

Old St. Joseph's Church

Est. 1733 | Philadelphia's Jesuit Parish

321 Willings Alley
Philadelphia PA 19106
215-923-1733
www.oldstjoseph.org

December 23, 2018 | Fourth Sunday of Advent

Timeless, and. . .

It seems the greatest of compliments to declare something timeless, to acknowledge that a work of art or music has a certain inevitability, as if it *must* have always existed. It can be difficult to imagine a world without this timeless thing because it so perfectly embodies the particular mystery it expresses.

For many of us, *Silent Night* is timeless. Can you imagine Christmas without it? Perhaps you look forward to hearing it every year as you sit quietly after Communion, or to singing it in choir, or to plugging in your earphones to get lost in the sound of Pentatonix or the King's College Choir. For me, *Silent Night* will always be sung by the University of Virginia Men's Glee Club, always the finale after the December concert's raucous, full-audience rendition of the *Twelve Days of Christmas*, the sweet clear voices of tuxedoed young men closing softly to stillness as their choirmaster's fingers and thumb draw imperceptibly together. Year after year, heavenly peace answers whatever cacophony the world throws at you; music expresses something essentially true.

And yet, high praise though it might be, to call *Silent Night* timeless is also to hold it at arm's length, to ignore the dark and messy history from which it came and through which it has travelled over the years. To insist that *Silent Night* is a timeless classic is to deny something of its real power.

And so, two hundred years since *Silent Night* was

first sung on Christmas Eve at St. Nikola Church in Obendorf, near Salzburg in what is now Austria, let us recall a little bit of that history.

In 1816, a young priest named Joseph Mohr wrote a six-stanza poem. Himself a poor child of a single mother, Mohr ministered in a Salzburg that was wrecked by decades as a battlefield of the Napoleonic wars. The lives of its people were governed (if at all) by the shifting fortunes of war. A 'year without a summer' that followed the eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia brought crop failure and famine. Two years later, in 1818, Mohr asked a musician friend, Franz Xaver Gruber, to add a melody to his verses so that it could be sung on Christmas Eve. Gruber evidently thought this would be a one-off performance, but the song was passed along by Austrian musicians, arriving in New York City some twenty-one years later, in 1839. Twenty years still later, a New York City Episcopal priest named John Freeman Young translated into English the three verses which we all know today--which are actually verses one, six and two of Mohr's original poem. By this time, Mohr himself was long dead, but Gruber lived on to 1863, able to see the global spread of something he thought would be sung only once and to clarify and claim its origins.



--continued inside



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This Week at Old St. Joseph's

Date		Mass Intention and Presider	Calendar Events
Mon 24	12:05 PM	<i>Cyrus C. Convery(D)</i> Presider: Fr. Dougherty SJ	
	4:00 PM	Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ	3:15 PM Church doors open
	6:30 PM	Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ	
	9:00 PM	Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ	8:40 PM Music Prelude (Church)
Tues 25	10:00 AM	Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ	
Wed 26	12:05 PM	<i>Old St. Joseph's Memorial Society</i> Presider: Fr. Dougherty SJ	
Thurs 27	12:05 PM	<i>Edward & Mary Britt Families (D)</i> Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ	
Fri 28	12:05 PM	<i>Old St. Joseph's Memorial Society</i> Presider: Fr. Dougherty SJ	
Sat 29	12:05 PM	<i>Old St. Joseph's Memorial Society</i> Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ	
	5:30 PM	Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ	
Sun 30	7:30 AM	Presider: Fr. Dougherty SJ	
	9:30 AM	Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ	9:30 AM Children's Liturgy of the Word (Barbelin)
	11:30 AM	Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ	5:30 PM Loyola Choir Rehearsal (Church)
	6:30 PM	Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ	5:30 PM YAC Pre-Mass Reflection (Greateon)

In your prayers,
please remember our sick and homebound brothers and sisters
and our ministry at Pennsylvania Hospital.

Adeline Acerno, Teresa Aponte, Louis Balestrucci, Rick Bravo, Debbie Brooks, Christopher Browne, Tony Corvaia, Melissa Counsellor, Charlotte Croce, Ann Crowther, Simeon Crowther, Fred DiStefano, Pat Farris, Lenny Felixson, Fr. Mike Hricko SJ, Aaron Hull, Edward Jacobs, Marie Jacobs, Mary Jacobs, Janet Jeitner, Tamae Kan, Catherine Keddie, David Luerssen, Fr. Jerry McAndrews SJ, James McBride, Jerry McBride, Hugh McNicholas, Christine Mari-Mazzola, Allen May, Angelo Miczza, D. Minter, Catherine O'Brien, Bernie Paquett, Joanna Pearl, Lucy Pearl, Betty Farris Pfeiffer, Colleen Raymond, Kim Reed, Ursula Reed, Joan Russo, Steve Saunders, Barbara Schmidt, Mida Skalamera, Sara Smith, Janet Street, Ed Tomezsko, Arlene Tomlin, Patricia Yusko, Mickey Zippo.

Bringing Communion to the Homebound

When people are confined to home, they can remain connected to our shared worship by receiving Communion at home. If you, a family member, friend or neighbor (with their approval of course), would like to receive Communion at home, contact the Parish Rectory to arrange for a parish Eucharistic Minister to visit.

--from page one

Still years later, on Christmas Eve in 1914, Europe was once again in a 'peculiarly horrible' war. As lights appeared along the trenches in Ypres, English soldiers heard *Stille Nacht* sung in German, and they answered with English Christmas carols. Stories of World War I's Christmas Eve truce are the stuff both of legend and of oral history, but Britain's Imperial War Museum documents the wonder that up and down the battle lines, all the soldiers in the trenches ceased fire for 24 hours, venturing out to sing, play a little soccer, exchange cigarettes, and bury their dead. The Christmas truce was never to be repeated, for once word of it reached higher-ups, any such attempt was threatened with court-martial or execution.

Silent Night was created in a time of human and natural catastrophe and was recalled by men who knew they were unlikely to survive the miserable war they were fighting. Placing the song in its time seems to reveal an even greater power, an ability to bring into being the heavenly peace of which it speaks.

Holding together the timeless and historically specific aspects of *Silent Night* is an exercise of that most deeply Catholic virtue, the Catholic 'and'. We confess our faith in a God who is utterly transcendent, beyond our ability to capture in word

or image *and* entirely incarnate and present among us. We long for a Kingdom that is both already *and* not yet; both present through Christ's salvific death and resurrection *and* still to come in His glory. We belong to a Church that is the People of God *and* is wounded by sin, and we of course know ourselves to be occasional saints *and* all-too-often sinners.

The Catholic 'and' and the power of *Silent Night* are somewhat paradoxical. The song's lyrics do not speak in great detail. They are barely a sketch, a line-drawing hinting at both stillness and fear, and yet they hold within a light that invites us to move into something all-embracing. How will we fill in the details of this picture when we hear *Silent Night* this year? Who is the young mother and the child that we will see? A Syrian mother, a Guatemalan child, our own firstborn, a long-awaited grandchild? What grace will draw us forward? A new love, a sorrow healed, a second chance?

As Advent moves, as it inevitably does, toward our Christmas celebration of God-among-us, let us pause for a moment to savor the dawn of that heavenly light, before we allow it to draw us forward into the presence of Christ and onward into the world He came to save.

BJ Brown
Pastoral Associate

The image on the front cover is Raphael's *studi per madonne col bambino*, c. 1507. This work is in the public domain in its country of origin and therefore in the US as well. It was accessed on commons.wikimedia.org.

Announcements

Christmas and New Year's Schedule of Masses At Old St. Joseph's Church

December 22-23

5:30 PM Saturday, 7:30, 9:30 & 11:30 AM &
6:30 PM Sunday

Christmas Eve

4:00 PM, 6:30 PM and 9:00 PM
with prelude music beginning at 8:40 PM

Christmas Day

10:00 AM

Sunday, December 30

5:30 PM Saturday, 7:30, 9:30 & 11:30 AM &
6:30 PM Sunday

Monday, December 31

12:05 PM

Tuesday, January 1

A holy day,

The Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God

12:05 PM

Please note! Christmas Eve Masses at Old St. Joseph's are very crowded. You may wish to arrive early to be sure of a seat. The Church doors will open at 3:15 PM.

Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are needed to help serve hot cider and cookies after the Christmas Eve masses. To volunteer, contact joetcasey@aol.com

The Christmas Sounds of Philadelphia

OSJ Music Director Mark Bani will be back at the Macy's Wanamaker Organ on **Thursday, December 27, 12:15-12:45 PM**. Mark will play a recital of Christmas music after the noon light show. Come enjoy a true Philadelphia tradition!

OSJ Book Group

The Book Group will meet again on January 8 at 7:30 PM in the Loyola Room. In the meantime, keep reading Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*.

Online Giving

The following collections are now active on the online giving website:

Immaculate Conception, through December 23

Christmas Flowers, through December 30

Christmas Music, through December 30

Christmas Collection, through January 13

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, through January 13.

PREP Calendar

There will be no Parish Religious Education Program on Monday, December 24 or Monday, December 30. PREP will resume at 6:00 PM on Monday, January 7.

Keep in Touch

You can find Old St Joseph's Church online at oldstjoseph.org and on Facebook at @OSJ19106. To receive occasional emails about parish activities, email office@oldstjoseph.org.

Dear friends and parishioners,

Welcome to Old St. Joseph's Church! These are the first words announcing that Mass is about to begin at Old St. Joseph's. And they are especially timely during this Christmas season.

Some people reading this bulletin message are our **regular parishioners**. They join us every Sunday for Mass and participate in so many of our special activities during the week. We are happy that Old St Joseph is such an integral part of your Christmas celebration.

Some people reading this message are **visitors** to our great city. Wherever you come from, we want you to feel that you have a second home here with us whenever you're in town. We wish you a safe journey home and hope you will return. Merry Christmas!

If you are **from another faith tradition or no faith tradition**, we want you to know how much of the Christmas story calls us together in mutual respect and fellowship. For we believe that Jesus came to all of us, something he demonstrated over and over again in his adult life--the way he reached out and broke all the boundaries that divide us. So, a special Merry Christmas to you!

But the people we want to greet most of all are **Catholics from around town who only occasionally drop into Church**--maybe just on Christmas and Easter. Of course, we'd like you to come more often. But coming at Christmas shows you're off to a good start--and we hope you will keep it up. You put a lot of pressure on us when you join us, because we want to make your time with us especially meaningful and uplifting. You should know that our door is always open, especially if there's a time when you need a word of encouragement or a prayer to get over a tough patch. It happens! And we know that the Church doesn't have a monopoly on dispensing God's grace and that you can find it in other places, too. You may have a lot of it in your life already. If that's the case, think about sharing some of that with us. You might have a lot to share with people who, like you, are struggling and searching to find Christ in other people. Anyway, keep in touch and a special Merry Christmas to you!

Greeting all of you this way reminds me of what Pope Francis said in his letter *The Joy of the Gospel*. In his inimitable and charming way, the Pope described the parish as the place where we can hear God's word, mature spiritually through dialogue and proclamation, join together in worship and celebration, and reach out to the poor and those who need our help. At Old St. Joseph's, we hope we do all that--imperfectly, but we try. We are glad that you are here with us, to be challenged and comforted as we all are by the Good News of Jesus' coming, and to celebrate His continuing presence among us. Please savor the music and worship that help make Christmas at Old St. Joseph's special.

If you want, you can learn more about Old St. Joseph's by visiting our website oldstjoseph.org and our Facebook page @OSJ19106. Check the flyers in the back of the church for more ways to become involved in our parish community. But most of all, come back whenever you can.

A very blessed Christmas to one and all,

Walter F. Modrys SJ
Pastor

INFORMATION

Rectory Office Hours

Monday through Friday: 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM
Sunday: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Mass Times

Monday through Saturday: 12:05 PM
Saturday Vigil Mass for Sunday: 5:30 PM
Sunday: 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 AM and 6:30 PM
Holy Days: 12:05 and 7:30 PM

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency when the need for a priest is urgent, please call the rectory.

Hearing Enhancements

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Registration

Persons who want to register as parishioners should complete a parish registration form and return it to the rectory office by mail or in person. Registration forms are available in the rectory office during normal office hours, on the bookcases in the back of the church and online at www.oldstjoseph.org.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Monday through Saturday: 11:30 AM to noon or by appointment

Sacrament of Baptism

Persons wanting to arrange for a baptism should call Fr. Dougherty at the parish office at least two months before the desired date to arrange catechesis and the baptism celebration.

The Sacrament of Anointing

The Sacrament of Anointing (the sacrament of the sick) is administered during the 12:05 PM Mass on the first Saturday of each month. Homebound or hospitalized persons wanting to receive the Sacrament of Anointing should call the parish office.

Sacrament of Matrimony

Persons wanting to be married in the parish should call Fr. O'Donnell at the parish office at least nine months before the desired date.

Rite of Christian Initiation

Unbaptized adults who are considering baptism into the Catholic Church, baptized Catholics who have received no other sacraments and who want to be confirmed and to receive First Eucharist, and baptized non-Catholics who are considering full communion in the Catholic Church should call Fr. O'Donnell at the parish office.

To arrange Mass of Christian Burial

The funeral director should call the parish office.

Pastor

Fr. Walter Modrys SJ (pastor@oldstjoseph.org)

Parochial Vicar

Fr. Edward O'Donnell SJ (eodonnell@oldstjoseph.org)

In Residence

Br. Robert Carson SJ

Fr. Edward Dougherty SJ (dougherty@oldstjoseph.org)

Pastoral Associate

BJ Brown (bjbrown@oldstjoseph.org)

Business Manager

Eric German (germane@oldstjoseph.org)

Director of Music

Mark Bani (music@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Offices

(office@oldstjoseph.org)

PREP Coordinator

Christine Szczepanowski (prep@oldstjoseph.org)

Faith, Food & Friends Director

Deborah Hluchan (faithandfriends@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Pastoral Council

Rana McNamara and Richard Le, co-chairs
(osjpc@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Finance Council

Paul Shay, chair

Historic Preservation Corporation Board

Fr. Walter Modrys SJ, president.

Adult Education

Rita O'Brien and Jeanmarie Zippo
(adulted@oldstjoseph.org)

Eldership

Joan Slavin (joanslavin@aol.com)

Parish Life

Joe Casey (joetcasey@aol.com)

Ignatian Spirituality and Formation

John Bitterman (osjspirituality@oldstjoseph.org)

Women, Faith and Fellowship

Rana McNamara (wff@oldstjoseph.org)

Young Adult Community

Jenn Lydic and Megan Prilutski (osjyac@gmail.com)

Altar Servers

Maria Ramirez (mathra71@yahoo.com)

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Bill Stewart (wstewart@kaplaw.com)

Hospital Ministry

Luanne Balestrucci (lbalestrucci@yahoo.com)

Homebound Ministry

Neal Hébert (neal9536@gmail.com)

Lectors

Lou Anne Bulik (labulik@yahoo.com)

Ushers

Nikola Sizgorich (niksiz@icloud.com)

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Peggy Connolly (pmcon@comcast.net)--