

**JANUARY 1, 2012: THE OCTAVE DAY OF THE
NATIVITY OF THE LORD. SOLEMNITY OF
MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD**



When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. — Lk 2:17-19

Scripture from the Lectionary for Mass (© 2011, 1982, 1979 CD)

LITURGY

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday, January 1, Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God (Nm 6:22-27/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21)

8:00 am- Pete Steinberg

10:30 am- James Bludau & Rose Trojcek

Monday, January 2, Sts. Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops & Doctors of the Church (1 Jn 2:22-28/Jn 1:19-28)

7:00 am- Lou Kubena

10:00 am- Pete Brom Family, Benefactors (H'ville Rehab)

Tuesday, January 3, The Most Holy Name of Jesus (1 Jn 2:29-3:6/Jn 1:29-34)

7:00 am- Florian & Martha Tomsu

Wednesday, January 4, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious (1 Jn 3:7-10/Jn 1:35-42)

7:00 am- Bernie & Stephen Bludau

8:05 am- Paul Jansky

Thursday, January 5, St. John Neuman, bishop (1 Jn 3:11-21/Jn 1:43-51)

7:00 am- Joe & Helen Grafe

10:00 am- Leon Sitka (Stevens)

Friday, January 6, St. Andre Bessette, religious (1 Jn 5:5-13/Mk 1:7-11 or Lk 3:23-38 or 3:23, 31-34, 36, 38)

7:00 am- Joe, Lillian, Sophie & Katie Muhlstein

8:05 am- Deceased members of Joe & Bernardina Bludau Family

Saturday, January 7, St. Raymond of Penyafort, priest (1 Jn 5:14-21/Jn 2:1-11)

5:30 pm- Douglas Bludau

Sunday, January 8, The Epiphany of the Lord (Is 60:1-6/Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12)

8:00 am- Dorothy, Ervin, Evelyn & Bonnie Grahmann

10:30 am- For our Parish Family

Bulletin & Radio Broadcast Mass Sponsor: KJZT Society #2 - Hallettsville.

Vigil Light: In memory of the Lucario Cappellano Family.

Our Gift to God: Envelopes-\$5,481; Christmas-\$5,401; Manna-\$2,431; Church Endowment-\$74; School Endowment-\$301; Loose-\$4,495; Children's-\$177.

Perpetual Adoration – An adorer is needed on Mondays at 2:00 p.m. If you are able to spend this hour in adoration with our Lord, please call Charlene Bradbury at 798-3224.

Anniversaries:

Welden & Virginia Lell	50 years	Jan. 6
Kay & Leon Steinocher	40 years	Jan. 7

The Rectory will be closed on Monday, January 2 in observance of the Solemnity of Mary and for the New Year's Day holiday.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONDAY, JANUARY 2

-No rosary & evening prayer.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3

-Quilting Circle, 9:00 a.m., KC Hall of Fame Room.

-Women's ACTS meeting, 7:00 p.m., Family Center.

-K.C.'s General Meeting, 7:30 p.m., KC Hall.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4

-CCD: K-12th Grade, 6:00-7:15 p.m.

-English Class, 6:00-7:15 p.m., Family Center.

-Divine Mercy Study/Prayers, 7:30 p.m., Church Cry Rm.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5

-First Friday Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament begins at 6:00 p.m. in church. The intention this month: *respect for life and success of Catholic schools.*

-Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration, 7:00 p.m. in church.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6

-First Friday Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament ends with Benediction at 6:00 p.m. in church.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7

-Serra Club Mass, 8:30 a.m., St. Rose, Schulenburg.

Among our sick: Edna Key, Frank Fishar, Faith Del Castillo, Michael Gerdes, Renae Ross, Hubert & Mary Grahmann, Doug Blumberg, Dan & Danielle Grady, Rose Thumann, Dr. Michael Moore, Bill Gohlke, Sterlin Ritchie, Ed Aulick, Ricky Skelton, Larry Appelt, Victor Pavliska, Anita Bohuslav, Anita Kallus, Daniel Wick, Josephine Janak, Paul Najvar, Irene Bordovsky, Betty Hemmi, Milissa Zamora, Rhonda Janak, Larry Korenek, Donna Belt, Red Kahaneck, Theresa (Alvin) Steffek, Bobby Pavliska, Liz Woytek, Hank & Marion Morris, Angela Hermes, Bohumir Pustejovsky, Emily Dworsky, Chris Layton, Wade Amsden, nursing home residents & home-bound.

Every First Thursday, the Church commemorates Jesus' institution of the Sacrament of His Body and Blood and of the holy Priesthood which is intrinsically tied to the Eucharist. Join us on Thursday for a special Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration in the church from 7:00-8:00 p.m. for the intention of the priests and seminarians of our diocese of Victoria and to pray for more good and holy priests for the service of our diocese.

Perpetual Adoration will observe regular hours during the New Year holiday. If unable to fulfill your regular hour, please find a replacement or call your hourly captain. For questions, please call Charlene Bradbury 798-3224.

Calendar Membership: Dec 22: Monica Chambers, Victoria-\$250; **Dec 23:** Phillip Sheridan, San Antonio-\$250; **Dec 24:** Jayne Easterling, Columbus-\$250; **Dec 25:** Royce & Irene Schulte-\$250.



Donations for Christmas Flowers:

Marcella & Henry Joe Henke-\$10; Melvin & Lorraine Rasmussen-\$50; Lillian Haas-\$10; Lillian & Marvin Rabel in memory of Stacey Rabel-\$10.

From the Desk of Father John

We have come to the end of another year. We thank God for all His blessings in 2011 and we thank Him for giving us the strength to deal with the difficult times during the year.

As we begin a New Year, let us ask God's continued blessing. Let us always keep God first in our lives. Let us also ask God's special blessing upon all our families.

On New Year's Day, we pray for peace in our families and peace in the world. We also honor Mary on her Feast Day as the Mother of God.

May this year be a very blessed year for each and every one.

Next Sunday, January 8th, will be the 6th anniversary of the establishment of our Adoration Chapel.

**Sacred Heart Catholic School News
Office 798-4251**

Jan 3: Classes resume.

Jan 9: Student Council Blood Drive, 10:30 am–6:00 pm.
School Advisory Council Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Teacher's Work Room.

Extravaganza – Feb. 4: Social, dinner & dance (music provided by "Cactus Country"). Tickets \$125 per couple & available at Sacred Heart Credit Union, School Office & Rectory.

Catholic School Sweepstakes for Catholic Education
Raffle tickets \$5 each. Call Joyce Smolik 798-5349, Kathy Haas 798-4251 or stop by the Rectory.

**Religious Education (CCD) ~~ Office 798-3124
Angela McConnell, Coordinator**

Jan 4: CCD classes resume.

Jan 8: 4th Grade youth involvement at 8:00 a.m. Mass.

Jan. 28: First Penance practice, 9:00 a.m. in church.

Jan. 29: First Penance, 2:00 p.m. in church.



PRAYER FOR RAIN – *Almighty God, we are in need of rain. We realize now, looking up into the clear, blue sky, what a marvel even the least drop of rain really is. To think that so much water can fall out of the sky, which now is empty and clear! We place our trust in You. We are sure that You know our needs. But You want us to ask You anyway, to show You that we know we are dependent on You. Look on our dry hills and fields, dear God, and bless them with the living blessing of soft rain. Then the land will rejoice, and the rivers will sing Your praises, and the hearts of men will be made glad. Amen.*

Single Catholic women (18-50 years of age, who are discerning God's call) are invited to attend a "Come and See" weekend at Incarnate Word Convent, Victoria on Jan. 21-22. Please check us out at www.iwbsvictoria.org or call 575-7111 or e-mail iwbsvoc@yahoo.com for more details or to make a reservation.

Sponsors for the Bulletin (\$80) and Radio Broadcast Mass (\$50) are needed. If you are able to be a sponsor, please come by the Rectory at your earliest opportunity.

Mary, the Holy Mother of God – January 1 is the oldest celebration of Mary in the Catholic Church. The custom of honoring the Virgin on the first day of the New Year originates in the sixth century, when her celebration was tied to the octave day of Christmas, the eighth day after December 25. In doing so, ancient preachers would remind their congregations about the role that Mary played in the history of salvation. Jesus was born of a woman, and so, as Eucharistic Prayer 4 states, "Made incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, He shared our human nature in all things but sin." The human nature of Christ is rooted in His being born like us. As we round out the Christmas celebration with its Octave Day on January 1, we venerate the woman who gave birth to Him.

There is a dual action in today's Gospel that is sometimes overlooked. The shepherds find the infant in the manger as has been told to them by the angel. And then they go out to tell others about the child. In the meantime, Mary reflects on all these things in her heart.



These are the two complementary stances of the Christian: action and reflection. Both are needed for a balanced spiritual life. It is, in effect, putting into practice the two great commandments: love God and love your neighbor.

As we begin the New Year, it is customary to make resolutions: to diet, to exercise, to change something in one's life. Like Mary, who reflected on the events surrounding the birth of her child, we take some time to reflect on our own lives: where we have been, and where we are going. The Gospel gives us the opportunity to situate that reflection in a spiritual context. What does the birth of Jesus mean for me spiritually (reflection), and what do I intend to do about that in my daily life (action)?
2011 Liturgical Publications Inc

SACRED HEART CHURCH ENDOWMENT FUND –
In memory of Emily Sitka: Marvin & Susan Bujnoch-\$20; Martha Sitka-\$20. **In memory of Gilbert Butschek:** James & Joyce Bucek-\$10.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL OPERATING FUND –
In memory of Gilbert Butschek: Clifford & Alta Brown-\$10; Estela Matus-\$10

PAM DORNAK SCHOLARSHIP FUND – **In memory of John Pavliska, Jr. & Pam Dornak:** Jimmie & Sylvia Steffek-\$40.

JEROME HAAS SCHOLARSHIP FUND – **In memory of Richard Klmitchek, Sr.:** Jimmie & Sylvia Steffek-\$20. **In memory of Gilbert Butschek, Gene Drozd & Henry Jalufka:** Georgia Haas-\$30

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY –
In memory of Marie Holy by her family-\$500

The Word of God This Week

Set time aside each day this week with other members of your household, with other members of your parish or alone to listen to and reflect on the living Word of God. Use these passages from the Lectionary that are assigned for Liturgy this week. Reflect on how the Lord is inviting you to a deeper union with him.

TODAY*

Numbers 6:22–27
Galatians 4:4–7
Luke 2:16–21

MONDAY

John 1:19–28

"Among you stands one whom you do not know . . ."

TUESDAY

John 1:29–34

" . . . I myself have . . . testified that this is the Son of God."

WEDNESDAY

John 1:35–42

"Look, here is the Lamb of God!"

THURSDAY

John 1:43–51

"You are the King of Israel!"

FRIDAY

Luke 3:23–38

"Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work."

SATURDAY

John 2:1–11

"My hour has not yet come."

*Solemnity of the Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord and the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Mary, Mother of God and Our Mother



Today is the first day of the calendar year, a day when people often make new resolutions or prophecies that attempt to predict the future; we could even say it's a day of cosmic proportions.

In the meantime, the Catholic Church celebrates the motherhood of Mary to replace the celebration of the circumcision of the child Jesus in the liturgical calendar. While the circumcision emphasized the humanity of Jesus and his incorporation in the Jewish covenant, the celebration of Mary as Mother of God reminds us that the child was not only a human baby visited by shepherds, but also God's eternal Word made flesh in a total union with humanity.

The visit of the shepherds also points to the importance of Mary. She is mentioned as the first one the shepherds notice and as the one holding everything in her heart in a special way. Moreover, Jesus gave Mary to us at the foot of the cross, thus the celebration of his birth has to include his mother.

Mary is called Mother of God because she is the mother of the God-man. Earlier controversy claimed she was mother only of the human Jesus. The controversy came to an end in 431 when the ecumenical Council of Ephesus decreed that since the baby was also God, Mary could rightly be called Mother of God.

God invited Mary to a unique and amazing cooperation in the work of Creation: to give her body to the miraculous and awesome birth of God in the flesh. Ave Maria!



The Faith of the Church

On January 1st, the Church used to celebrate Jesus' circumcision, the sign of his incorporation into the people of the covenant. Instead, today we celebrate the motherhood of Mary, as Mother of God. Mary conceived Christ by the Holy Spirit who, through the angel, proclaimed him the Christ at his birth. Also, through Mary, the Holy Spirit brings people, the objects of God's merciful love, into communion with Christ (Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 695, 725, 2599).



Questions of the Week

Catholics believe that Mary is the Mother of the man Jesus, the Mother of God, and our mother. She is also the Mother of the Church and the humble woman who said a big YES to God's request to be the earthen vessel for Jesus.

Adults

What does the mystery of this human baby, who is also the Word made flesh, the Lord of all creation say to me about the love of God for us all?

Children

What can I do this year to be more like God in loving everyone, even those I don't like very much?

Responding to God's Word . . .

In most cultures, the evening of the first day of each new year is celebrated somewhat lavishly. These festivities often are filled with symbols, traditions, special music, and food.

We tend to review our decisions and behaviors of the past year and take this time to define new goals and resolutions for the coming year. It feels as if we have been given another chance, a new opportunity to start from scratch. However, the spiritual meaning is actually more powerful and goes much deeper.

It is against this backdrop of starting over that the Church places the liturgical celebration of Mary as the

Mother of God. The feast of this solemnity acknowledges that Mary is the Mother of God, because she is the mother of the God-man; this we call the mystery of the Incarnation.

As Catholics, all we are asked to do is embrace this mystery of the Word made flesh and to cooperate with God's plans for us. Mary showed us how to do this by lending her body to the miraculous conception and birth of God in the flesh.

As we begin a new year, our most important resolution ought to be to cooperate more deeply with our God of love.

SUGGESTIONS

Use one of these suggestions or one of your own to respond to God's Word this week.

In the home. Take some time during Advent or Christmas to gather together as a family. Let every member explain briefly what the celebration of Mary, Mother of God means to them.

In the workplace or in school. Take holy cards with a brief explanation of the feast and give one to anyone who is open to receive it.

In the community. Try to organize a seminar in your Parish to dialogue on the importance of this solemnity.



Meditation Moment

The novel *The Unoriginal Sinner and the Ice Cream God* contains a letter from young Conroy to God. It reads: "Dear God, Today . . . a guest lecturer proved through the use of logic that you don't exist." God responded to the letter as follows: "Conroy, Ask your professor . . . to list the reasons why pizza and beer taste good together. . . . Logic and reality don't have much to do with one another." The point of God's response is this: Some things are beyond reason. All we can do is what Mary did in today's reading [Luke 2:19]: ponder them deeply.

For reflection . . .

What do I find "wonderful" about the fact that God took human form and lived among us?

WE DIE ON THE DAY WHEN OUR LIVES
CEASE TO BE ILLUMINED BY THE STEADY
RADIANCE, RENEWED DAILY, OF A WONDER,
THE SOURCE OF WHICH IS BEYOND REASON.

DAG HAMMARSKJOLD

FROM *MISSION* BY MARK LINK, SJ

Let Nothing Trouble You

Let nothing
trouble you.

Let nothing scare you.

All is fleeting.

God alone is unchanging.
Patience everything obtains.

Who possesses God
nothing wants.

God alone suffices.

From *The Collected Works of
St. Teresa of Avila* Volume Three,
translated by Kieran Kavanaugh
and Otilio Rodriguez © 1985

Carry this thought in your heart
as a guide for your faith journey
this week.

But when the fullness of
time had come, God sent his
Son, born of a woman . . . in
order to redeem those who
were under the law, so that
we might receive adoption
as children. Galatians 4:4-5

Profile in Faith

Saint Angela Merici
(1470?–1540)

As a young woman Angela became a member of the Secular Franciscan Order. The ignorance of the poor children in her neighborhood saddened her, and she organized a group of girls to help her in catechetical work. Later, she formed the Company of St. Ursula to offer Christian education to future wives and mothers.
Feast Day: January 27

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† Most Reverend Kevin J. Farrell, DD, Bishop of Dallas
September 29, 2011

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Discovering **hope and joy** in the Catholic faith.

January 2012

Sacred Heart, St. Mary, St. John and Ascension Churches

Fr. John C. Peters, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

Try something new

Do you find that your prayer life feels stale or dull occasionally? Try learning a new prayer. Look in the missal at church or the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' website (www.usccb.org) under "Prayer and Worship." Sometimes learning something new to say to God can refresh your time with him.

Hope

Hope is what leads us to desire and expect eternal life with God in Heaven. Hope gives us the strength to keep going when we are troubled, tired, overwhelmed or burdened. Hope is what makes us strong. Followers of Christ always have hope.

God's ways

How do we become disappointed when it seemed as if God didn't answer a prayer? It is so easy to despair when God's ways don't look like our ways. Instead, we need learn more about God by learning the teachings of his Church and reading his Word. Only then will we come to understand his ways.

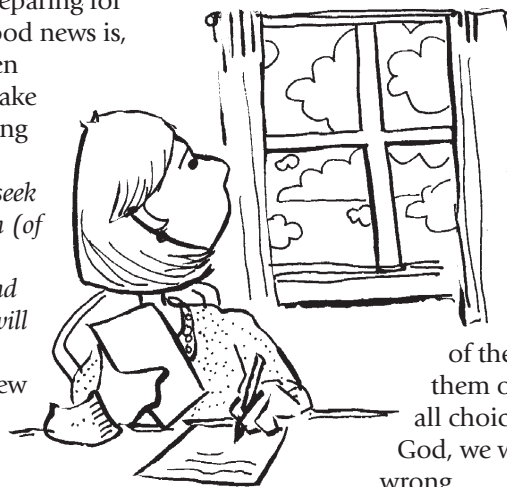


Choose Heaven over Earth

Our lives on Earth last but a moment compared to our time after death, yet we often let earthly matters take priority over preparing for Heaven. The good news is, if we put Heaven first, God will take care of everything else. Jesus promised, "... seek first the kingdom (of God) and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides" (Matthew 6:33).

What is important to you? Although you may have God-inspired values – family, service, work – that may not be what claims your time. Write down a list of what you do each day, from morning to bedtime. Whatever absorbs most of your time and

attention are your real priorities. If they aren't related to God, your activities need to be changed.



How do you make decisions? Do you look to friends or coworkers for advice? Or do you turn to prayer and Scripture for guidance? This year, resolve to take your eyes off

of the world and place them on Christ. If we base all choices and decisions on God, we will never choose wrong.

Do you trust God to make you happy? "For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

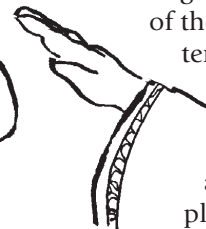
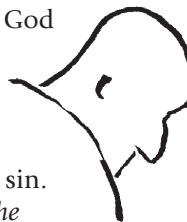
Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why Catholics ask for indulgences?

Every sin has consequences. Obtaining forgiveness through the Sacrament of Penance restores our friendship with God so that we can eventually go to Heaven, but we still must first suffer punishment for our sin.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC,

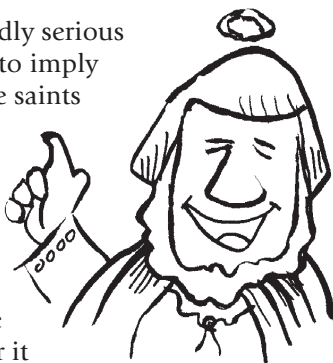
1471) says that through an indulgence, God grants the prayer of the Church that the temporal penalty for sin is reduced or even eliminated. For example, after certain actions and prayers, a plenary indulgence can remove the temporal punishment for sin.



Lighten up with the Good News

If we spread the Gospel and are always deadly serious and anxious, wouldn't our appearance seem to imply that the Good News isn't very good? Even the saints had a laugh now and then.

Humor can give us a new perspective. St. Phillip Neri was a holy priest with a knack for bringing people to God in unusual ways. When a penitent asked permission to wear a hairshirt – an irritating garment worn next to the skin – as a penance St. Philip agreed but ordered the man to wear it



over his clothes. The penance was to bear the jokes and ridicule that resulted.

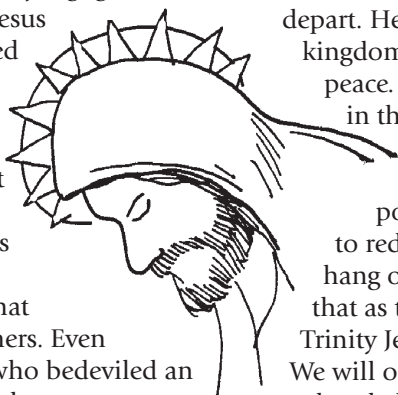
Humor heals. St. Teresa of Avila is said to have complained to God of the rough road he had chosen for her. She was said to have scolded him by saying that if asked his friends to endure so much suffering, "No wonder you have so few." Joking with God didn't make St. Teresa's road any smoother, but it may have made her feel a little better.

from Scripture

Mark 1:21-28, My buddy or my God?

This Gospel describes Jesus and his apostles entering the synagogue at Capernaum where Jesus taught those gathered at the Sabbath. A human teacher would say, "Thus says the Lord..." But Jesus said, "I say to you ..." He taught as one who had the authority of God. That astonished his listeners. Even the unclean spirits who bedeviled an unfortunate man at the synagogue recognized who Jesus was.

Jesus showed his authority by performing an exorcism on the man.



The unclean spirits had to obey him when he commanded them to depart. He came to announce God's kingdom of justice, love, and peace. There is no room for evil in the Kingdom.

In recent years there has been an attempt to portray Jesus as our buddy, to reduce him to a guy we can hang out with. We can't forget that as the second person of the Trinity Jesus has supreme majesty. We will one day appear before him on bended knee to be judged. He is our divine savior and mediator. He may be our dearest friend, but he is not our buddy.

Q & A Is there a right way to ask someone for forgiveness?

Jesus thought asking for and granting forgiveness was so important, he included it in the Our Father, a prayer we say regularly. There is no one right

way to ask for forgiveness. What is important is to make a start.



Take responsibility for what happened between you. Tell your friend that you are sorry and you want to be back on good terms.

Detail steps you can take together to be sure that a breach won't happen again. Key to real contrition is amending your life.

Give some sign that you are sorry. Shake hands or hug. Such an action will start the healing of your relationship.

In order to be in friendship with God, we have to be at peace with each other. Jesus said, "Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).

Feasts & Celebrations

January 2 – St. Basil the Great (379). St. Basil founded the first monastery in Asia Minor. He fought passionately against the Arian threatening the Church and worked to protect the faith and religious freedom. He is best known for his skill as an orator and for being tireless in his pastoral care.

January 21 – St. Agnes (258). At a young age, St. Agnes pledged chastity for Jesus. Reportedly she was turned in for being a Christian by a suitor whom she refused to marry. She maintained her chastity and her faith and was

executed as a result.

January 31 – St. John Bosco (1888). St. John Bosco combined catechetical training and fatherly guidance to teach young men and women how to unite their spiritual life with their work and play. He opened the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales and provided workshops for boys in shoemaking and tailoring. In 1859, he founded the Salesians who were committed to education and mission work.



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