincoln pilgrimages, please email: olgeucharisticpilgrimage@gmail.com.

In marriage, communication is more than just talking. At some point, did you stop sharing about the things that were important to you? Improving a marriage takes time & a conscious effort to learn about your spouse.

Growing closer in a marriage does not happen automatically.

RETRouvaille

Retrouvaille is a marriage program dedicated to helping couples grow closer & develop a stronger bond.

For more information about our upcoming **February 16-18, 2024 Retrouvaille Weekend**, go to <https://helpourmarriage.org/>

2024 MARIAN CAMP

Counselor Application and Camper Registration Open

JANUARY 20

Financial Aid Applications Available Dec 11-Jan 8

mariancamp.html

NOW Available on Formed:
What's your resolution this year?

Dr. Tim Gray welcomes Dr. Scott Hefelfinger, Assistant Professor of Theology in the Augustine Institute Graduate School of Theology, to celebrate one year of the **Augustine Institute Show!** From his background on moral & spiritual theology, Dr. Hefelfinger will offer a **reflection on forming good spiritual habits for the new year.**

Formed resources for *Christmas & year around:*
GO TO **FORMED.ORG**, &/OR DOWNLOAD THE FORMED APP. ENTER YOUR ZIP CODE. FIND OUR PARISH.



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PINK SISTERS! Attention all diocesan, parish & school groups: are you looking for an interesting & uplifting activity for your group in 2024? Consider learning more about the *Pink Sisters!* The Sisters invite you to come to their community meeting room to hear a short 30-45 minute presentation on the order & then to make a visit in their beautiful chapel. Or, if it's more convenient, the presentation will come to you wherever it works best for you! (*Note: the presentation can be geared toward different ages & the length can be adjusted to fit any group's needs.) This is the **50th anniversary year** of the Sisters coming to Lincoln, & it's a great year to spread the word about this wonderful gem located in the center of Lincoln. For more info., contact: Joan Tasler, *Pink Sisters Auxiliary P.R. Chair* at 402-310-9682 or JFTASLER@gmail.com.

YOU ARE INVITED TO ALPHA! Join us for a great meal/conversation with others who are exploring life & faith; no strings attached.

Alpha is a chance to explore life & the Christian faith in a friendly, open & informal environment. If you come, we won't call you after, write, or ask you to pick up the check—the ball is completely in your court. What do you have to lose? **Monday Evenings beginning January 8 at St. Joseph Church, 1940 S. 77th St., Lincoln** in Resurrection Hall from 6-8 pm **Dinner provided. Babysitting avail. by request. RSVP or questions to michele-chambers@cdoline.net or text/call 402-613-9269 or <https://www.signupgenius.com/o/20F0E4DA4AA283-46957518-alpha>**

MOTHER DAUGHTER PROGRAM Sunday, February 4th from 1:30-4:30 pm. Registration is now live for our only scheduled mother/daughter program of the 2023-24 school year. It will be held at St. Patrick's parish in Lincoln, with a virtual option available as well. This program is for 9-13 year old girls & their mom or another supportive adult. More information & registration can be found at <https://lincolndiocese.regfox.com/motherdaughter>

HEARING THE WORD: UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE: The **Emmaus Institute for Biblical Studies** is accepting registrations for this 5-week course offered in person on Monday or Tuesday evenings (6:30-8:30pm) **beginning Jan. 8, & available online** (typically posted the following day, w/ class notes). Taught by Emmaus president Dr. Vern Steiner, *Hearing the Word* is a **practical course** designed to equip students with the tools to read the Bible with understanding. Learn more & register at www.EmmausInstitute.net.



"Finding a heartfelt-love we most desire in Marriage."
Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience February 9-11 in Lincoln, NE. For questions, or to find out more about a Virtual Encounter Weekend, contact: Brenda & Gary Granger: 402-370-5839. Space is limited, so **reserve your weekend early.** We need **advance registration.** Call right-away. Contact Gary & Brenda 303.604.6202. For more information about *Worldwide Marriage Encounter* please visit www.wwme.org.



Looking for a retreat that works for you? Check out some upcoming retreats at [Our Lady of Good Counsel Retreat House in Waverly.](#)

✦ 4-Day, or 8-Day Ignatian Retreat w/ Fr. Barak or Sarina Stokes (on Jan. 8-11) Jan. 8-11, Jan. 11-15, or Jan. 8-15,

✦ Laborers in the Vineyard Retreat for Men on January 12-13.

Read more/register at www.goodcounselretreat.org, QR Code, email office@goodcounselretreat.org or call 402-786-2705.



Knights of Columbus THE **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL OF ST. JAMES-CORTLAND** will pay for part of your **Retreat** Registration for any member of **St. James Parish - adults & youths.** Thank you to the **Knights** for supporting Retreats.

Pope's JANUARY 2024 Intention: For The Gift Of Diversity In The Church-

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit helps us recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community, & to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church. *Thanks for praying!*

NATIONAL MARRIAGE WEEK Feb. 7-14 and WORLD MARRIAGE SUNDAY, Feb. 11, 2024 is coming up! Looking for ideas of how our parish could celebrate!

10TH ANNUAL CATHOLICS AT THE CAPITOL DAY OF ADVOCACY- Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. St. Mary's Church, 14th & K St, Lincoln. Info & sign up at NECATHOLIC.ORG

Jesus, I trust in You! **Mary, Mother of the God. Pray for us!**



For Men & Women seeking healing from Divorce: LINCOLN SESSION-

The *Surviving Divorce* program was created to bring hope & healing to divorced & separated Catholics. This 12 week program will be leader facilitated & features 30-minute video segments that cover topics of shock, denial, anger, grief, guilt, forgiveness, money, kids, annulment, & much more. The next session begins **February 6, 2024** & will be held at **John XXIII Diocesan Center**, Lincoln, NE from **7-8:30 pm.**

You may register by contacting the **Office of Family Life & Discipleship** at: 402-473-0620, or familylifeoffice@cdolinc.net

Dance Dance Dance! Join us for dancing & a whole lot of fun & good food **Feb 9th** for the **Villa Marie Annual Dance & Auction**

Fundraiser. Dress in an outfit from your favorite era: are you a medieval princess, or a 70's go-go dancer, an 80's Rockstar, a prancing poodle skirt & leather jacket couple, or just going for the "I just left the

office in 2023" look? Whatever you decide, make it fun. Tickets & our 60th anniversary merchandise on sale. Pre-orders available at the dance.

Join us for **Villa Marie** HOME & SCHOOL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN **DANCE / AUCTION FUNDRAISER** Sandhills Global Event Center (formerly Lancaster Event Center) 4100 N 84th St., Lincoln

Scan for Tickets & Silent Auction or onecau.se/villamdance60

Friday, February 9, 2024 6:00- 10:30 pm

Presented by: **Knights of Columbus Nebraska State Council**

National Eucharistic Pilgrimage heading to the **National Eucharistic Congress.** Join a **National Eucharistic Pilgrimage** next summer. The pilgrimage will consist of **4 cross-country eucharistic processions**, collectively **traversing the entire continental United States over a 2-month period.** Named the "**Serra Route**," after **St. Junipero Serra**, the patron saint of California, the **western route** is the longest of the planned pilgrimages & will begin in San Francisco. The pilgrimage will then **pass thru Ut, Co, Nebraska;** & Mo before **ending in Indianapolis.** Make plans to join the **weekend stops or the procession in route: 6/14-16, '24- North Platte, NE & 6/21-23, '24- Omaha, NE.**



AUG 20 - OCT 15 - NOV 12 - JAN 7 - FEB 4 - APR 7 - MAY 12

Villa Regina Motherhouse, 4100 SW 56th Street, Lincoln
Holy hours held at 12PM. Divine Mercy Sunday (Apr 7) will be held at 3PM.

NEBRASKA **Right to Life**
State affiliate to National Right to Life

A weekend of inspiration and activism

2024 Nebraska Walk For Life Gala & Nebraska Walk For Life

Friday, Jan. 26
6 p.m. at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel

Keynote Speaker
Melissa Ohden
Melissa Ohden, a survivor of an abortion attempt, is the founder of the Abortion Survivors Network. At the Gala, she will describe her journey that led her to pro-life activism and reuniting with her birth family. She will speak again the following morning at the UNL Student Union. Melissa's newest book will be released in time to be available at our Gala.

Saturday, Jan. 27
10 a.m. at the State Capitol, then UNL Student Union

Bake sale donations needed
Volunteers will be curbside 8-9 a.m. in front of the Student Union to accept donated baked goods for the NRL bake sale.

For Gala tickets or other information scan this QR code.



Archbishop George Lucas

Holy Mass will be held at 9 a.m. across from the Capitol at St. Mary's Catholic Church, 14th and K streets.

Celebrant is Archbishop George Lucas of Omaha and Homilist is Msgr. Thomas Fucinaro of Lincoln.

Mass is sponsored by Nebraska Catholic Conference.



Msgr. Thomas Fucinaro

THE MASS IS THE GREATEST PRAYER THAT CAN BE OFFERED. Jesus offered the Mass **once for all** at the Last Supper & on the Cross. He worships His Father in heaven for all eternity & is the celebrant of each Mass offered. **Mass may be offered for a variety of intentions** i.e. the repose of the soul of a deceased person, a living person, in thanksgiving, for a special intention, World Peace, greater glory of God, etc. **REQUEST THE OFFERING** of a Mass for your intention. **Usual stipends are \$10.** This is part of the support of a priest. A priest can offer Mass for free. Just ask. **THANK YOU** to all who requested a Mass be offered for your intention. You can request specific **dates.** 1st request gets the date. **Priests assigned w/out a parish, retired or in impoverished areas** would welcome your Mass intentions & stipends. Contact Fr. Lux if you wish to give Mass intentions for them.

LARGE NATIVITY AT CRISTO REY PARISH IN LINCOLN- 28' wide nativity scene to view at **Cristo Rey Parish.** Elaborately constructed it takes a week to construct. It depicts scenes from Bethlehem, Nazareth, Egypt & the Jerusalem Temple. Hosted at **Cristo Rey** since 2004. Donations will be given to the **St. Vincent de Paul Society** in Lincoln. Open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily **thru Jan. 7** at **Cristo Rey Church, 4245 J St., Lincoln.**

AROUND OUR PARISH

PARISH WEEKLY ACTIVITIES: <https://stjamescortland.com/>

Wed	Jan	11	7:00 pm	Parish Co. of Catholic Women Meeting moved to Thursday	Parish Hall
Friday	Jan	12	8:00 pm	AA - Hall Reserved	Parish Hall
Saturday	Jan	13	6:30 am	That Man Is You	Parish Hall

Each week, we choose what will be done with the **168 hours** we have available to us. Good **stewardship of time** means we will share some of that time **with God** in prayer, praise & thanksgiving, & some time **caring for the needs of others**.

OFFICE MANAGER NEEDED - ST. JAMES CATHOLIC PARISH OF CORTLAND: Interested in helping out our Parish by taking care of day-to-day needs in the office? Responsible for general administrative duties, *QuickBooks* knowledge a plus but can train. This is a paid position. Approximately 10-15 hours/week, could be more depending on availability.

Contact Father Lux.

Our 1st PCCW MEETING of 2024 is rescheduled to Thursday, January 11th at 7 pm due to some conflicts. We hope to see some new faces in 2024. Join us! -Denise

BRING BACK OFFERTORY FAMILIES, & DOOR GREETERS. SIGN UP TO BE USHERS, EXTRAORDINARY READERS, INSTALLED LECTORS OR INSTALLED ACOLYTES These are Parish Council recommendations. Use this link to indicate your interest in serving in one of these ways- **Volunteer Sign Up** (<https://forms.gle/zAuJVMZmcJPDvU3m9>)

TOTUS TUUS 2024 dates for St. James Parish - Cortland are July 20-26.

2024 PARISH CHURCH CALENDAR w/ feast days of 2024 are in Church entry. Supports *Extension Society* missions. NB. Error in phone no. **798-7335**. **THAT MAN IS YOU (TMIY)** session is entitled **Worthy of the Call** on Sat. at 6:30 a in parish hall. Men & women welcome.

ALUMINUM RECYCLING: Drop cans at the S.E. corner of **Vinton Automotive**. Spons. by K. of C.

THANK YOU TO ALL DONORS to refinish the **tabernacle** in 2-tone bright & satin of **\$4,000**. Current time for completion is 20-25 weeks. **Pray we find a loaner tabernacle to use during the refinishing. A great Eucharistic Renewal project - beautifying God's House.**

Stewardship of Treasure	
<i>As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. (1 Pt 4:10)</i>	
Parish Offering 12/31/23	
Adult Envelopes	\$1,133.00
Plate	\$40.00
Retired Priests	\$200.00
Christmas Offering	\$100.00
Solemnity of Mary	\$89.00
Hall Rental	\$50.00
Votive Candles	\$57.80
December Mass Stipends	\$210.00
Total Deposit	\$1,879.80

ONLINE GIVING TO OUR PARISH is easy to get started. **Ways to sign up:** On parish website www.stjamescortland.com click on **Online giving**.
OR Visit faithdirect.net/ne1020.
OR Call Faith Direct Customer Service at 866-507-8757.

GET A BOOK TO READ ABOUT THE EUCHARIST: Pick up **your gift** from St. James Parish in the **Church entry. Merry Christmas!**

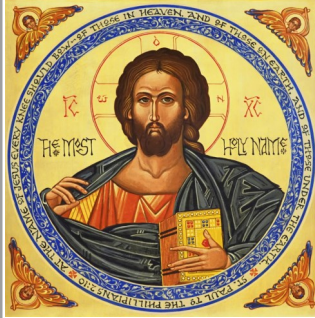
✠ **Beautiful Eucharist:** collection of reflections that delves into the profound mystery of Jesus' presence in the Eucharist.

✠ Brant Pitre's **Jesus & the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist** pairs together the Jewish Scriptures & Jewish tradition to frame the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper, & to provide a fresh look at the heart of Christian practice—the Eucharist..

✠ **The Word Among Us** with Daily Mass Readings, commentaries & other articles.

Prayer in Time of Drought-

Lord God, in the past you have given us rain in abundance, & you have also withheld it. We ask you now to look down upon us & bless us with the rain we so desperately need. We know that you are a God of mercy & compassion, & we trust that you will provide for us in our time of need. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL
 "My flesh for the life of the world"
 John 6:51

Thank you for your kind remembrances at Christmas including cards, goodies, Mass Intentions, prayers, Christmas liturgy celebrations, etc! May God bless you & yours & all of us. - Fr. Lux



Fr. Lux is available to talk to you if you are interested in the Catholic Faith – to know more about it or to start learning about it. We have studies we could do on different topics. Perhaps the *Bible Timeline* would be a good study. **If interested talk to Fr. Lux.**

Liturgical Ministers for Sundays & Holy Days of Obligation

	Jan 6-7, 2024	Jan 13-14	Jan 20-21	Jan 27-28	Feb 3-4
Reader	Diana McCown	Amy Larkins	Ron Eisenbarth	Diana McCown	Amy Larkins
Acolyte	(volunteer)	Kurt Larkins	Randy Eickmeier	(volunteer)	Kurt Larkins
Server 1	Braxton Skillett	(volunteers)	(volunteers)	(volunteers)	Braxton Skillett
Server 2	Easton Schilbitzki	(volunteers)	(volunteers)	(volunteers)	Easton Schilbitzki
Reader	Joe Vinton	Michelle Milke	Chris Hytrek	Jerry Lentfer	Joe Vinton
Acolyte	Scott Osterhaus	Chris Hytrek	Tony Sullivan	Scott Osterhaus	Chris Hytrek
Server 1	Rylan Hochstein	Sam Robinson	Mason Eickmeier	Carter Stieb	Simon Robinson
Server 2	Reid Hochstein	Sawyer Robinson	Carson Eickmeier	Asher Stieb	Andrew Oelke
Server 3	Brayden Kuhlman	Jax Peterson	Parker Eickmeier	Liam Dush	Spencer Robinson
Server 4	Hudson Kuhlman	Drake Peterson		Kyler Beck	Cooper Mason
Reader	Shirley Yates	Karl Gramann	Larry Etmund	Ginger Jelinek	Shirley Yates
Acolyte	Ron Boden	Ron Eisenbarth	Myron Heusinkvelt	Ron Boden	Ron Eisenbarth
Server 1	Sam Troxel	Hayden Nielson	Brady Troxel	Max Jacobson	Sam Troxel
Server 2	Mason Henn	Nolan Nielson	Ty Troxel	Finn Jacobson	Mason Henn
Server 3	Crew Dummer				Crew Dummer
Server 4					
Greeter	Paige Anderson	Lydia Dominy	Paige Anderson	Lydia Dominy	
Collection Counters	Julie Pfingsten / Laureen Ehmen	Jeanne Egger / Grace Benes	Jim Fuhrman / Theron Troxel	Kassie Ebberts/ Amy Argo	Julie Pfingsten / Laureen Ehmen

7 facts about the Wise Men you might not know



Adoration of the Magi. | Credit: El Greco/Public Domain

By [ACI Prensa](#) ACI Prensa Staff, Jan 6, 2024 / 04:00 am

On Jan. 6, the Catholic Church celebrates the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. On that day we commemorate the “manifestation” of the expected Messiah, who reveals himself to all the peoples of humanity, represented by the Three Wise Men who arrived in Bethlehem from the East.

The Gospel according to St. Matthew tells us that “on entering the house they saw the child with Mary, his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh” (Mt 2:11).

Here are seven facts that perhaps you didn’t know about the Three Wise Men and the Epiphany.

1. The Church celebrates three epiphanies.

The feast of the Three Kings is commonly called Epiphany, a word that in Greek means “manifestation” in the sense that God reveals himself and makes himself known.

However, the Church celebrates three manifestations of the life of Jesus as epiphanies: the Epiphany of the Magi from the East (manifestation to the pagans), the Epiphany of the Baptism of the Lord (manifestation to the Jews), and the Epiphany of the wedding at Cana (manifestation to his disciples).

2. It’s believed to be the second-oldest feast day.

The feast of the Epiphany is one of the oldest Christian feast days, most likely the second after Easter. It began in the East and then came to the West in the fourth

century.

It is said that originally Christians commemorated the three epiphanies on the same date. In some Eastern Churches, they even gave this feast day the celebratory character of the birth of Christ, but this aspect was diminished when the Roman feast day of Christmas was added in the fourth century.

In the Middle Ages, the Epiphany gradually became known more as the feast of the Three Wise Men. Currently, the Catholic Church celebrates the three epiphanies at different times on the liturgical calendar.

3. A saint determined the date

Studies maintain that Epiphany was set for Jan. 6 because this day commemorated the birth of Aion, the patron god of Alexandria, who was related to the sun god. It was also because winter solstice was celebrated on the same date in Egypt since ancient times.

St. Eusebius of Caesarea and St. Jerome in the fourth century — as well as St. Epiphanius in the sixth century — stated that the kings arrived to see the child Jesus before he was 2 years old.

However, St. Augustine (354 AD – 430 AD) maintained in his Epiphany sermons that they arrived on the 13th day after the birth of the Lord — i.e. Jan. 6 on the current calendar.

4. Kings by tradition

St. Matthew, the only one in the Bible who mentions the Magi, explains that they were from “the East,” an area that, for the Jews, was the territories of Arabia, Persia, or Chaldea. The easterners called doctors “magi.”

“Magus” in the Persian language meant “priest,” and precisely the magi (“magoi” in Greek) were a caste of Persian or Babylonian priests. They did not know divine revelation like the Jews, but they studied the stars in their desire to seek God.

Tradition called the wise men “kings” in reference to Psalm 72 (10-11), which proclaims: “The kings of the West and the islands will pay tribute to him. The kings of Arabia and Ethiopia will offer him gifts. “All kings will bow down before him and all nations will serve him.”

This text is currently read in the U.S. Church as “May the kings of Tarshish and the islands bring tribute, the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. May all kings bow before him, all nations serve him.”

5. There could have been more than three

St. Leo the Great and St. Maximus of Turin in the fourth and fifth centuries,

respectively, speak of three magi, not because this was based on any tradition but perhaps because of the three gifts the evangelist describes.

In the first centuries there are pictorial representations in which two, four, six, and even eight magi appear. However, the oldest fresco of the adoration of the Magi dates back to the second century and is found in an arch of the Greek chapel in the Roman catacombs of Priscilla, and three appear there.

The Three Wise Men would have had material of a prophetic nature (some have suggested that they obtained it from an eastern Jewish community, such as that of Babylon) that allowed them to astronomically identify the birth of the “King of the Jews.”

They may have been especially motivated to see him because at the time it was expected that there would come a universal ruler from Israel.

In his book “Jesus of Nazareth,” Pope Benedict XVI explains: “We know from [Roman historians] Tacitus and Suetonius that speculation was rife at the time that the ruler of the world would emerge from Judah, an expectation that [the Jewish historian] Flavius Josephus applied to [the Roman emperor] Vespasian, thereby finding his way into the emperor’s favor (cf. De Bello Judaico III, 399-408).”

6. The origin of their names, physiognomies, and gifts

The names of the Magi do not appear in the holy Scriptures, but tradition has assigned them some. In a Paris manuscript from the late seventh century they are called Bitisarea, Melchor, and Gataspa, but in the ninth century they began to be referred to as Balthazar, Melchior, and Gaspar.

Melchior is generally depicted as an old white man with a beard representing Europe. He offers the child gold in recognition of the kingship of Christ. Gaspar (also called Casper or Kasper) represents Asia and brings incense representing the divinity of Jesus. Balthazar is usually depicted with dark skin because he comes from Africa. He gives the Savior myrrh, a substance used to embalm corpses and symbolizes the humanity of the Lord.

At the time when the Magi began to be described with these characteristics, there was no knowledge of America. Furthermore, all three refer to the stages of human growth: youth (Gaspar), maturity (Balthazar), and old age (Melchior).

7. The star may have been a conjunction of planets

Several hypotheses have been built around the star of Bethlehem that the Three Wise Men saw. It was previously said that it was a comet, but astronomical studies indicate that it was apparently due to the conjunction in the sky of the planets Saturn and Jupiter in the constellation of Pisces.

Thus, the Magi possibly decided to travel in search of the Messiah because, in ancient astrology, Jupiter was considered the star of the prince of the world, the constellation of Pisces as the sign of the end times, and the planet Saturn in the East as the star of Palestine.

In short, it is presumed that the “wise men of the East” understood that the Lord of the end times would appear that year in Palestine.

It is likely that the Three Wise Men knew some messianic prophecies of the Hebrew people and that is why they came to Jerusalem, to Herod’s palace, asking for the king of the Jews.

*This story **was first published** in 2021 by ACI Prensa, CNA’s Spanish-language news partner. It has been translated and adapted by CNA.*

ACI Prensa is the Catholic News Agency’s sister agency, which was founded in Lima, Peru, in 1980 by Fr. Adalbert Marie Mohm (†1986). In 1997, ACI Prensa launched the website www.aciprensa.com, which is the largest and most visited online source of Catholic news in Spanish. In 2014, [Eternal Word Television Network \(EWTN\)](http://www.ewtn.com) acquired Catholic News Agency and ACI Prensa. Since the merger, CNA and ACI Prensa have expanded their distribution platform. Now it is a service of [EWTN News Inc.](http://www.ewtn.com)

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The Magi: Misconceptions and Mythicism



JON SORENSEN • 1/6/2022

Today is the [Feast of the Epiphany](#), when Western Christians celebrate the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus. The account of the visit of the Magi can be found in [Matthew 2:1-18](#). According to Scripture, “wise men from the East” followed a star to Jesus’ location and then “fell down and worshipped him” (Matt. 2:11).

The traditional belief that there were three wise men is a development based on the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh recorded in Matthew 2:11. The identification of the wise men as kings may have developed from a reading of Psalm 72 that says, “May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him” ([v. 11](#)).

Most Nativity scenes include the Magi, but we know from [Scripture](#) that they did not arrive until later. Some Bible scholars suggest that this may not have occurred until up to a year and a half later, based on King Herod’s command in Matthew 2:16:

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men.

The fact that Herod had all the male children up to two years old killed suggests that some time had passed before he ascertained the age of the Christ child from the Magi. In any case, Matthew does not tell us exactly how much time elapsed between the birth of Jesus and their arrival.

According to the website [religoustolerance.org](#): “The Egyptian God Horus was born of the virgin Isis; as an infant, he was visited by three kings.” Of Hercules, Osiris, Bacchus, Mithras, Hermes, Prometheus, Perseus, and Horus, the site claims all of them had been “visited by ‘wise men’ during infancy.” In classic popular mythicist fashion, there are no primary source citations to back up these claims.

As I have already pointed out, Matthew’s Gospel is silent on the number and political status of the Magi. These are later developments in Christian tradition and not a matter of Gospel record. Because we know that these traditions arose from biblical inferences, we can say with confidence that they have nothing to do with pagan mythology.

Furthermore, of the pagan deities mentioned above, none of them was visited by three wise men or kings. The burden of proof is with the mythicists, and they will be hard pressed to deliver anything credible.

Some mythicists will also claim that, like Jesus’ birth, the births of certain pagan gods were heralded by a star in the east. Mythicist author and blogger [D.M. Murdock writes](#), “Rather than representing a ‘historical’ event surrounding the birth of a Jewish messiah, the star at the coming of the savior can be found in the myths of Egypt.”

Of the Magi, Pope Benedict XVI explains that it is possible these men were part of a Persian priesthood, or they could have been something else (see Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives, p. 94). Whoever they were, they were probably not Jewish. This point is significant, because even if there were a parallel here with some pagan god and the birth of Jesus, it makes sense that the Magi would recognize a sign familiar to them and respond to it. But there are no pagan parallels.

Some mythicists attempt to connect Sothis—a star that the ancient Egyptians believed to be significant—to the birth of Horus. However, this can be achieved only through a series of rigorous mental gymnastics.

The Egyptians most often connected the rising of Sothis (AKA Sirius) to the rising level of the Nile River, which was very important to them. The flooding of the Nile brought with it fertile soil necessary for farming (see the Oxford Guide to Egyptian Mythology, p. 256). In the astral realm, the goddess Isis was sometimes identified with Sothis, and her husband, Osiris, was identified with the constellation Orion. Their sexual union was said to have produced Horus (Oxford Guide, p. 171). Even if Jesus were an astrological deity as some mythicists claim, there is still no parallel here.

The other “star in the east” parallel claims are met with the same obstacle: little to no evidence. There are other accounts from antiquity that appeal to astrological events as a sign of some spiritual significance, but none of them plays out like the story of Jesus’ birth and the visit of the Magi.

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How to bless your home on the feast of Epiphany 2024



By Francesca Pollio Fenton CNA Staff, Jan 6, 2024 / 08:00 am



Have you ever walked past a door & seen what appears to be random letters & numbers written at the top? These letters & numbers actually

have a great significance.

Traditionally on the feast of Epiphany, Catholics bless their homes by writing the letters C, M, & B & the

numbers of the year on either side - so this year it would look like “20+C+M+B+24.”

The letters stand for the traditional names of the 3 Magi: Caspar, Melchior, & Balthasar. They also represent the Latin blessing “Christus mansionem benedicat,” which means “May Christ bless this house.”

Many Catholic parishes will give their parishioners a piece of chalk, a small bottle of holy water, & the words for the house blessing so that each family can bless its home.

Epiphany, which is also known as “Little Christmas,” is the feast that celebrates the arrival of the three Magi who had come to worship the Child Jesus shortly after

his birth. It is traditionally celebrated on Jan. 6. However, in the United States, in the Novus Ordo, it is celebrated on the Sunday between Jan. 2 & Jan 8. Many around the world celebrate this feast with as much pomp & circumstance as Christmas, including the exchanging of gifts.

The blessing, which is popular in Poland & other Slavic countries, has spread around the world & is becoming increasingly popular in the United States.

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How do you bless your home? This is a special tradition at the beginning of each year, a way to invite God into your home & place your family under his protection.

Begin by having all family members **gather outside the front door**. All make the **sign of the cross**. One person will then read this prayer:

Priest/Leader: *Peace be to this house.*

All: *And to all who dwell herein.*

Leader: *From the east came the Magi to Bethlehem to adore the Lord; & opening their treasures they offered precious gifts: gold for the great King, incense for the true God, & myrrh in symbol of his burial.*

Enter your home & read the Magnificat, the hymn of praise sung by the Blessed Virgin Mary in Luke's Gospel after being greeted by Elizabeth.

During this, **sprinkle the area you are in with holy water**.

The Magnificat - The Prayer Of Mary (Lk 1: 46-55)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, & holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,

& has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, & the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham & his children forever.

After that is complete:

All: *From the east came the Magi to Bethlehem to adore the Lord; & opening their treasures they offered precious gifts: gold for the great King, incense for the true God, & myrrh in symbol of his burial.*

Leader: *Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, & forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead & lead us not into temptation, All: But deliver us from evil.*

Leader: *All they from Saba shall come*

All: *Bringing gold & frankincense.*

Leader: *O Lord, hear my prayer.*

All: *And let my cry come unto Thee.*

Leader: *Let us pray. O God, who by the guidance*

of a star didst on this day manifest Thine only-begotten Son to the Gentiles, mercifully grant that we who know Thee by faith may also attain the vision of Thy glorious majesty. Through Christ, Our Lord. All: Amen.

Leader: *Be enlightened, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for thy light is come, & the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee — Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary.*

All: *And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light & kings in the splendor of thy rising, & the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee.*

Leader: *Let us pray. Bless, O Lord God almighty, this home, that in it there may be health, purity, the strength of victory, humility, goodness, & mercy, the fulfillment of Thy law, the thanksgiving to God the Father & to the Son & to the Holy Spirit. And may this blessing remain upon this home & upon all who dwell herein. Through Christ, Our Lord. All: Amen.*

After the prayers are recited, walk throughout your home **sprinkling each room with holy water**. Then write the initials of the **Magi** connected with crosses at the **top of your front door**. Then the **numbers of the year**. The numbers will be split so that they are on each side of the initials. You will write:

20 + C + M + B + 24