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PETITIONS & THANKSGIVING LETTERS

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Novena Notes

Mary – Theotokos, God – Among Us

The 1st of January, New Year's Day, is a day for revelry around the world, countdown celebrations, street parties and fireworks. However, as this new year begins, we have many concerns for our world. Even as the world comes out of the Covid-19 pandemic, we see how prices of everything are rising. We are almost certain that the economy will be going into a recession. We see the rise of totalitarian states, increasing the threat of invasions and war. We've come to realize that we have destroyed this planet that we live in and we don't know how to change our lifestyle to stop destroying it. Yet, on this day, our thoughts tend to be positive. We make resolutions to do better in our studies, our work and relationships.

In the church, we begin the year with the celebration of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. In Greek, Mary is known as the Theotokos – the God-bearer. But how can God have a mother? The Church professes belief in the Incarnation. When we celebrate Christmas, we don't simply believe that God put on a human body like it was a costume and just pretended to be human for a few years. To believe in the Incarnation is to believe that God truly became human, really and forever. To share all the joys and suffering we experience in our humanity.

To say that God truly became man is to acknowledge Jesus as one divine person with two natures, divine and human, and that Mary gave birth to this divine person in his human nature as Paul tells us in his letter to the Galatians: *'God sent his Son, born of a woman.'*

At the same time, we also come to pray and worship on this day to seek God's blessings in the year ahead. When we truly believe in the Incarnation, that God has become one of us, one with us, we believe that God does not simply bless us from afar, as if God were detached, disconnected or uninvolved in our lives. This feast of Mary the Mother of God reminds us that God blesses us by becoming one of us, sharing our lives, experiencing all that we do and walking with us through our ups and downs. On the first day of the year, we read and pray the blessing of Aaron. And this is my prayer for you. That this year, you may experience God's presence in your life.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace.

Reflection by Fr. Gerard Louis, CSsR

Readings & responses for the week

Sunday, 1 JANUARY Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God	Num 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21 O God, be gracious and bless us.
Monday, 2 JANUARY SS. Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen	1 Jn 2:22-28; Jn 1:19-28 All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
Tuesday, 3 JANUARY The Most Holy Name of Jesus	1 Jn 2:29, 3:6; Jn 1:29-34 All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
Wednesday, 4 JANUARY	1 Jn 3:7-10; Jn 1:35-42 All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
Thursday, 5 JANUARY St. John Neumann	1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23; Jn 10:11-16 The Lord leads us on the path of peace.
Friday, 6 JANUARY	1 Jn 5:5-13; Mk 1:6-11 Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.
Saturday, 7 JANUARY St. Raymond of Penyafort	1 Jn 5:14-21; Jn 2:1-11 The Lord takes delight in his people.

NOVENA DEVOTIONS ON SATURDAY

8.00am, 10.00am, 12.00pm,
4.00pm, 6.00pm

2.00pm (Mandarin)

MASS ON WEEKDAYS

12:15pm, 6.30pm

9.00am Public Holiday

(confession will be 30 minutes before Mass)

MASS ON SATURDAY

7.00am

MASS ON SUNDAY

8.00am, 10.00am, 12.00pm, 5.30pm

(confession will be 30 minutes before Mass)

RECEPTION OPERATING HOURS

Monday to Friday
9.00am to 8.00pm

Lunch Hour
11.45am to 12.45pm

Saturday
7.30am to 7.00pm

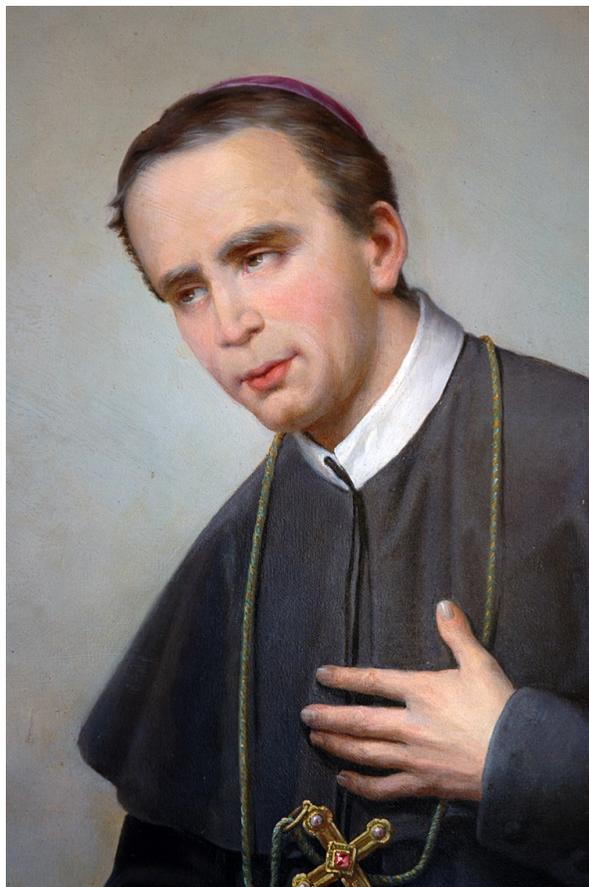
Sunday
8.30am to 1.30pm & 4.30pm to 7.00pm

SAFE MANAGEMENT MEASURES UPDATE

No booking is required. There will not be standing room allowed in the main church.

5 January, Feast of St. John Nepomucene Neumann, Bishop

John Neumann was born in Prachatitz in Bohemia (Czech Republic) on March 28, 1811. He studied theology at the seminary of Budweis. Zealous for the missionary life and wanting to lead souls to Christ, he decided to leave his homeland to dedicate himself to the European immigrants in America, who were deprived of spiritual support.



He was ordained a priest by the bishop of New York, and gave himself to the pastoral care of people in the vast area around Niagara Falls. Since he wanted to live in a religious community that corresponded more closely to his missionary vocation, he entered the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. He was professed on January 16, 1842.

He filled the role of vice-provincial of the Redemptorists from 1846 to 1849, after which he became the parish priest of St. Alphonsus Church in Baltimore. In 1852, at the age of forty-two, he was appointed bishop of Philadelphia.

As a worthy son of St. Alphonsus, he made a vow never to lose a minute of time. As a bishop, he was holy and tireless. He visited his vast diocese, on one occasion travelling more than twenty-five miles of mountain roads by mule in order to confirm a young boy who was sick.

On January 5, 1860, he died suddenly of a heart attack on a street in Philadelphia. He was beatified during the Second Vatican Council on October 13, 1963, and was canonized on June 19, 1977. In the homily on the occasion of his canonization, Paul VI summarized the activity of the new saint in these words: "He was close to the sick, he loved to be with the poor, he was a friend of sinners, and now he is the glory of all emigrants."

Operating Hours For Festive Seasons

Church Reception operating hours will be as follows:

31st December - 7.30am to 1pm
1st January - closed
2nd January - closed

Giftshop operating hours will be as follows:

31st December - 8.30am to 1pm
1st January - closed
2nd January - closed

Canteen will be closed on 31st December.

Schedules during the Festive Seasons

Mass on New Year Eve, 31st December will be at 10.30pm.

Masses on New Year Day will be at 8am, 10am, 12pm & 5.30pm

Masses on Monday, 2nd January will be at 9am & 6.30pm being Public Holiday