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DEACON & PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

Deacon Mark Bialkowski

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Peter Gonciarz

December 21, 2025 | Fourth Sunday of Advent



GET IN TOUCH!

RECTORY OFFICE

Monday- Friday: 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.
(closed on Th. and Fri. from 1—2 p.m.)

716-828-9444 • 716-828-9429 fax

olvrectory@olvbasilica.org

SCHOOL

2760 S. Park Avenue, Lackawanna

Mary Doyle-Szlosek, Principal

716-828-9434

elementary@olvbasilica.org

www.ourladyofvictoryelementary.org

FAITH FORMATION

2760 S. Park Avenue, Lackawanna

Sunday: 7:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.

Monday- Friday: 7:30 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Carmelann Zomeri, Director

716-828-9437

faithformation@olvbasilica.org

GIFT SHOP AND MUSEUM

Open Daily 10:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

(closed 11:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. for lunch)

James Murphy, Gift Shop Manager

716-828-9433

olvgiftshop@olvbasilica.org

COME & WORSHIP

BASILICA HOURS

The Basilica is open for private prayer every day during the following hours:

Sunday: 6:30 a.m.—6:00 p.m.

Monday- Friday: 6:30 a.m.—7:00 p.m.

Saturday: 6:30 a.m.—7:30 p.m.

WEEKEND MASSES

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 p.m.

Sunday: 8 a.m., 10 a.m., Noon, 4:30 p.m.

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday—Saturday:

7:30 a.m. and 12:10 p.m.

There is an additional Mass at 8:15 a.m. on Fridays when school is in session.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturdays: (except Holy Saturday)

3:00—4:00 p.m. and 7:00—7:30 p.m.

Eve of First Fridays: 3:00—4:00 p.m.

Eve of Holy Days: 3:00—4:00 p.m.

GUIDED BASILICA TOURS

Please call the Rectory Office at 716-828-9444 if you are interested in scheduling a group tour.

Address: 767 Ridge Road, Lackawanna, NY 14218

Phone: 716-828-9444

Website: www.olvbasilica.org

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST,

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

We gather this weekend to celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent and prepare during these final days of Advent to celebrate Christmas. We welcome the greatest gift of all, Jesus our Savior, Son of God and Son of Mary and Joseph. The fourth candle on our Advent Wreath represents "Peace" and that is what I pray for all our wonderful parishioners and benefactors. May the Peace of the Christ Child fill your hearts and homes this Christmas and throughout the coming year.

CHRISTMAS GIFT BOOK

As a Christmas gift to all of our parishioners, I am giving the book entitled *The Seven Pillars of Catholic Spirituality* by Matthew Kelly. I encourage every household to take home one book (available at the entrances to the Basilica). If your spiritual life were a house, what would it be like? What street would it be on? What part of town would it be in? What would it look like? Would it be a house or a home? Is it in need of renovations? Is it peaceful, noisy, distracting, well-organized, messy? In *The Seven Pillars of Catholic Spirituality*, Matthew Kelly demonstrates the timeless genius of Catholicism by illustrating the practical and spiritual ways seven ancient spiritual habits continue to enrich our daily lives today. My hope and prayer is this book will strengthen your individual spiritual life and the life of our Basilica Parish Family. Merry Christmas!

CHRISTMAS MASSES & CONFESSIONS

Priests are available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation on **Saturdays from 3:00—4:00 p.m. and 7:00—7:30 p.m.**

In addition, priests will be available to hear confessions in the Basilica on **Monday, December 22 from 3:00—4:00 p.m. and 6:30—7:30 p.m.**

Christmas Eve, Wednesday, Dec. 24 –
Masses at 4:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and
Midnight (11:30 p.m. choral prelude)

Christmas Day, Thursday, Dec. 25 –
Masses at 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. and
12:00 Noon

Also, please note that all of our Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day will be livestreamed, so if you want to view any one of the Masses, simply go to our website at olvbasilica.org and click on "Live Streaming" in the top righthand corner a few minutes before the scheduled Mass time. We will also provide a digital Christmas Mass that can be viewed on our website or social media sites anytime Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

KIDS' NIGHT UNDER THE DOME

Our beloved *Kids' Night Under the Dome* event is back! Families are invited to this special evening, scheduled for **Saturday, January 3 from 5:30 p.m. — 8:30 p.m.** Come for the 4:30 p.m. Mass celebrating Epiphany and then stay for some family fun! Children are invited to dress comfortably and bring a blanket to use while hearing and seeing the story of the Magi come to life under the dome of the Basilica. There will also be singalongs, giveaways, kid-friendly activities like crafts and a scavenger hunt, and pizza, snacks, and hot cocoa. (All children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.)

The event is free, but a donation of a non-perishable food item for the St. Vincent de Paul Society would be appreciated.

Pre-registration is highly encouraged to reserve your place—scan this code or go to olvbasilica.org/christmas.



JOIN US IN TRANSFORMING THE BASILICA'S SOUTHEAST ENTRANCEWAY

As we celebrate the remarkable restoration of Our Lady of Victory National Shrine & Basilica, I invite you to be part of a transformative journey

creating a welcome plaza worthy of a saint! This inspiring project aims to create a stunning, accessible entrance that pays tribute to Father Baker's enduring legacy. An anonymous benefactor is challenging us to rise to the occasion with a generous \$500,000 matching gift! The challenge gift will match 50¢ for every dollar contributed, increasing your impact, but only until December 31.

The welcome plaza initiative is a unique opportunity for our community to come together and create a lasting legacy for future generations. Please take a moment to scan the QR code to review the materials about the welcome plaza. I encourage you to make a contribution—every gift, regardless of size, brings us one step closer to our goal. Together, we can design a welcome that reflects our faith and commitment to our community. Thank you for your unwavering support!



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Merry Christmas! We welcome the greatest gift of all, Jesus, our Savior, Son of God and Son of Mary. This is the true meaning of Christmas. God became man in Jesus Christ. God could no longer bear the distance between us and Him. God wanted to break the barrier by becoming one of us. The baby born in Bethlehem is God speaking to us. It is God reaching out to us. It is God telling us clearly this is how much I love you. Wouldn't you do anything to be able to spend time with your loved ones? God did just that. God did the impossible by becoming man in Jesus Christ so He could be near us and so that He could save us.

People who have a relationship with the Father through Jesus Christ do not share the secular world's view of God as distant and disinterested. They see God at work in their lives every day. They sense God at work sustaining them in their difficulties, providing for them in their need, and comforting them in their sorrow. They sense God

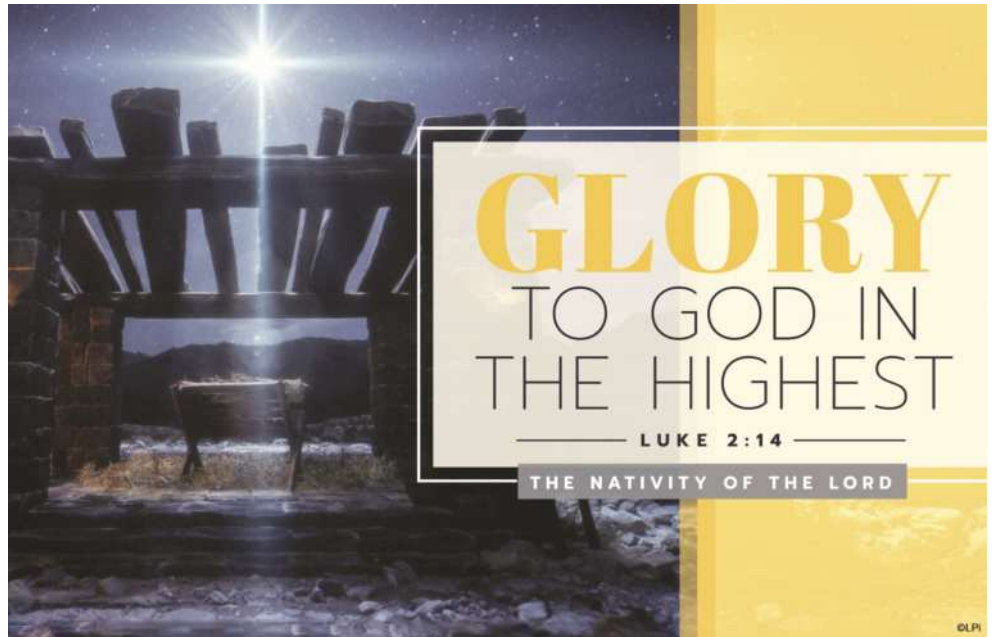
calling them to serve others, to forgive when it seems impossible, and to reach out to the needy. They trust that God is in control when things seem out of control and they feel certain that God will bring good out of whatever evil they see in the world. They have faith that the God who loved them enough to become a man in Jesus Christ will do everything else for them besides.

God's message to us this Christmas is the same message of the angel to the shepherds that first Christmas night: "Do not be afraid, for behold, I proclaim good news of great joy that will be for all people. For today in the City of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ the Lord."

Never be afraid of opening your heart to God and allow God to fill you with everything He wants to give . . . His unconditional love and mercy. In these uncertain times, let us heed the call to replace fear and anxiety with trust in God's daily presence in our lives. Let us follow the example of our beloved founder, Father Baker, and place our lives under the protection of Our Lady of Victory and the providence of God.

As I reflect on the true meaning of Christmas, I take this opportunity to thank you, our devoted parishioners, visitors, donors and benefactors, for the myriad of ways in which you reflect the love and compassion of Jesus Christ to others. Thank you for your generous support of OLV Charities and our OLV Basilica Parish, as well as the generous donations of food and money to the St. Vincent de Paul Society in providing for the needy, and the overwhelming amount of gifts collected for the children we serve through the Christmas Angel & Mitten Giving Tree. Many children and families will have a brighter Christmas because of your generosity. I am deeply grateful!

I want to share with you this reflection that inspires me on keeping Christmas . . . not just for a day but throughout the year:



Keeping Christmas

Are you willing... To forget what you have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for you? To ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world? To put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground? To see that men and women are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy? To own up to the fact that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life? To close your book of complaints against the management of the universe, and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness? Are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing... To stoop down and consider the needs and desires of little children? To remember the weakness and loneliness of people growing old? To stop asking how much your friends love you, and ask yourself whether you love them enough? To bear in mind the things that other people have to bear in their hearts? To try to understand what those who live in the same

home with you really want, without waiting for them to tell you? To trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you? To make a grave for your ugly thoughts, and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open? Are you willing to do those things, even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing... To believe that love is the strongest thing in the world, stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death — and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem two thousand years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you keep Christmas. And if you can keep it for a day, why not always? But you can never keep it alone.

- Henry Van Dyke

On behalf of Fr. Paul, Fr. Dan, Deacon Michael, Deacon Mark, and myself, we wish you all a Blessed Christmas season and a Blessed & Healthy New Year 2026! Be assured of our continued prayers! May Father Baker intercede for you and Our Lady of Victory protect you and your loved ones! God bless you! Merry Christmas!

**GRATEFULLY,
FR. DAVID**

PRAYER & WORSHIP

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"I proclaim to you good news of great joy!" God has been calling us to rejoice since the very beginning. This news is so good, the whole world pauses to rejoice in it on Christmas Day. Find the fulfillment of all joy in God's plan for your life. Consider the religious life or priesthood, and contact Fr. Dave Baker at 716-847-5535 or visit buffalovocations.org.



JOIN US IN PRAYER

Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.

All are welcome to join in praying the Rosary for Peace on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. in the Basilica.

Tuesdays • 6:30 p.m.
January 6, February 3 and 17, March 3 and 24

Join our "Victory for Christ" prayer group in the Basilica's lower level chapel to praise, thank, and give witness to God.

Friday Afternoons

Join us each week for Eucharistic Adoration in the Basilica on Fridays after the 12:10 p.m. Mass until 5:00 p.m.

MASS INTENTIONS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20—Advent Weekday

7:30 am	Intentions for the Novena in Honor of the Birth of Our Lord
10:30 am	Funeral for Jaqueline A. Mazur
12:10 pm	David Freitus by Elaine Freitus
1:30 pm	Wedding: Jessica Serafin and Raymond Harris
4:30 pm	Hilmar & Rita Horbach by Nancy Horbach

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21—Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:00 am	Cindi Selmensberger by Marcia Tos
10:00 am	Shirley Motyka by Dick Motyka
12:00 pm	Intentions for the Novena in Honor of the Birth of Our Lord
4:30 pm	All Souls Intentions

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22—Advent Weekday

7:30 am	Intentions for the Novena in Honor of the Birth of Our Lord Joseph & Shirley Wilczewski by Family
12:10 pm	Kevin Bond (Birthday Remembrance) by Bill & Mary Lou Bond George Frederick Egloff, Jr. (Birthday Remembrance) by the Egloff Family
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Advent Confessions
6:30 pm - 7:30 pm	Advent Confessions

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23—Saint John of Kanty, Priest

7:30 am	Intentions for the Novena in Honor of the Birth of Our Lord Thomas H. Twist by Family
12:10 pm	Effie Ringle by daughter, Louise Filomena Del Vecchio by Regina A. Del Vecchio

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24—Advent Weekday

7:30 am	Intentions for the Novena in Honor of the Birth of Our Lord Theresa Kind by David & Palma Tomasik
12:10 pm	Living & Deceased Parishioners of OLV Basilica
4:00 pm	Vigil Mass for Christmas: Living & Deceased Parishioners of OLV Basilica
6:30 pm	Vigil Mass for Christmas: Living & Deceased Parishioners of OLV Basilica

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25—Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord

Midnight	Christmas Mass: Living & Deceased Parishioners of OLV Basilica
8:00 am	Christmas Mass: Novena Intentions in Honor of the Birth of Our Lord
10:00 am	Christmas Mass: Living & Deceased Parishioners of OLV Basilica
12:00 pm	Christmas Mass: Living & Deceased Parishioners of OLV Basilica

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26—Saint Stephen, The First Martyr

7:30 am	Colin J. MacDonald (Wedding Anniversary) by wife, Shirley A. MacDonald Mary Rog D'Andrea by Gary & Gail
12:10 pm	Thomas Mazurek (Birthday Remembrance) by David & Cynthia Muskopf Sante & Angelina DeGiuli by Anne Maria DeGiuli & Family

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27—Saint John, Apostle & Evangelist

7:30 am	Peter Szalasny by Theresa Kolasny
9:00 am	Funeral for Owen J. Macey
11:30 am	Wedding: Lauren Wardynski and Peter Fields (no 12:10 p.m. Mass today)
4:30 pm	Elma Wilson by Christine Brown

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28—The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

8:00 am	Rev. George Stephan by the Grasso Family
10:00 am	Edward & Mary Jarosz by Ed & Pat Jarosz
12:00 pm	David, Christian & Joshua Honan by the Honan Family
4:30 pm	Jeremiah P. & Dolores W. Sullivan by Nora Sullivan

UPCOMING EVENTS

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The Rectory Office will be closed Wednesday 12/24—Friday 12/26, as well as Wednesday 12/31 and Thursday 1/1.

CHRISTMAS DISPLAYS

During this Christmas season, make sure to view our **Nativity Set Exhibit** with more than 100 sets from around the world, part of Fr. Roy Herberger's unique collection. If you came last year—don't worry—the 2025 exhibit is all new! And throughout this season, view **Sacred Stories in Glass**, a close-up exhibit of some of the Basilica's beautiful stained-glass windows. Both exhibits are available to view on the lower level of the Shrine during regular Basilica hours through January 6, 2026.

MAZUREK'S BAKED GOODS AVAILABLE IN THE BASILICA

Wednesdays • after 12:10 p.m. Mass

Mazurek's baked goods are now available on the Basilica's lower level on most Wednesdays following 12:10 p.m. Mass! Since 1933, Mazurek's Bakery has been a beloved name in Buffalo, known for authentic Polish rye bread, pretzels, and sweet treats. In 2020, OLV Human Services purchased Mazurek's and integrated it into their WAY program to give students and young adults hands-on workforce training. This vocational initiative builds on Father Baker's

JOIN US AT OLV ELEMENTARY!

At OLV Elementary, we believe learning should be joyful, faith-filled, and full of possibilities. Our teachers, students, and families work together to create a warm, welcoming community where every child shines. We educate children from PreK 3 to 8th grade. Please call 716-828-7592 for a private tour!

vision of preparing youth with skills that empower them for life. For questions, contact mazureksbakery@gmail.com.

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION

Tuesdays • 6:30 p.m.
January 13, February 10, March 10,
April 14, May 12, or June 9



If you are a new parent looking to have your baby baptized, please plan to attend one of our upcoming Baptism Preparation classes.

Choose the class that fits best with your schedule. Sessions are held in the Basilica's Marian Room. Scan the QR code to register. For questions, contact Deacon Mark at 716-339-0767 or mbialkowski@olvbasilica.org.

OLV SERVICE CLUB

Please help us stock the OLV Service Club Food Pantry in the parking lot by OLV Elementary. Be sure to mark items "not for resale" and cross out the barcode to ensure items go to homes that need it. Canned good items needed are: turkey, chicken or ham; green beans; cranberries; white potatoes; sweet potatoes; yams; soups; gravy/gravy packets; or applesauce. Any help is greatly appreciated! For questions, contact Bridget Wood at 716-536-3887 or bowood62@gmail.com.



Please pray for our brothers and sisters in the OCIA who are anticipating to fully enter into the Church here at Our Lady of Victory Basilica:

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults: Jill Bermingham, Thomas Bigouette, Molly Bryniarski, Dia Castro, Victoria Christopher, James Clawson, Melanie Delmendo, Sandy Dunkleman, Cort Farley, Linsey Heferle, Emily Hoffman, Taylor Hollarn, Trent Kubiak, Allison Malecki, Jared Murray, Carol Parker, Evelyn Parker, Sienna Pawlowski, Brenna Smith, Tamara Sullivan, Murray Wright, Natalie Wright

Order of Christian Initiation of Children & Families: Mea Alzaidi, Gabriella Chicone, David Cordova, Maria De Moura, Joseph Fox, James Fox, Jason Fox, Brady Hanlon, Noah Hanlon, Chelsea Hanlon, Zoe Hines, Evan Lee, Gabrielle Lohr, Gibson Mansfield, Giovanni Mansfield, Adalis Pellow



THANK YOU!

A heartfelt thank you to the Knights of Columbus, Fr. Baker Council #2243, for their generous gift of warm coats for our OLV Elementary School students. We also extend a special thank you to the Columbiettes for creating beautiful knitted and crocheted hats to accompany each coat. Your thoughtfulness is keeping our students cozy and cared for this winter!

SUPPORT OLV

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Offertory

Donate to the offertory collection to support OLV National Shrine & Basilica.



Vigil Candles

Pay the requested offering (\$5 each) to light a candle inside the Basilica.



Adopt an Angel

Adopt an angel for Christmas in support of our Basilica Centennial Campaign. Questions? Call Shannon Donovan at 716-828-9610.



Volunteer

Become an OLV Parish Volunteer! Fill out a form to indicate your interests.

THIS CHRISTMAS, GIVE YOUR GIFTS ONLINE



IT'S SAFE. IT'S SIMPLE. IT'S CONVENIENT

Support OLV Basilica today with your credit or debit card or a checking/savings account.

1

Go to olvbasilica.org and click *Donate*.

2

Select a collection or event.

3

Make a gift using a credit/debit card, bank account, PayPal, or Venmo. That's it!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

OFFERTORY COLLECTION FOR
Sunday, November 23, 2025

In order to maintain our beautiful Basilica and support the mission and ministries of our parish, including our elementary school, we depend on weekly offertory donations.

Offertory envelopes can be mailed or dropped off at the Rectory Office at:
**767 Ridge Road,
Lackawanna, NY 14218**
or you may give online.

We are very grateful for your ongoing support of Our Lady of Victory Basilica!

PARISH COLLECTIONS:

Weekly	\$15,580.65
Monthly	\$596.00
All Souls Mass Intentions	\$5.00
Ash Wednesday	\$20.00
Christmas Flowers	\$170.00
Fuel	\$100.00
Holy Day: All Saints (11/1)	\$5.00
Holy Day: Christmas (12/25)	\$101.00
Holy Day: Solemnity of Mary (1/1)	\$31.00
Pennies to Heaven	\$193.00
Processing Fees (online)	\$5.27
Shrines / Votive Candles	\$1,967.00
ADDITIONAL COLLECTIONS:	
Archdiocese for Military Services	\$40.00
Campaign for Human Develop.	\$817.00
Holy Name Society	\$5.00
Religious Retirement Appeal	\$30.00
TOTAL	\$19,665.92

MINISTRY SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER 27—28					
	TIME	LECTOR	EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS	ALTAR SERVERS	SACRISTAN
SAT.	4:30 pm	Jeffrey Stenzel	Paul State, Mary Stenzel, Jean Dulak	A.J. Ball, Samantha Ball, Isaac Cacacho	Mary Anne Jackson
SUN.	8:00 am	Donna Mitchell	Mary Patricia Allman, Moey Oakley, Janet Covino	Nathaniel, Joshua, and Theodore Lindstrom	Mary Patricia Allman
	10:00 am	James Schmigel, Jr.	Patricia Osborne, Timothy Wing, Bridget Wood		Diane Bona
	Noon	Ellen Scheiderer	David West, Doreen West, Sandy Swiech	Carter Cofield	Robert McDonough
	4:30 pm	Annette lafallo	Donna Gelle, Stefan Gelle	Erin Bialkowski	Michalene Murray



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