



3rd
Sunday
OF ADVENT

**Our Lady of Peace Church
December 13, 2020**

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER STAN



My dear friends,

On this Third Sunday of Advent, the candle we light on our Advent Wreath is pink, a reminder that this is what was called *Gaudete Sunday* in the old Latin. *Gaudete* is a plural command, directed to us all: rejoice! During this time of preparation for both the Christmas feasts and for the Lord's final coming; during a time of prayer, reflection and introspection; during this time when we are invited to deepen our faith and repent of our sins—all of this is taking place against a background of joyful anticipation.

Thus, our first reading, Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11, includes the following: "I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul; for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of justice, like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, like a bride bedecked with jewels. As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord God make justice and praise spring up before all the nations." Isaiah rejoices that God hears the cry of the poor, comes to their aid, and promises to bring salvation and justice.

In our second passage, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, St. Paul gives this advice: "Brothers and sisters: Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." Pope Francis has often reminded us that we Christians should not go around looking glum. Looking like sourpusses hardly makes Christianity an attractive faith, and it means that we have forgotten what is at the heart of our faith: our God loves us, always and forever; our God forgives us when we ask; our destiny is to be with God forever. Surely, the shadow of the cross falls on everyone sooner or later. Many of the first Christians, Paul included, were put to death for their faith. Suffering is simply a part of life. But the joy to which the bible calls us is not a surface-level happiness, which can come and go depending on circumstances. No, biblical joy, God's joy, is deeper, because sin and death have been defeated. Our God comes to save us. And so, we must rejoice and be glad.

It is interesting to note that the Responsorial Psalm for this Sunday is not actually a Psalm, but it is a song of praise, the Magnificat of Mary, found in Luke 1:46-54. "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked upon his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name."

Finally our gospel reading, John 1:6-8, 19-28, presents the one who directly prepares the way of the Lord by calling people to a baptism of repentance, John the Baptist. John, like Jesus after him, has been anointed by God to bring glad tidings to the poor: One is coming! "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." Lord Jesus, come, and be born anew in our hearts! Bring glad tidings to a world in the grips of a pandemic of sickness and death. Bring us joy in knowing that you have conquered death, and no pandemic can take us out of the hand of God.

Christmas Masses

Thursday, **December 24**

4:00 P 6:30P 9:00P

Friday, **December 25**

10:00A

Due to limited capacity we are having **CHRISTMAS MASSES BY RESERVATION ONLY**. If you want to attend one of the Masses, **CALL THE RECTORY**, Monday thru Thursday, 8:30A-12:00Noon, be sure to speak to Marcia, and let us know how many places you wish to reserve. Call 413 863.2585 by **DECEMBER 22**. Reservations will be taken on a first come, first served basis.

Prayer List Reminder

Please continue to provide the names of those in our community who are suffering (illness, medical treatment, etc.) and in need of additional prayers by contacting one of the following: Cindy Milewski (413 773.9817), Jim Devlin (413 772.6432), or Dottie Pelis (413 659.3360). Updated prayer lists will be in the bulletin once a month.



**Saturday, December 12**

4:00P *Robert Jablonski*
by the Richotte family

Sunday, December 13

8:00A *Lauren & Jeffrey*
by Bob & Yvette Bissell

10:00A *Barbara Sevene*
by her family

Saturday, December 19

4:00P *Hap & Rose Dunican*
by their daughters

Sunday, December 20

8:00A *Sr. Irene Socquet, SSA*
by her family

10:00A *Judy Pos*
by her family

DAILY MASS**Monday, December 14**

8:00A *Chief Francis Geraghty, USN retired*
by Virginia & family

Tuesday, December 15

8:00A *Dean Letourneau*
by Jean Donovan

Wednesday, December 16

8:00A *Stanley Choleva, 57th anniversary*
Julianna Sak 23rd anniversary
by their family

Thursday, December 17

8:00A *Deceased members of the Cotton & Bucci families*
by Deacon Joe & Kay

Friday, December 18

8:00A *Communion Service*

Our Lady's Window

December 16 *Kay Scepanski*
by Greenfield Community Meals

December 17 *Joe & Kay Bucci families*

December 18 *Ruth Arnold*
by her family

**HISTORY OF THE MANGER**

St. Francis of Assisi established the first Nativity scene in 1223 in Greccio, a small town in Italy. As he was preparing for Christmas Eve Mass, St. Francis was trying to think of a way to remind people that Jesus came not as a wealthy king but as a poor child born among animals. So he wrote to Pope Honorius III and obtained permission to create a living Nativity scene.

In a cave near town, Francis set up an altar. He brought in a manger filled with hay as well as a live ox and a donkey. He invited the townspeople to come, and he preached about the humble beginnings of the Christ Child.

The idea of re-creating Jesus' birth was very popular. Churches in Italy created displays made out of terra cotta. In the middle of the 1500s, families began to put up Nativity scenes in their homes. And living Nativity scenes like the one that St. Francis started centuries ago remain popular to this day.

Who was there?

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke describe Jesus' birth. Mary, Jesus' mother, and Joseph came to Bethlehem together with their donkey right before Jesus was born. When there was no room at any of the inns for them to stay, they ended up in a stable where animals were kept. So the Nativity scene includes Mary, Joseph, Jesus and the animals in a stable, as well as a manger, or trough, where Baby Jesus slept.

In Luke, we learn about the angel who brought the shepherds "good news of great joy" when Jesus was born, so we include the shepherds and the angel in our Nativity scene.

WEEKLY COLLECTION

December 6, 2020

Regular collection/mail	\$4,166.00
On-line	\$649.00

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