

## WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S PARISH DECEMBER 13, 2020

*Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say, rejoice!  
Indeed, the Lord is near.*

Philippians 4:4-5

**Gaudete Sunday** is the Third Sunday of Advent. This Sunday provides a break about midway through the Advent Season which is a season of penance and a return to God and turning away from our sinfulness and our separation from Our God. During this time of Advent, we recognize that we move toward Our God, and the joyful experience of nearness of the Lord's coming. In Isaiah when the Messiah comes – the desert blooms, strength is given to the feeble, eyes of the blind will be open, the ears of the deaf cleared – all return to Zion and made whole. The prophet proclaims, "I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul . . . In the Gospel message in describing John the Baptist it was stated, " He came to testify to the light. . ." The Messiah is the Light, who enlightens us of God's Word and His works. Jesus, the Messiah, is seen as the One that makes us whole. When Our Lord comes, all is transformed.

As we examine the candles to be lit on the Advent wreath which we had done during the first week of Advent, we know that the lighted candle represents the light of Christ. Historically the pink or rose candle is called the **Gaudete** candle, from the Latin word meaning "rejoice." Our candles representing the Light of our lives, Jesus, who brings and enhances Hope, Faith, Joy, and Peace. It is important to remember that in the **Advent** season of preparation for the Lord Jesus' coming, joy is ours in knowing the power of love is entering our lives.

We anticipate with joy, the coming of the Word made Flesh, the Prince of Peace, the God of Love. As we anticipate the birth of Our Savior, we see an Empty Crib. However it is not just Christ's birth, but the entire Christ event, that brings us great joy. The entire revealed message is what we celebrate -- his birth, his life in ministry and eventually his death and rebirth -- his resurrection is what brings us such joy as we rejoice in Christ's coming, we rejoice in our salvation and the gift of eternal life. This is the true meaning of God is with us. The Wood of the manger is directly linked to the wood of the cross, the Empty manger is directly connected to the Empty Tomb, as Our Lord is not a God of the dead, but the Lord of the *Living!*



In the coming of Jesus comes, he was heralded by John as a voice crying in the wilderness. And in the wilderness, all is made new, – all, just like in a child, all will be reborn. Make straight the way for the Lord, have hope. This is the empty crib – hope. The love, the gifts of a child will make all new, the Lord's arrival will renew us and transform us. The empty crib represents each of us as empty vessels to receive the love and joy of the Lord. The opening up of our minds, our hearts, our souls, requires us to empty ourselves of distractions, sinfulness, our anxieties, worries, anger, envy, our self-centeredness and when these are purged, our loving God, fills us up with His graces. Our void is filled with our LORD Jesus, with His love, with His goodness.

This past week we celebrated the Holy Feast of the Immaculate Conception where Mary, Our Mother, was conceived without sin – she was Full of Grace as she was prepared to conceive the Lord of All in her womb. In our lowliness, we need to experience the presence of God throughout our lifetime, not a single life event because we often turn away from God. We need to be open to grace filled opportunities by receiving the Sacraments such as attending Mass, going to Confession, listening to Our Lord in the Word by reading the Bible, saying prayers, conversing with God, entering into deep contemplation by performing devotions such as saying the rosary spending time in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and being life giving by sharing ourselves in doing random acts of love and kindness by visiting, being present and helping those more vulnerable in our communities.

In Scripture, the Lord said through His prophets, " I am sending my messenger ahead of you, he will prepare the way". As we approach to receive the Eucharist during this beautiful time of year, this time of pilgrimage as we await the celebration of Our Savior's birth, let us acknowledge the presence of God in a new, refreshed transformed way by being open to and by committing ourselves to a more intimate relationship with our Lord and with those around us. Let us use our gifts and encourage others to use theirs no matter how given so that lives will change, never again to be the same. Let the Lord fill our emptiness as He makes Our joy complete. Rejoice! For our God is near -- He is coming to you! He will surround you, His dwelling is within you – with that knowledge, truly **REJOICE!**

**MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK**

**Saturday, December 12 -**

**4:30 PM † Arnold McHone Sr. - Anv. -**  
Wife, Yvonne and Family

**Sunday, December 13 - 3rd Sunday of Advent**

**9:30 AM † Vincent Di Tanna - Anv.**  
- Margaret Di Tanna  
**† Sara Neeson - The Neeson Family**

**Monday, December 14 -**

**8:00 AM † Margaret Bush - BR - son, John**  
**† Rhea Carls - Dr. & Mrs. Peter Bliss**  
**† William Adams - Anv. - Fr. John**

**Tuesday, December 15-**

**8:00 AM † Michael & Donna Phillips - Anv.**  
*The Phillips & Knight Families*

**Wednesday, December 16 -**

**12:15 PM - Rhea Carls - brother, Paul**

**Thursday, December 17 -**

**8:00 AM † Bobby Gill - BR - Tom & Pat Aiello**

**Friday, December 18 -**

**8:00 AM † George J. Moses Sr. - CR**  
Wife, Carol & Family  
**† Donald Budzinski - Mary Ann Loskey**

**Saturday, December 19 -**

**4:30 PM † Toni Hartman - Jon & Elaine Baker**  
**† Bud & Mary Pezzimenti - Family**

**Sunday, December 20 - 4th Sunday of Advent**

**9:30 AM † Theresa & Dennis Napolione**  
- Helen & Joe Pardi  
**† Floyd "Week" & Frances Rogers**  
**and Paul & Mary Ramire - CR**  
- Dee & Paula Rogers & Family



Our Sanctuary Lamp burns Dec. 1 - 15 for the glory of God in the Remembrance of

**Jim Melaro - BR**

*By: Jan, Judy and Joey*

Our Lady of Perpetual Help burns Dec. 1 - 15 for the glory of God and in remembrance of

**James Keenen - Anv.**

*By: Walt & Kathy Zeznick & Family*



**Let us lift up in prayer  
all the men & woman in the  
military serving  
our country**



Our parish extends its condolences to the Tri-Catholic community families of

Chuck Walters, Ronald Orsini, Kenneth Haggerty Eli Eade, Mary Smith, and Margaret Bowen,

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon them.*



**Confessions & Adoration  
Wednesdays 6:30 - 8:00 pm**

St. John's and Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels



Please keep the following in your prayers for healing:

Jackie Attard, Linda Coletti, Alyssa Magro, Gene Robak, Jr., and all Hospice Patients and their families and care givers.



**Ministers of the Holy Eucharist  
December 19 & 20**

4:30 PM - J/K Fitzgerald  
9:30 AM - D. Pezzimenti

**Lector Schedule  
December 19 & 20**

4:30 PM - S. Yatzkanic  
9:30 AM - D. Hinz

**Greeter Schedule  
December 19 & 20**

4:30 PM - T. Shaffer  
9:30 AM - M. Smith Family & D/C Hinz

**Reflection for Gaudete Sunday; Dec. 13, 2020**

(Isaiah 61:1-2a,10-11): The message from Isaiah is a message of joy and great hope, setting just the celebratory tone we need to resound as we celebrate Gaudete Sunday this weekend. As we read this passage, we see that it's addressed to the poor, the broken-hearted, captives and those otherwise condemned or experiencing hopelessness. It's a message of positive transformation; like a beam of light and promise shining on a dark place marked by suffering and discouragement. The image of the writer being clothed in salvation and justice suggests a similar promise to us that inequality, unfairness and all evil will be destroyed and that we'll be protected from harm as if we're wearing protective royal garments, as children of our saving God!

(Isaiah 61:1b): "My soul rejoices in my God." (Psalm = Luke 1): Today we recite the most perfect and soulful song of rejoicing in both personal and world-wide spiritual transformation; the Magnificat! This timeless song of praise celebrates God's generosity, protection and eternal love and care that transcend every generation and time. The song resounds with the newly sprung hope and joy of the Incarnation of our Lord. The last stanza proclaims the holy remedies to suffering supplied by God's tender mercy; the hungry are fed, the greedy and unjust deposed and a miraculous overturning of all that is not right in the world is promised. The pure joy of a just soul exulting in God's Presence is palpable for all to share and join in the psalmist's (Mary's) exultation.

1 Thess 5:16-24): Reading this passage from St. Paul, one could easily see it as an invitation to join Mary in singing the Magnificat. Paul encourages us to rejoice always, as Mary does, with an attitude of profound gratitude and thankfulness. We are told not to "quench the Spirit", therefore we're being told to nurture and rejoice and magnify the Spirit, as Mary so effectively does through all the ages. The importance of conforming to God's Will is mentioned as are the availability of the God of Peace to heal us of every imperfection or wound of spirit, soul and body. As in the Magnificat, trust in God radiates throughout this entire message. We are given deep and abiding hope in God for both healing and perfecting us.

(John 1:6-8,19-28): The Magnificat theme of a soul "magnifying the Lord" is so starkly portrayed in the Apostle John's depiction of John the Baptist. Especially notice how the Gospel writer refers to John the Baptist as "not the light," but as having come to "testify to the Light." Thus, John too is not the Source, but the mirror, an instrument to reflect and thereby "magnify" the Light. As this passage continues, John's humility, like Mary's is evident. When questioned about whom he is, John never points to himself, but describes himself only in terms of his function of preparing the way for the Lord. In other words, he refers to himself only in terms of his relationship with God as a prophetic voice for the coming Messiah.

Like Mary's pure humility, John's is on display when he accentuates Jesus' vast superiority over him. He describes Jesus as the "One Who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." In humility and joy, Mary, our Blessed Mother, Isaiah, St. Paul and St. John the Baptist join us today in our rejoicing at the coming of the Lord and the Presence of our loving and healing God in our midst. Rejoice!

Make efforts to spread the joy.

*Deacon Matt*



Deacon Matt

**Deacon Matthew Wenke**  
deaconmattwenke@gmail.com

## NOTES FROM OUR PARISH

- ◆ Watch your mailboxes for the Christmas letter which will contain information regarding the Christmas Mass schedule and details regarding the Christmas Dinner. This is contingent upon our COVID-19 status. Stay tuned!
- ◆ Sacrament of Reconciliation & Eucharist Adoration will be held at each parish every Wednesday - 6:30 - 8:00 PM
- ◆ Thank you to all of you who are able to continue supporting the parish with your online, direct deposit and mailed in contributions!!
- ◆ Don't forget to make your reservation for the upcoming weekend Masses. Go to [sjteolean.org](http://sjteolean.org) or call the Parish Office. - 372-5313
- ◆ Live streamed Masses - attempts are being made to livestream our vigil Mass through [sjteolean.org](http://sjteolean.org) - Saturdays @ 4:30 p.m.
- ◆ Pastoral Care Medical information privacy laws require that you must give permission to have the parish notified or pastoral care to visit you when you are admitted to the hospital.
- ◆ We are in need of a Pro- Life Committee for our church. Anyone interested in heading this team up, please call the church office. So many baby's life depend our help!

### With much joy and anticipation . . .

*The Faithful of the Diocese of Buffalo welcomes a newly appointed Bishop!* Our Apostolic Administrator, Bishop Ed stated in his recent pastoral letter that we belong to a "family of families" as we move forward on a path to renewal. It is with gratitude to God that the Holy Father chose the **Most Reverend Michael William Fisher** as the new Bishop of the Diocese of Buffalo. The Auxiliary Bishop currently from Washington, DC will be installed as the 15<sup>th</sup> Bishop of our Diocese and will be installed at St. Joseph Cathedral on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2021. May our parish family rejoice with all of the Catholic families of Buffalo as we anticipate our newly named shepherd.



### With Gratitude . . .

It is with caring and prayerful support that our parish families receive the news of the upcoming departure of Joe Keary from his position as Joint Operations Manager at the parishes of St. John, the Evangelist and the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels.

Joe has tirelessly given from his goodness, his talents and his gifts to help make the operations of our linked parishes to run smoothly. Through his dedicated efforts, he is leaving the parishes in a better way through his countless contributions from before he took on his position 14 months ago.

We wish Joe in his final week with us serving in the capacity of operations manager, God's graces, blessings and our prayers for his new position in the international consulting firm in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Joe, we wish to celebrate in your joy as you embark on this journey with Godspeed and send you, Claudia and your family our love and caring as you transition to your new vocational venture.

## Church and Area Events

**January 3 ( Sun) - Monthly Stand for Life** - Join the region's pro-life community the 1st Sunday of each month 1:00-2:00 pm in Lincoln Park downtown Olean to give public witness to the Culture of Life

**January 3 ( Sun)** SVDP food drive for non-perishable food items for St. Vincent de Paul. Please put your food in the shopping carts located at each entrance. Thank you for your support!

**St. Vincent de Paul** - Refundable can drive. Please drop cans/bottles at Allegany Beverage and Redemption Center located across from the St. Bonaventure University at 3247 Route 417 Allegany, NY. *Please mention St. John's* and all the monies collected will be given to the SVDP Society. If you are unable to get down the Redemption Center, there will be covered blue containers at both church entrances to deposit your recycles and we will transport them for you. **Thank you for your continued support!!**

**Coping with COVID Support Group** - Catholic Charities Serving Cattaraugus and Allegany Counties - Feeling lost or sad? Frustrated? Isolated or alone? Experiencing anxiousness? Suffered a job or income loss? Struggling with virtual or hybrid learning? Join us online for a monthly meeting. Sometimes we need a helping hand to walk through those difficult times - join the conversation. Catholic Charities offers encouragement and comfort virtually. For more information or to register, call (716) 372-0101.

**Music Ministry** - Times are tough right now especially for those who are isolated at home. Donna Brestensky, one of our music leaders would love to take the time to musically worship you via Zoom or a phone call. If you would like to join Donna on a Zoom Music Meeting or by a phone call, please email/call her and she will set you up with all the details and times!! [dbresten@sbu.edu](mailto:dbresten@sbu.edu) or call **716-307-7065**

**In Home Communion** - Not being able to attend church right now is a struggle for many. But you shouldn't feel alone. Would you or someone you know like to receive Holy Communion at home? Please call the Church Office to set up a time for a Eucharistic Minister can come to your home. 372-5313 - *All Covid Precautions will be practiced.*



## Advent and Christmas Schedule



### PENANCE SERVICE:

#### Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels

Saturday, Dec. 19 | 10:00-11:30 am including individual confessions and exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

#### Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels & St. John's

Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (no Dec. 30)

Reservations Online: [sjteolean.org](http://sjteolean.org)  
| [smaolean.org](http://smaolean.org)

### Christmas Vigil Mass: Thursday, December 24

1:30 p.m. Christmas Concert - SMA | **FB LIVE**

2:00 p.m. Basilica Family Mass with St. Nick |  
**FB LIVE**

3:30 p.m. Christmas Concert - SMA | **FB LIVE**

4:00 p.m. St. Mary of the Angels | **FB LIVE**

4:30 p.m. St. John's | **FB LIVE**

8:15 p.m. Christmas Concert - SMA | **FB LIVE**

9:00 p.m. St. Mary of the Angels | **FB LIVE**

10:00 p.m. St. John's | **FB LIVE**



### Christmas Day Mass Friday December 25

8:00 am Basilica

9:00 am St. John's

11:00 am Sacred Heart

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