

THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

Readings This Weekend:

Isaiah 60:1-6 Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6 Matthew 2:1-12 (20)

Readings Next Weekend:

Isaiah 42: 1-4, 6-7 Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7 Luke 3:15-16, 21-22



The Wise Men in today's Gospel seek to understand the light of the star and come to understand the light of the world, Jesus. Notice first their Journey. God summons PASTOR them by the star to seek him and they set out. A lot of folks follow movie stars or sports

stars. What star are you following? Is it Jesus? The Wise Men's journey is not an easy one. Travel was always difficult and dangerous in the ancient world. Next, notice the Jeopardy they encounter. As they arrive in Israel two things threaten to misdirect their mission. First, there are Sleepy Saints. As they arrive in Jerusalem the Wise Men expect to find wild celebration. But the town seems quite sleepy. And when Herod, who strangely knows nothing about the birth of a King, summons his religious leaders they rather sleepily give the prophecies and show little or no enthusiasm. The Wise Men could have been quite discouraged by this but they persevere. The second threat they face is that Herod is scheming to use them so that he can kill the child. This is surely not their mission and his secret scheme almost renders them dupes but they are later warned. Finally, in this Gospel we see the Justification of the Wise Men. Coming at last to Jesus the text says they worship him and offer him gifts. They also manifest conversion, for having been warned of Herod's plot, they take another route home. That is, they change how they have been walking, they make a course correction, if you will. Praise God for the example of the Wise Men who journey to Christ, despite jeopardy, and thus they find justification.

+ MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, January 5 Solemnity of the Epiphany

8:00am Intentions of Sharlene Carter

9:30am Mary O. Taylor † 11:00am Dolores Hawkins †

7:00pm Marie Pratt † Monday, January 6

7:00am Intentions of Dorothy Simpson

Tuesday, January 7

7:00am Tyrone Adams (B'day)†

Wednesday, January 8

7:00am Raymond J. Vanzego, Sr. †

Thursday, January 9

James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, Jr 🕇 7:00am

Friday, January 10

7:00am Maurice & Shirley Austin (Anniv. 55th)

Saturday, January 11 8:00am For the People

Joseph Oliver Middleton + 4:30pm

DAILY MASS READINGS FOR THE WEEK

1 JOHN 3:22-4:6 MATT 4:12-17, 23-35 MONDAY: 1 JOHN 4:7-10 Mark 6:34-44 TUESDAY: WEDNESDAY: 1 JOHN 4:11-18 Mark 6:45-52 THURSDAY: 1 JOHN 4:19-5:4 LUKE 4:14-22 FRIDAY: 1 JOHN 5:5-13 LUKE 5:12-16 SATURDAY: 1 JOHN 5:14-21 JOHN 3:22-30



FAITH DIRECT (Electronic Tithing): We offer electronic tithing through Faith Direct. Here are 3 ways to get info and register:

- Scan the QR code to the right.
- Text "Enroll" to 301-478-8900 to give.
- Go online to faith.direct/DC59 and register. This eGiving service is **FREE**. You can register to have your tithes automatically deducted twice a month or give a one-time Mala gift/donation. Questions? Contact Kim Peaks (kpeaks@hcscchurch.org or 202-546-1885).



Stay Connected

- Visit our website hcscchurch.org
- Subscribe to Flocknote to receive emails and updates
 - 1. Text **HCSC** to **84576** OR
 - 2. Visit https://hcscchurch.flocknote.com/
- Download the MyParishApp to your mobile phone and turn on notifications to get parish updates
- Follow us on social media:



Facebook.com/HCSCChurch



hcsc church

MASS ATTENDANCE Dec. 21 st —22 nd — Fourth Sunday of Advent	
4:30pm	36
8:00am	56
9:30pm	45
11:00am	
7:00pm	<u>47</u>
TOTAL	340
Dec 24th—25th— C 6:00pm 12:00am	Christmas Eve & Day 151 145
	(12/25) <u>69</u>
TOTAL	365
Dec. 28 th —29 th — Feast of the Holy Family	
4:30pm	29
8:00am	53
9:30am	41
11:00am	* *
7:00pm	149
TOTAL	299

THIS WEEK AT THE PARISH

Wednesday (1/8)

7:30pm Adult Bible Study (Zoom)

Friday (1/10)

+

6:00pm Holy Hour w/confession

Saturday (1/11)

9:00am Holy Name Mtg 10:00am Women's Ministry

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION or HOLY HOUR is held EVERY FRIDAY from 6-7PM in the sanctuary. This Catholic devotion dates back to the early days of the Church. During adoration, a consecrated host is exposed, allowing us to sit and pray in the true presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Confessions are also heard at this time.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Roman Catholic Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, exists to evangelize and to uphold Christian values by promoting the teachings of the Church in Word, Sacrament and Witness.

OUR VISION STATEMENT:

A welcoming, embracing and joyful faith family richly rooted in the community today, tomorrow and forever.

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

PARISH LIFE

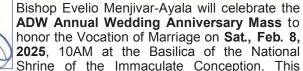


WHAT IS THE EPIPHANY? Epiphany isn't an everyday Christian word like sin or salvation. It comes from the Greek word epiphainen, a verb that means "to shine upon," "to manifest," or "to make known." Thus, the feast of the Epiphany

celebrates the many ways that Christ has made Himself known to the world, mainly the three events that manifested the mission and divinity of Christ:

- the visit of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12),
- the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1:9-11), and
- the miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11).

The visit of the Magi (or Three Kings) is emphasized on Epiphany Day. Other names for Epiphany Day are Three Kings Day, Twelfth Day, Theophany, and Little Christmas. Epiphany commemorates the manifestation of God to the world through Jesus Christ. The feast day of the manifestation, or Epiphany, is traditionally celebrated the 12th day of Christmas, January 6th. In the diocese of the United States, this feast day is celebrated on the Sunday closest to Jan. 6th— which falls on Jan. 5th this year.



Annual Mass is a celebration of the living vocation of all couples who provide a Catholic witness to the beauty of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Couples can attend the Mass and/or receive a certificate from Cardinal Wilton Gregory in honor of their anniversary. Deadline to submit your names to attend and/or receive a certificate is Jan. 24th. Contact the rectory office at hcscstaff@hcscchurch.org or 202-546-1885 to register. Any couple can attend regardless of anniversary year.



2025 WALL CALENDARS: If there are any remaining, pick one up in the rear of the church. We have a limited supply.

2024 HCSC YEAR-END CONTRIBUTION (TITHING) STATEMENTS—will be prepared only upon request beginning Fri., Feb. 7, 2025. Statements will not be automatically distributed. Contact the rectory office (202-546-1885 or hcscstaff@hcscchurch.org) to request your statement. It can be mailed, emailed or picked up from the rectory. NOTE: only cash donations (submitted in an envelope with your name) and checks payable to Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian are included in your statement. Your statement will not reflect loose cash donations.

FAITH DIRECT YEAR-END TITHING STATEMENTS: Parishioners who tithe electronically through Faith Direct will automatically receive their 2024 year-end giving statement directly from Faith Direct as part of the online giving program.

We are so grateful for our parishioners continual generosity to our parish community. Thank you!



This year, our parish will set our focus on the "Biblical Basics of the Greatest Story Ever Told". The Scriptures teach us why and how we exist, what happened to us in Original Sin and How God, in his great mercy, has redeemed us and called us back to Him in newness of life. This will be a whole-parish catechesis, led by our pastor, in three stages. Words from a keynote song titled Just a Little Talk with Jesus helps us to understand the 3 stages:

- OUR FALL- I once was lost in Sin,
- ii) OUR REDEPMTION But Jesus took me in,
- iii) OUR GRACE And then a little Light from Heaven Filled my Soul.

A reflection by Msgr. Pope on the bible stories will be in the bulletin every other week. They are also on our website (scan the QR \$ code) or have them emailed via FlockNote along with a video. To sign-up to receive emails/videos, or visit: hcscchurch.flocknote.com



and sign up for Bible Basics! FlockNote is a FREE service!

Yes, Just a little talk with Jesus made me whole!

BIBLE STUDIES AT HCSC



YOUNG ADULT BIBLE STUDY: Mondays at 7:15PM in the rectory w/Msgr. Charles Pope.



FRIENDLY SENIORS BIBLE STUDY: held the second Tuesday of every month at 10:30AM in the chapel. Deacon James Flagg is the facilitator.



WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY: held every Wednesday via Zoom at 7:15PM w/Msgr. Charles Pope. Sign up at hoscohurch.flocknote.com to receive Zoom link.



SEEKING HELP

marriage? Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue, or have you just stopped talking to each other? The Retrouvaille (pronounced Retro-vee) program has helped tens of thousands of couples. For confidential information or to register for the upcoming program beginning with a weekend on Jan. 24, 2025 at Marriottsville MD, visit: www.HelpOurMarriage.org, call (443) 400-7017, or email: 3015@HelpOurMarriage.org.

HOLY COMFORTER-SAINT CYPRIAN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

1357 East Capitol Street, SE, WDC 20003 202.546.1885 * www.hcscchurch.org Rev. Msgr. Charles Pope, Pastor (pastor1@hcscchurch.org) Deacon James P. Flagg II (jpflaggll@gmail.com)

For information on membership, sacraments and funerals contact rectory staff at hcscstaff@hcscchurch.org or (202) 546-1885.

MASS TIMES: Saturday Sunday

8AM & 4:30AM (vigil);

8AM, 9:30AM, 11AM and 7PM; Mon—Fri: 7AM (8AM on holidays)

Weekdays **RECTORY OFFICE HOURS:**

> Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 10AM—6PM Thursday, Saturday & Sunday: Closed

The Greatest Story Ever Told

A Back-to-Basics Catechesis

The Life of Lot: A Study in Sloth

One of our greatest spiritual problems is sloth. Sloth, one of the seven deadly sins, is a sorrow, sadness, or aversion toward the good things God offers. Rather than being joyful and zealous to obtain these gifts, the slothful person sees them as too much trouble to obtain and is averse to the changes such gifts might introduce into his life. This is clearly the case with Lot, who resists the attempts of God to rescue him and his family from the sinful city of Sodom, which is about to be destroyed. Let's examine his struggle in several steps.

Roots - Lot's personal troubles were many, but for our purposes his problems began when he "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Gen 13:12). Abraham and Lot had grown very rich (almost never a good thing in the spiritual life) and realized that their flocks were so large that one part of the land could not sustain them both. Thus, they agreed to live in different sectors. Abraham left the choice of areas to Lot, (selfishly?) chose the better part for himself. The area where Sodom was is now a deep desert, but at that time the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the delta land of Egypt (Gen 13:10). And thus, it was that Lot took his family and "pitched his tent toward Sodom."

Risks - But Sodom was a wicked city, filled with false worship, greed, insensitivity to the poor, and the approval and practice of homosexuality. Here is the risk that Lot takes: he turns his face toward Sodom and willingly exposes his family to the grave moral threats there. And it does indeed affect them. Ultimately, as we shall see, his wife

cannot bear to leave, looks back, and is lost. His daughters escape, but later engage in the grave sin of incest. Lot, too, will find it hard to flee Sodom, finding God's offer to save him to be too much trouble. He'd rather stay, whatever the risk.

If you're going to swim in muddy water, you're going to get muddy. And that mud gets in your ears and in your soul. This is what Lot risks and what results when he pitches his tent toward Sodom.



Many of us, too, think little about the risks that television, the internet, music, and culture pose to us and our children. Too easily we risk our eternal salvation and that of our children by pitching our tent toward Sodom through easy commerce with a world that is poisonous to our faith. Even if some things are troublesome, many of us make little effort to draw back and limit, even in little ways, the influences that are contrary to our faith.

Resource - Lot has only one resource in his favor: Abraham is praying for

his ne'er-do-well nephew. He asks God's destroying angel to spare Lot and his family (see Gen 19). God agrees to this and acts to save Lot despite himself. Really, it's the only thing that saves Lot.

It is true that Lot was just, in the sense that he did not approve of the sin around him. (see 2 Peter 2:6-8) But neither did he act to really protect himself or his family from it. Something about Sodom appealed to him. Perhaps he thought he could make money there (or perhaps the trains ran on time). Whatever the benefits, Lot weighed them more heavily than the risks.

And so, too, for many today, who leave the TV or unfiltered Internet on no matter the risk because it entertains or has some other perceived benefit that outweighs the obvious risks. For many parents it's just too much trouble to monitor the websites their children visit or the music they listen to.

It really is only Abraham's prayers that save Lot. Thus, don't forget the power of prayer for some of the "ne'er-do-wells" you may know. God may act to save them before the Day of Judgment simply because you prayed for them.

Root Sin - But here comes the heart of the story: sloth. The angel warns, "Flee!" But Lot hesitates. Fleeing is hard work; it means leaving things behind that you like. Perhaps Lot thinks, "Maybe the warnings of destruction are overblown; maybe it won't really be so bad." Here is what the story says:

As dawn was breaking, the angels urged Lot on, saying, "On your way! Take with you your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of Sodom." When he hesitated, the men. by the LORD's mercy, seized his hand and the hands of his wife and his two daughters and led them to safety outside the city. As soon as they had been brought outside, he was told: "Flee for your life! Don't look back or stop anywhere on the Plain. Get off to the hills at once, or you will be swept away!" "Oh, no, my lord!" Lot replied, "You have already thought enough of your servant to do me the great kindness of intervening to save my life. But I cannot flee to the hills to keep the disaster from overtaking me, and so I shall die. Look, this town ahead is near enough to escape to. It's only a small place. Let me flee thereit's a small place, is it not?— that my life may be saved." "Well, then," he replied, "I will also grant you the favor vou now ask. I will not overthrow the town you speak of. Hurry, escape there! I cannot do anything until you arrive there." That is why the town is called Zoar (Gen 19:15-21).

Lot has become so lazy and settled in with sin that he'd rather accept death than expend the effort to flee. Not only that, but he also can't even manage to rouse himself to save his family. It's all just too much trouble. Sloth is sorrow, sadness, or aversion at the good things God is offering, even escape from Hell.

Thanks to Abraham's prayers, the angels literally drag Lot and his family out of the city and repeat the warning: "Flee!" God who made you without you, will not save you without you. So, Lot must cooperate. But still, Lot sees it as all just too much trouble. In effect, he says, "Man, those hills look far away. And they're not nearly as nice as this valley. It's going to take a lot of effort to get there. Do I really have to go that far?"

And here is another aspect of sloth: compromising with evil despite the dangers. Even if it occurs to many that some things in their lives need to change, they try to minimize those changes. The Lord tells us that we cannot serve two masters, that we cannot serve both the world and Him. In other words, we must decisively choose God over the demands of this world whenever there is a conflict. But many, realizing that this may introduce uncomfortable situations or have financial impacts, begin to negotiate with their conscience, saying, "I'm basically serving God ... well, at least mostly. Maybe it's enough if I do a few holy things and serve God "for the most part." And then I can still serve the world and enjoy its fruits, too. After all I have a career and I don't want to risk a promotion. How about if I serve God 60% and the world 40%? Is that enough?"

Thank God for His mercy! (And thank Abraham for his prayers.) We are a real mess. As the text shows, God will take the little he can get from Lot, at least for now, to save him. But God shouldn't have to take this from us. Only grace and mercy can spare us from ourselves.

Results - But note this: grace and mercy need to have their effect. We cannot go on in sloth forever. We must allow God to heal this deep drive of sin in us or we will be destroyed. Lot is saved for now, but great tragedy is still in store for him. His wife turned back in longing for Sodom and was lost. His daughters cannot get Sodom out of them and will later turn to incest, inebriating their father and having sexual relations with him (Gen 19:30ff). And from this incest will be born the ancestors of the enemies who will later afflict Israel: the Moabites and the Ammonites.

And what of us today? What role have we played in pitching our tents toward Sodom? What happens to us

and to our children and grandchildren when all we do is express shock at the condition of the world but expend little real effort to protect ourselves from it or actively change it? What happens to us when we learn to live off the fruits of our Sodom, and make easy compromises with the world in terms of greed, insensitivity to the poor, and sexual confusion? What happens when God's plan to rescue us through the gifts of chaste living, generosity, and more simple living, is rejected as too much trouble or as requiring us to give up too many things that we like? Many think to themselves, "I know my favorite television show has bad scenes, but I like the story line, and I want to find out what happens at the end of the season. I know I should be clearer and firmer with my children, but that leads to conflict, and I hate conflict, and besides they'll complain if they can't have a smart phone. And it's so much trouble trying to monitor their Internet activity. And ... and ... and ..."

What happens when we do this, when we slothfully reject God's offer of sacraments, prayers and Holy Scripture? Well, we don't have to look far; we know what happens. We and the people we love get lost, wounded, corrupted, confused, and even die, both physically and spiritually.

The virtues opposed to sloth are zeal and joy. Zeal for God's truth and the beauty of holiness, and a joyful pursuit of the life God offers us are gifts to be sought. Sloth is very pernicious and has cumulative effects. We haven't done well, collectively speaking. It's time to turn more zealously to God, to appreciate the truth of what He has always taught. It's time to gratefully, joyfully study His ways, and live them and share them with others.

Here, then, is a study of sloth in the life of Lot, a lesson more necessary and urgent today than ever before.





PRESENTED BY

Voces Verbi

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RESTORE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST.

MARCH 4 LIFE

8:00am Breakfast

9:00am Keynote Talk

10:00am Holy Mass

12:00pm Departure to March for Life

1:00pm 51st March for Life

MEETING POINT:

Madison Dr. NW & 12th St NW

DEPARTURE POINT:

Union Station to Fort Totten Station

4:00pm Snack and Showers for Guests

Evening Prayer

Dinner & Show

10:30pm Grand Silence

RESTORE CONFERENCE

Arrival / Registration

& Breakfast

8:45 am Intro Activities

10:00am Keynote Talk #1 (Hall)

11:15am Holy Mass

12:30pm Lunch - Fogon

After JPII Shrine Departure

3:30pm Group Photo! & Return

3:45pm Keynote Talk #2

4:45pm Snack/Break

5:15pm Adoration

6:00pm Benediction & "Good Night"

6:30pm Dinner & Show

8:00pm Candle-lit Rosary Procession

8:30pm Sign-out

RELIGIOUS FAMILY OF THE INCARNATE WORD

Registration for Restore Conference 2025: https://www.vocesverbiusa.org/restore.html



In Memory of John N. Graham Catherine E. Graham Joan M. Graham

Ernestine C. Jackson Always Loved. Remembered. Missed



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Anna, Othalene, Lataunya Betty - wife and mother

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The Deceased Jenifers:

Oscar, Mary, Helena, Bay, David,

Baby Sis, Beverly, Frankie, David,

Neal, Kimberly, Cyprian Jr., Jovan

& Very Dear, The Family

100 Still Loved, Still Missed In Loving Memory of

Lillian H. Myrick Charles Myrick Sr. Leon (Tony) Myrick Lucy Myrick **Lucy Jones** Shirley Ann Jackson The Family

In Memory of

Winnie,

Ray,

Bertie

In Loving Memory of

Mattie Barclay Helene Crutchfield **Edgell Fairfax** Elizabeth Fairfax Clyde Fairfax Sr. Clyde (Guy) Fairfax Jr. The Family



Our Deceased Members



Holy Name Society

In Loving Memory

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J. Mother We Love You Always

Willie, Lawrence & Maria

In Loving

Memory of

Devin M. Wright

Love Always,

The Family



In Memory of

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Son & Father

We'll always

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