

Dear Padre,

I recently lost my husband of sixty years. I prayed for him through his four-year illness. Since he has died, I cannot pray. Any advice for me?

My heartfelt condolences on your profound loss. When someone we love dies, a part of us dies too. Sometimes, the trauma is so severe that it can even affect our relationship with God.

Psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross identified five stages of grief. In the denial stage, some people can't accept the reality of the death. It becomes too much to handle. In the anger stage, some may question their belief in God—especially if their prayer requests (such as, "Please God, if you heal my loved one, I will...") weren't successful in the bargaining stage. People in the depression stage feel overwhelmed by the reality of the loss and may not always feel like connecting with others—even with God in prayer. However, in the acceptance stage, emotions stabilize, and a person comes to terms with their new reality. Nothing makes up for the absence of a loved one, but people manage to cope and live on.

It's because you loved so deeply that the loss feels so deep. God accepts you completely; God understands how you feel. He wants you to be at peace and live life fully. Our compassionate God yearns to help console you and offer assistance in your healing process until you can embrace him again in prayer. ●

Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / DearPadre.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

Monday	Wednesday	Saturday
January 5 St. John Neumann, Bishop 1 Jn 3:22–4:6 Mt 4:12–17, 23–25	January 7 Christmas Weekday 1 Jn 4:11–18 Mk 6:45–52	January 10 Christmas Weekday 1 Jn 5:14–21 Jn 3:22–30
Tuesday	Thursday	Sunday
January 6 Christmas Weekday 1 Jn 4:7–10 Mk 6:34–44	January 8 Christmas Weekday 1 Jn 4:19–5:4 Lk 4:14–22a	January 11 The Baptism of the Lord Is 42:1–4, 6–7 Acts 10:34–38 Mt 3:13–17
Friday	January 9 Christmas Weekday 1 Jn 5:5–13 Lk 5:12–16	



YANDRY FERNANDEZ PERDOMO / CATHOPIC

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

Let us resolve to bring [God's] love everywhere, never forgetting that each of our sisters and brothers is a dwelling place of God and that his presence is manifested above all in the little ones, in the poor and the suffering, who ask us to be thoughtful and compassionate Christians.

REGINA CAELI, ROME, MAY 25, 2025



YANDRY FERNANDEZ PERDOMO / CATHOPIC

Our Parish COMMUNITY

January 4, 2026

The Epiphany of the Lord (A)

Isaiah 60:1–6 / Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6 / Matthew 2:1–12



"We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage."

MATTHEW 2:2

Following Jesus Without a Star to Guide Us

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSSR

“We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage” (Matthew 2:2) describes the spark that sent the Magi on their journey. Something unusual in the sky, interpreted as a sign of something wonderful—in response, they changed direction in their lives and devoted themselves to a completely different path. As wonderful as it might well be, a special star in the heavens is not the ordinary experience of how we learn to follow the Lord or discern his will. If only there could be a sign in God's universe for each of us, beckoning us forward, clarifying what we need to do, setting down the path that needs to be followed. Perhaps life would be much simpler. Or perhaps not?

Would it truly be less complicated if everything were made clear and certain? Is the manifestation of God's grace and blessings confined to the straight and narrow, or can we also experience God in the chaos—"in the weeds," so to speak. Human experience seems to suggest that life is more "gray" than "black and white." There is real grace in the journey, in making mistakes, even in choosing something that is incomplete. Thankfully, God's grace does not need perfection to be powerful. We can know and follow God's will for us in the ordinary moments of day-to-day living. We do not need the extraordinary or the dramatic. ●

Reflect

How can I resolve to look for God in the unplanned, the unexpected, the interruptions?



LEARN ABOUT THE AUTHORS OF OUR PARISH COMMUNITY



The
Catholic Church
in Pocahontas County
West Virginia

OUR MISSION

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:19-20, NAB-RE)

ST. JOHN NEUMANN PARISH & CHURCH OFFICE, 714 Tenth Avenue, Marlinton WV 24954
ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST MISSION, 92 Catholic Church Road, Rts 250 & 92, Bartow WV 24920
ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX CHAPEL, 6332 Snowshoe Drive, Snowshoe WV 26209
Telephone: St. John Neumann 304-799-6778, St. Bernard of Clairvaux 304-572-0847
Website: PocahontasCatholic.org
E-mail: Pastor@PocahontasCatholic.org

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

“They departed for their country by another way”
(Matthew 2:12, NAB-RE)

ANNOUNCEMENTS & NOTES

- **Jubilee Year of Hope 2025** ends on January 6 (Tuesday), the traditional feast of Epiphany. The jubilee is the 50th year following the 49th year (7x7), and the jubilee is a time of renewal, forgiveness, liberty, care for the poor, and return of property (Leviticus 25:8-55). In the Catholic Church, we celebrate a jubilee year twice during each jubilee. The next *Jubilee Year* will be in 2050.
- **Community Dinner** planning meeting is this Thursday (January 8) at 5:30 p.m. at Marlinton Presbyterian Church. We welcome new volunteers and new ideas.



Patty Bryant
Margaret Bryant
Ann Burke
Danielle Cade
Dick Connor
Dale Kinnison
Drema Moore
Cynthia Olson
Quinn Riffle
Tristan Sizemore

EUCHARIST THIS WEEK

Friday 8:00 p.m. St. John
Saturday 5:30 p.m. St. Bernard
Sunday 9:00 a.m. St. John
11:30 a.m. St. Mark



St. John Neumann Church is open for private prayer every day during daylight.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered before each Eucharist or by appointment, and at St. Bernard on Saturdays 4:30-5:00 p.m.

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is available any time upon request.

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Calendar for 2026

Epiphany (celebrated) - January 4
St. John Neumann - January 5
Baptism of the Lord - January 11
Ash Wednesday - February 18
daylight saving time begins - March 8
Palm Sunday - March 29
Passover begins - April 1
Catholic Easter - April 5
Orthodox Easter - April 12
St. Mark the Evangelist - April 25
summer schedule begins - May 2
election of Pope Leo XIV - May 8
Mothers' Day - May 10
Pentecost - May 24
Fathers' Day - June 21
St. Bernard of Clairvaux - August 20
standard time begins - November 1
winter schedule begins - November 7
Thanksgiving - November 26
Advent begins - November 29
Merry Christmas - December 25

CHRISTMAS

	<u>attendance</u>	<u>collection</u>
St. John Neumann	42	
Catholic Charities WV		\$276.00
Fund for the Poor		\$1,667.00
St. Mark the Evangelist	12	
Catholic Charities WV		\$130.00
Fund for the Poor		\$51.00
St. Bernard of Clairvaux	140	\$1,056.00
Catholic Charities WV		\$25.00
Fund for the Poor		\$535.00
total	194	\$3,740.00

LAST WEEKEND

	<u>attendance</u>	<u>collection</u>
St. John Neumann	31	\$630.00
Catholic Sharing Appeal		\$3,423.00
St. Mark the Evangelist	13	\$297.50
Catholic Sharing Appeal		\$546.25
St. Bernard of Clairvaux	161	\$1,018.00
Catholic Sharing Appeal		\$130.00
Fund for the Poor		\$984.00
total	205	\$7,028.75



Please call the Church office (304-799-6778) if you know of a parishioner who is sick, in the hospital or nursing home, homebound, deployed, or in prison.

To report an incidence of suspected child sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency, or you may confidentially contact WV Child Protective Services at 800-352-6513.
To report suspected cases of sexual abuse by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, please contact the Diocese at 888-434-6237 or 304-233-0880.
To report suspected cases of sexual misconduct or sexual abuse by a bishop or eparch, please contact ReportBishopAbuse.org or call 800-276-1562.

First Reading (Isaiah 60:1-6)

Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come,
the glory of the Lord shines upon you.
See, darkness covers the earth,
and thick clouds cover the peoples;
but upon you the LORD shines,
and over you appears his glory.
Nations shall walk by your light,
and kings by your shining radiance.
Raise your eyes and look about;
they all gather and come to you:
your sons come from afar,
and your daughters in the arms of their nurses.
Then you shall be radiant at what you see,
your heart shall throb and overflow,
for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you,
the wealth of nations shall be brought to you.
Caravans of camels shall fill you,
dromedaries from Midian and Ephah;
all from Sheba shall come
bearing gold and frankincense,
and proclaiming the praises of the LORD.

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13,
Grail translation, 1963)

Response: Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

O God, give you judgment to the king,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgment.

In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails.
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds.

The kings of Tarshish and the seacoasts
shall pay him tribute.
The kings of Sheba and Seba
shall bring him gifts.
Before him all kings shall fall prostrate,
all nations shall serve him.

For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor.

Second Reading (Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6)

Brothers and sisters:
You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace
that was given to me for your benefit, namely,
that the mystery was made known to me by revelation.
It was not made known to people in other generations
as it has now been revealed
to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:
that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body,
and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus
through the gospel.

Gospel Acclamation (Matthew 2:2)

We saw his star at its rising
and have come to do him homage.

Gospel (Matthew 2:1-12)

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea,
in the days of King Herod,
behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,
"Where is the newborn king of the Jews?
We saw his star at its rising
and have come to do him homage."
When King Herod heard this,
he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.
Assembling all the chief priests
and the scribes of the people,
He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.
They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea,
for thus it has been written through the prophet:
And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
since from you shall come a ruler,
who is to shepherd my people Israel."
Then Herod called the magi secretly
and ascertained from them
the time of the star's appearance.
He sent them to Bethlehem and said,
"Go and search diligently for the child.
When you have found him, bring me word,
that I too may go and do him homage."
After their audience with the king they set out.
And behold,
the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them,
until it came and stopped over the place
where the child was.

They were overjoyed at seeing the star,
and 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.
And having been warned in a dream
not to return to Herod,
they departed for their country by another way.

Reflection

The Magi came searching for the newborn King of the Jews. We don't know where they came from, or the path they took, but we know they followed the star. Once encountering this newborn with his mother Mary, they gave him their homage and their gifts, and then returned home – and they returned home following a dream, but by a different path. After meeting Christ, they were changed, their path was to follow a new way of life.

4 January 2026
Epiphany

Penitential Rite

Lord Jesus, you came that we might have life: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you are the light of all nations: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the Word made flesh: Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Prayer of the Faithful

Merciful Father, we are gathered to worship you today, and we lift up our needs to you in prayer:

- for the Church, that we will promote peace where there is war, we pray
- for leaders of nations, that they will work together for the good of all people, we pray
- for missionaries, for strength as they spread the Gospel in word and action, we pray
- for those who are far from home, that they will be comforted, we pray
- for an increase in vocations to Church ministry, we pray
- for those who have died, that they will have the gift of eternal salvation, we pray
- and for your other intentions (*pause*)
for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, we pray

Almighty Father, you teach us by your Word, and you guide us by your Spirit. Hear our prayers, and show us the new way of life in You. We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.