ST. MICHAEL ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

751 Locust Street

PO Box 103

St. Michael, Pennsylvania 15951

Rev. Msgr. David A. Lockard, Administrator MASSES:

(814) 495-9640 Saturday 4:00 pm



Sunday Morning 8:00 am

Secretary: Michele Panick 10:30 am

Bookkeeper: Kathy Kalicky Daily Mass: M,T,W,Th,F Noon

DRE: Laurie Sloan Holy Days: See Bulletin

Maintenance: Rodney Turgeon Office Hours:

PHONES: 8:30 am to 3:30 pm

Rectory / Office: (814) 495-9640 Monday, Tues., Thurs., Friday

Fax: (814) 495-9424 Confessions:

Rel. Education: (814) 495-4873 Saturday 3:30 pm to 3:45 pm

Parish Website Sunday 10:00 am to 10:15 am

[www.saintmichaelchurch.weebly.co](http://www.saintmichaelchurch.weebly.co)m By Appointment

Secretaries’ E-mail

[saintmichaelsecretaries@yahoo.com](mailto:saintmichaelsecretaries@yahoo.com)

Facebook page:

St. Michael Catholic Church/St. Michael, PA

Fourth Sunday of Advent

SERVING GOD AND COMMUNITY FOR OVER ONE HUNDRED YEARS!

December 20th, 2020

BAPTISM: By Appointment. Reserve at least one month in advance.

MARRIAGE: Plan at least nine months in advance.

Preparation sessions are necessary.

FUNERALS: Arrangements are made in conjunction with the funeral home.

REGISTRATION Those new to the area, newlyweds, and single adults, (even if registered

and before with their families) are asked to register by calling the Parish Office.

MEMBERSHIP: Every parishioner must be registered. This is a condition for admission

to our Program and reception of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation,

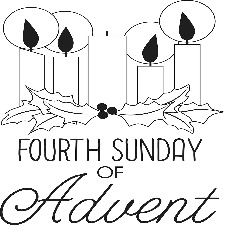
First Penance, First Eucharist, and Matrimony; also, for testimonial letters or sponsorship of Baptism and Confirmation outside the Parish.

VISITATION: We are concerned and want to be advised when someone is ill at home or in the hospital. Call the office to have the shut-in placed on our monthly Holy Communion calls or seriously ill prayer list.

SACRAMENTAL Parish registration and active Mass participation for Baptism is

POLICY: encouraged and is required for Marriage.

BULLETIN ARTICLES: Articles are due to the Parish Office by Noon on Tuesday.

 Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20th, 2020

The Immaculate Conception

**MASS INTENTIONS**: (December 21 – December 27, 2020 )

Monday Noon Irene & Ray Baldwin req. by Carl & Pam Freidhoff

Tuesday Noon Theresa Fleck req. by Helen Slonac & Family

Wednesday Noon Ann Marie Swelfer req. by husband, Louis Swelfer

Thursday 3:00 PM For the Health & Wellbeing of All Lay Ministers

7:00 PM People of the Parish

Friday 9:00 AM Anna Wilson req. by Mary Ann Murin & Family

Saturday 4:00 PM Paul & Anna Pavlik req. by Helen Slonac & Family

Sunday 8:00 AM Michael Chalan req. by daughter, Pauline Minor & Family

10:30 AM People of the Paris

LITURGICIAL APPOINTMENTS:

Saturday, December 26 4:00 PM

Lector: Susan Poldiak

Minister of the Host: Veronica Richards

Altar Server: Caden & Kaylee Roberts

Cantor: David Zajdel

Sunday, December 27 8:00 AM

Lector: Joe Faher

Minister of the Host: Marie Bernard

Altar Server: Griffen Christ

Cantor: Sharon Dibble

Sunday, December 27 10:30 AM

Lector: Tony Bambino

Minister of the Host: Robert Oshaben

Altar Server: Jackson Henderson

Cantor: Lou McCloskey

Sunday, December 27 Collection Counters

Christ Smay, Sara Zybura

Mary Ann DeRosa

During the week of December 20th, 2020

The Sanctuary Candle will burn in memory of

Suzie Thomas

requested by Helen Slonac & Family

[](https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images;_ylt=A0LEV1kSWptXvOwAKINXNyoA;_ylu=X3oDMTEyZGdkcmRoBGNvbG8DYmYxBHBvcwMxBHZ0aWQDQjIwODlfMQRzZWMDc2M-?p=Clipart+of+a+sanctuary+candle&fr=ush-mailn_02&th=110&tw=110&imgurl=http://www.henningers.com/389-168-wall-sanctuary-lamp.jpg&rurl=http://pixshark.com/sanctuary-lamp.htm&size=43KB&name=Sanctuary+Lamp+Bronze+wall+sanctuary+lamp&h=600&w=600&turl=http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id%3DOIP.M68453c67108cdc5ab485d309b395bd03o0%26pid%3D15.1%26rs%3D1%26c%3D1%26qlt%3D95%26w%3D110%26h%3D110#inline&tt=Sanctuary+Lamp+Bronze+wall+sanctuary+lamp&sigr=116keh5le&sigit=13gvlt42j&sigi=11ip0pgm4&sign=119kp6100&sigt=119kp6100)

RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS ~ “We are conscious of the great generosity of the many benefactors who support the Retirement Fund for Religious each year,” says a Catholic sister. “Support from the fund has been a tremendous blessing to our retired sisters.” Thank you for donating to last week’s special collection.

SECOND SUNDAY FOOD COLLECTION ~ Thank you to all who so generously donated to the Forest Hills Food Pantry. The total money collected was $1,152.00 and an assortment of non-perishable items.

OPLATKI ~ Anyone wanting Oplatki, please call the Parish Office during the hours 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM.

ST MICHAEL’S CONFESSIONS ~ Saturday from 3:30 PM to 3:45 PM and Sunday from 10:00 AM to 10:15 AM or call the rectory to make an appointment with Msgr. Lockard.

ST. MICHAEL’S CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR’S DAY MASSES ~ Christmas Masses here at St. Michael are: Christmas Eve: 3:00 PM and 7:00 PM (No NOON Mass); Christmas Day: 9:00 AM. Solemnity of Mary Vigil Mass (December 31st): 4:00 PM and Solemnity of Mary (January 1st): 9:00 AM.

LOCAL CHURCH CONFESSIONS FOR CHRISTMAS ~ St. John, Summerhill: Monday, December 21st, 3-4 PM and 5-7 PM. Immaculate Conception, New Germany: Tuesday, December 22nd, 3-4 PM & 5-7 PM.

LOCAL CHURCHES CHRISTMAS SCHEDULES ~ Immaculate Conception, New Germany: Christmas Eve: 4 PM, 6 PM, and 8 PM. Christmas Day: 9 AM. St. John, Summerhill: Christmas Eve: 5 PM, 7 PM, and 9 PM. Christmas Day: 10 AM. St. Bartholomew, Wilmore: Tentatively; Christmas Eve: 2 PM and 6 PM. (No Christmas Day Mass). Most Holy Trinity, South Fork: Tentatively; Christmas Eve: 4 PM. Christmas Day: 9 AM.

DIOCESE TO AIR CHRISTMAS MASSES AND TELEVISION SPECIAL ~ As part of its continuing efforts to keep local Catholics connected during the coronavirus pandemic, the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown is pleased to offer expanded television opportunities through its *Proclaim!* TV Ministry thisChristmas. Bishop Mark Bartchak will celebrate Mass on Christmas Eve at St. John Gualbert Cathedral in Johnstown, which will air live at 7 PM on WWCP FOX 8. The Christmas Day Mass at St. John Gualbert will air at Noon on WATM ABC 23 with the Very Rev. James Crookston, Rector, as celebrant. This year, the diocese is also presenting a television special “Joy to the World: Christmas in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.” The show will highlight beloved Christmas traditions, the overwhelming spirit of giving, and beautiful music from parish and school musicians. It will air on Dec. 20th at 1 PM on WATM ABC 23 and on Christmas morning at 7 AM on WWCP FOX 8.

Weare placing names of the sick in the bulletin for prayer providing they give permission. *May the* *Divine Physician send healing grace for those for* *whom we pray:* Allen C. Rosemas, Patricia Murphy, Bernice Myers, Dwight Fyock, Dylon Wills, Missy, Joanne (Kolar) Hufford, Christine Flanagan, Ayden Alan Grata, Mary Lou Offman, Mary Zangaglia, Natalie Zerby, Valencia Tursi, Homer Locher, Brayden Schofield, Michelle Kasper, Diane Kingera, Allison Krischer, Ted Paluch, Brandt Hutzel, Pearl Litzinger, Patrick Munro, Fran Baldassarre, Kristen Sinosky Long, Cresta Micik, Basil Costantino, Madison McCrory, Laura, Joe Yoder, Dolores Yanzetich, Sandy Krug, Wanda Gramling, Jennifer Hagans, Shawn, Holly, Shane, Spencer, Owen Taylor, Keith & Dawnetta Hoyer, Derrick Varnish, Vincent Koshute, Michelle Elliott, Heather Romanow, Mackston Barrick, Connor Thomas, Erin, Pat, Mary Agnes Nastase, Mary Ann Bertolino, Dick Wilson, Izzy Bihun, Dorothy Kaminsky, Patricia Oshaben, Ashlee Madison, Susan Yanzetich, Mike, Danika Faith, Alina Rusnak, Gary Smay, Elizabeth Howell, Walter Bodziak, Rhonda, Dan Strinkoski, Anne Robinson, Marlene McCrory, Carter Bobak, Vince Arena, Mike Morris, Sarah Kelt, Patty Yanzetich Caldwell, Colton Snyder, Nancy Edmiston, Leonard Oshaben, Adam, Bill Gideos, Janice Dipyatic, Lily Maloney, Scott, Lisa, Rosalie Ambrose, Audrey Costlow, Cathy Sossong, Rosanne Krug, Becky Kakabar, Catherine Tedjeske, Howard Delaney, Ed Myers, Dolores Mucko, Elliana, Ashlee, Helen Soohy, Carol K. Fabrizio, Peggy Carpenter, Mary Kiel, Sharon Vance, Janet Minor, Dave Seder and all of the sick of our parish, the homebound, those in nursing homes, those who care for them, and those in the military along with their families. *(Please call the Rectory to have your name removed from the list when no longer seriously ill. Thank You.)*



LAST WEEK’S COLLECTION

Adults $3,022.00

Loose $ 35.00

Youth $ 19.00

Monthly $1,345.00

Initial Offering $ 15.00

Candles $ 28.00

Maintenance Fund $ 105.00

Immaculate Conception $ 517.00

Christmas Offering $ 475.00

Christmas Flowers $ 145.00

Solemnity of Mary $ 65.00

Religious Retirement $ 573.00

Catholic Charities $ 35.00

Total $6,379.00

We sincerely thank and ask God’s

blessing upon all who have care

and concern for our parish.

*Fourth Sunday of Advent Luke 1:26-38*

*QUESTION: What do you call a family which began with an unmarried pregnant teen and had a twelve-year-old son who ran away from home and was eventually executed as a criminal?*

*ANSWER: HOLY! Two lessons in today’s gospel: (1) No matter what is happening in your family, “The Lord is with you.” (2) “Do not be afraid” for “nothing is impossible with God.”*

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Liturgical Appointments

*Please check the following schedules. If unable to keep your Lay ministry*

*assignment, please find a replacement.*



Christmas Eve December 24th 3:00 PM

Lector: Sandy Bambino

Minister of the Host: Pauline Minor

Altar Server: Dylan Kundrod

Cantor: Susan Blazosky

Christmas Eve December 24th 7:00 PM

Lector: Mary Anne Davis

Minister of the Host: Eric Tedjeske

Altar Server: Ian Dobbins

Cantor: Amy Dobbins

Christmas Day December 25th 9:00:00 AM

Lector: Mike Barton

Minister of the Host: Sally Kolar

Altar Server: Kaden Christ

Cantor: Susan Yanzetich



 Sunday, December 20 Mass ~ 8:00 & 10:30 AM

Confessions / 10:00 – 10:15 AM / St. Paul Room

Girls Scouts / 1:00 – 2:30 PM & 4:00 – 5:30 PM

Monday, December 21 Mass ~ Noon

NO Sunday Choir Practice

Tuesday, December 22 Mass ~ Noon

Boy Scouts / 7:30 – 9:00 PM

Wednesday, December 23 Mass ~ Noon



Thursday, December 24 No Noon Mass

Christmas Eve Masses ~ 3:00 & 7:00 PM

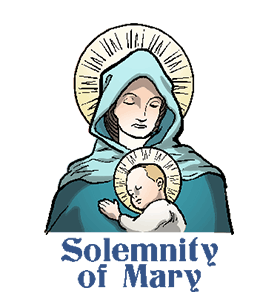
Parish Offices Closed

Friday, December 25 Christmas Day Mass ~ 9:00 AM

Parish Offices Closed

Saturday, December 26 Mass / 4:00 PM

Confessions / 3:30 – 3:45 / St. Paul Room

 UPCOMING EVENTS

December 31 Solemnity of Mary Vigil Mass / 4:00 PM

Parish Offices Closed

January 1, 2021 Solemnity of Mary Mass / 9:00 AM

Parish Offices Closed

FRIAR’S NOOK GIFT SHOP – CHRISTMAS SALE! ~ Finish up (or start!) your Christmas shopping! Save 20% off the ENTIRE store Dec. 18th – 23rd (CLOSED DEC 20th) including nativities, flags, home décor, cards, gifts & much more! The Friar’s Nook Gift Shop is located on the campus of St. Bernardine Monastery at 793 Monastery Road, Hollidaysburg. With any questions, please call 814-695-3802 or message us on Facebook at “The Friar’s Nook Gift Shop”. *Please note: The Friar’s Nook Gift Shop will be closed the following days in observance of the holidays: Dec. 24th – 27th and Dec.31st – Jan.1st.*As always, thank you so much for all the hard work you do to spread God’s message, and please have a safe and blessed Christmas season!





+++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++

dIOCESE OF aLTOONA-johnstown

YEAR END GIVING IS HAPPENING NOW!

*A bequest through your Will!*

What will you be known for when you leave this earth? Perhaps you want your faith to be at the top of the list. Consider leaving a legacy through your Will. It’s simple to do by including the following statement when you create or amend your Will.

*I give, devise, and bequeath to* [the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, or specific parish, school, or ministry]*, or its successor, in* [city, state] *all* [or a percentage] *of the remainder of my estate, both real and personal, for use* [its general support or a specific ministry or initiative].

Need more info or help?

Visit www.dioceseaj.org/ways-to-give/ or contact Pam Seasoltz, Director of Stewardship and Development, at 814.695.5577 or email: [pseasoltz@dioceseaj.org](mailto:pseasoltz@dioceseaj.org)

[](https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=free+clipart+of+a+poinsettia+border&view=detailv2&&id=CB5445BEE0B665B28D730A91789BE55608749957&selectedIndex=50&ccid=4hPsM9Z6&simid=608052918100428968&thid=OIP.Me213ec33d67ac3da0f61101afeda0e1bo0)

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL FLOWERS 2020

IN MEMORY OF:

John Papcun by Violet Barr

John Barr by Violet Barr

Stanley & Barb Brezovec by J. Eric & Susan Wieczorek

Steve & Diane Bernot by J. Eric & Susan Wieczorek

Mike & Luba Slanoc by J. Eric & Susan Wieczorek

Joseph & Catherine Lucas by J. Eric & Susan Wieczorek

Bernard & Betty Neff by Karen Neff

John Neff by Karen Neff

Our Parents by Frank & Deborah Dupnock

Anna Myers by Frank & Deborah Dupnock

Gladys Pepoy by Steve Pepoy

Judy Pepoy by Steve Pepoy

Michael & Josephine Koshute by Paul & Cynthia McCloskey

Daniel Koshute by Paul & Cynthia McCloskey

Louis & Bernice McCloskey by Paul & Cynthia McCloskey

Deceased members of the Estok, Barton, Homolish, Flick Family & Leskanic Families

by Elaine Barton

Deceased members of Ray Plummer Family by William & Betty Plummer

Deceased members of Joseph Surkosky Family by William & Betty Plummer

Podrebarac Family by Alice Podrebarac

DiMarino Family by Alice Podrebarac

Podrebarac Family by Robert Podrebarac

Brindak Family by Robert Podrebarac

Joe & Antoinette Evanchick by Dennis & Veronica Richards

Harry & Bertha Richards by Dennis & Veronica Richards

Deceased Classmates of Adams Class 1962 by Dennis & Veronica Richards

Betty Zaluski by Dennis & Veronica Richards

Betsy Brown by David Brown

David & Hannah Brown by David Brown

Ann Bernat by David Brown

Art & Joan Zibura by David Brown

Mildred Facciani by Rob Facciani

Rose Marie Bambino by Tony & Sandy Bambino

William Stanko by Tony & Sandy Bambino

Mary Michaels by Tony & Sandy Bambino

Lloyd Michaels by Tony & Sandy Bambino

Panek Family by Barry & Mary Ann Spangler

Spangler Family by Barry & Mary Ann Spangler

Deceased Stoker Family by Sara Wieczorek

Deceased Wieczorek Family by Sara Wieczorek

Francis Andrykovitch by Michael Andrykovitch

Mr. & Mrs. Clyde Baumgardner by Bryan & Amy Spangler

Mr. & Mrs. Carl Huber by Bryan & Amy Spangler

Mr. & Mrs. Jack Spangler by Bryan & Amy Spangler

Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Panek by Bryan & Amy Spangler

Betty & Earl Penatzer by Gary & Denise Breto

Louise & Sylvester Bentkowski by Gary & Denise Breto

Mr. & Mrs. John Glovany by Paul Glovany

Mrs. Ann Blazosky by Paul Glovany

John Musilek by Paul Glovany

Carlos Diaz by Paul Glovany

Stoker & Gallaher Families by Wayne & Helen Gallaher

Marcella Bridge by Christine Rose

Howard Rose Jr. by Christine Rose

Michael Davis by Mary Anne Davis

Mary Costlow by Mary Anne Davis

Clair Costlow by Mary Anne Davis

Anna Owens by Mary Anne Davis

Deceased Members of the Bernard Family by Arnold & Marie Bernard Sr.

Deceased Members of the Sholtis Family by Arnold & Marie Bernard Sr.

Albert & Katherine Demko by Camillus & Betty Long

Albert & Clara Long by Camillus & Betty Long

Walter M. Lorek by Jeannine & Rick Roberts

Frank & Margaret Snyder by Paul & Susan Snyder

Harry & Agnes Noon by Paul & Susan Snyder

Our Grandparents by Matthew & Laura Docherty

Theresa Sager by Matthew & Laura Docherty

Olszewski & Habas Families by Robert & Joan Oshaben

Oshaben & Luberto Families by Robert & Joan Oshaben

Charles Vasas by Reba Vasas

Janet Smith by Reba Vasas

Boniface & Charlotte Smith by Reba Vasas

Philip Hillegas by Reba Vasas

Walter M. Lorek by Anita Lorek

Levia & Louis A. Kuhar by Anita Lorek

Margaret & Walter S. Lorek by Anita Lorek

Rhoads Family by Nicholas & Sally Kolar

Kolar Family by Nicholas & Sally Kolar

Ed & Kitty Yakicic by Martin & Tracy Yakicic

Edward & Margaret Yanzetich by Catherine Yanzetich

Deceased Members of Evan & Luba Yanzetich Family by Catherine Yanzetich

Michael & Rose Chalan by daughter, Pauline Minor & Family

Sam & Margaret Minor by son, Nicholas Minor & Family

Our Chalan & Minor Brothers & Sisters by Nicholas & Pauline Minor & Family

Flossie by Pauline Minor

Tony Smay by Kathleen Smay

My Gram & Pap Pcola by Andrew Martin

My Sister Adrienne by Andrew Martin

Francis Andrykovitch by Mildred Andrykovitch

John Stupi by Mildred Andrykovitch

Single Family by Marian Single

John Zibura by Agnes Zibura

Joe & Eileen Zibura by Eileen Zibura

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Cononie Jr. by Michael & Lucia Ann Brezovec

Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Brezovec by Michael & Lucia Ann Brezovec

Mr. & Mrs. John Lidonnice by Michael & Lucia Ann Brezovec

Mr. & Mrs. Larry Lucas by Michael & Lucia Ann Brezovec

John & Nora Ripper by Jeffry & Carol Schofield

Deceased Members of Shay & Faher Families by Joe & Cathy Faher

Stephen Faher by Joe & Cathy Faher

Josh Faher by Mom & Dad

Lehman Family by Michael & Linda Caddy

Caddy Family by Michael & Linda Caddy

Carole Leonard (Mom) by R. Timothy & Carole Kakabar

A and PopPop Sills by R. Timothy & Carole Kakabar

Mae Austin (Grandma) by R. Timothy & Carole Kakabar

Aunt Rita & Uncle Les Martin by R. Timothy & Carole Kakabar

Irene Hribar (Smith) by Frank Hribar

Donna Reuscher by David & Sarah Zajdel

Conrad Reuscher by David & Sarah Zajdel

Ted Zajdel by David & Sarah Zajdel

Pete Parisi by Joseph & Karen Parisi

Violet Parisi by Joseph & Karen Parisi

Emma Diaz (Parisi) by Joseph & Karen Parisi

Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Spanogle by Joseph & Karen Parisi

Ann Marie Swelfer from Husband Louis

Ann Marie Swelfer by Granddaughter Jenna Weis

Ann Marie Swelfer by Diane & Brian Weis

Ann Marie Swelfer by Grandson Jeremy Weis

Matt & Anna Rus by Hermina Tokarsky

Carl Tokarsky by Hermina Tokarsky

Joseph Rus by Hermina Tokarsky

Ann M. Swelfer by Hermina Tokarsky

Deceased Members of the Selepack & Yanzetich Families by Dolores & Evan Yanzetich

Deceased Members of the Stridinger & Yanzetich Families by Susan Yanzetich

Aloysius Neff by Grandchildren Emma, Rachel, Julia, Andrew & Tyler

Albert and Clara Long by Galen & Lorraine George

Bella & Katherine Demko by Galen & Lorraine George

Chester & Margaret George by Galen & Lorraine George

Paul & Violet Cummings by Galen & Lorraine George

Peter & Mary Ann Poldiak by John & Susan Poldiak

George & Jeanne Borenish by John & Susan Poldiak

Deceased Members of the Leonard Jasiecki Family by John & Susan Poldiak

Bruno & Elvida Bovino from Great Grandchildren Emma, Rachel, Julie, Andrew, Tyler,

Shawn & Elizabeth

Mary & Stanley Zybura Family by Sara Jane Zybura

Linda Bovina from Sisters Louise Neff & Joyce Suckenik

Mary Lou Yourich by Grandchildren Libby & Ian Dobbins

John & Nora Ripper by Mrs. Annette Kensinger

Valeria & Andrew Kush by Lawrence & Suellen Kush

Fremont & Dorothy Thomas by Lawrence & Suellen Kush

Michelle Poborski by Gloria Tompkins

Henry & Fran Zakraysek by Karen A. Zakraysek

Carol Horner by Loving Husband, Children & Grandchildren

Brandon Baxter by Loving Family

Wayne & Shirley Baxter by Loving Family

Stanley & Mary McCloskey by Loving Family

Verde & Vera Horner by Loving Family

Mike Hudak, Sr. by Edward Hudak

Rose Hudak by Edward Hudak

Margaret Hudak by Edward Hudak

Steve Domen by Edward Hudak

Kyle Fleck by Helen Slonac & Family

Nick Somonick by Helen Slonac & Family

Classmates of Adams-Summerhill Class 1964-1965 by Helen Slonac & Family

IN HONOR OF:

Ronald & Joanne Thomas by Martin & Tracy Yakicic

U.S. Military by Michael & Linda Caddy

DONATIONS:

Helen Petkosh

Carol Podrebarac

Jenna Frampton

William & Dee Kostan

Adam Bambino

Mark Bambino

Robert Bambino

Shirley Walls

Andrea Shirdon

James Shirdon Jr.

Ray & Christine Baxter

Elizabeth Zajdel

Kathy Kalicky

John & Bonnie Bizzarri

Thank you to everyone who donated to our Holiday Flowers.

We will use any extra monies to provide flowers in the church throughout 2021.

[](https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=free+clipart+of+a+poinsettia+border&view=detailv2&&id=CB5445BEE0B665B28D730A91789BE55608749957&selectedIndex=50&ccid=4hPsM9Z6&simid=608052918100428968&thid=OIP.Me213ec33d67ac3da0f61101afeda0e1bo0)

A charming story is told of Pepita, a poor Mexican girl who had no gift to present the Christ Child at Christmas Eve Services. As Pepita walked slowly to the chapel with her cousin Pedro, her heart was filled with sadness rather than joy.

"I am sure, Pepita, that even the most humble gift, if given in love, will be acceptable in His eyes," said Pedro consolingly.

Not knowing what else to do, Pepita knelt by the roadside and gathered a handful of common weeds, fashioning them into a small bouquet. Looking at the scraggly bunch of weeds, she felt more saddened and embarrassed than ever by the humbleness of her offering. She fought back a tear as she entered the small village chapel.

As she approached the altar, she remembered Pedro's kind words: "Even the most humble gift, if given in love, will be acceptable in His eyes." She felt her spirit lift as she knelt to lay the bouquet at the foot of the nativity scene. Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into blooms of brilliant red, and all who saw them were certain that they had witnessed a Christmas miracle right before their eyes.

From that day on, the bright red flowers were known as the Flores de Noche Buena, or Flowers of the Holy Night, for they bloomed each year during the Christmas season.

Today, the common name for this plant is the poinsettia!

The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ. The white leaves represent his purity.