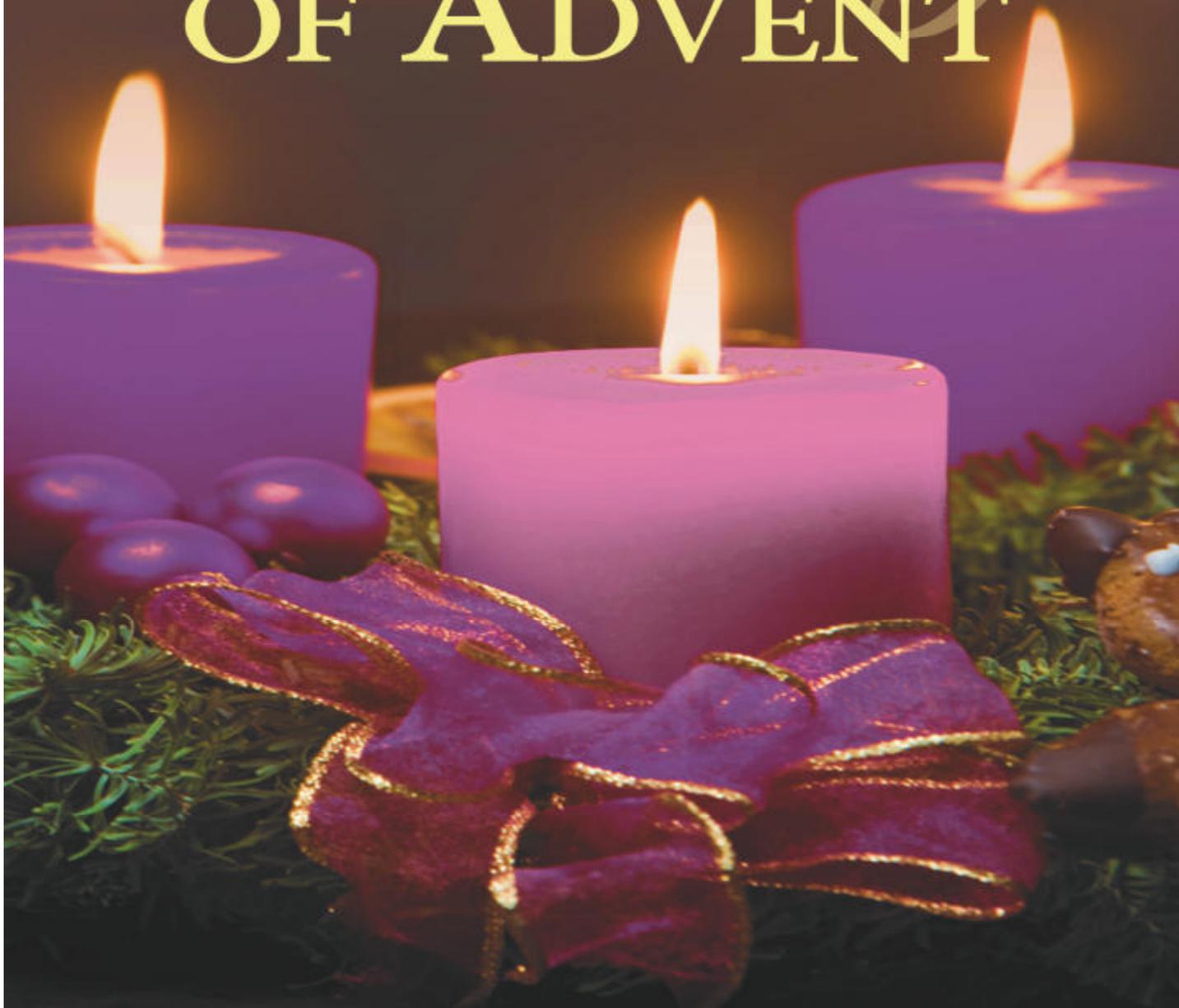


# 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday OF ADVENT



## **Ss. Cosmas & Damian Parish**

616 W. Mahoning St., Punxsutawney, PA 15767

814-938-6540

[www.sscdchurch.com](http://www.sscdchurch.com)

Mass Intentions for This Week

Saturday, December 12

4:30 p.m. Deceased of the B. E. Henry  
and Joseph Eggleston Families --  
Estate of Gertie Eggleston

Sunday, December 13

8:00 a.m. Ralph & Catherine Adams --  
Tony Gigliotti  
11:00 a.m. Emily Zaborowski -- Tom & Pat Strawn

Monday, December 14

8:00 a.m. Joseph R. Gigliotti -- Family

Tuesday, December 15

8:00 a.m. Paul Baranich -- Wife, Julie

Wednesday, December 16

8:00 a.m. Frank & Anna Molnar -- Family

Thursday, December 17

8:00 a.m. Parishioners

Friday, December 18

9:00 a.m. John P. Liscinsky -- Nick & Barb Gresock

Saturday, December 19

4:30 p.m. Rita Juart -- Rose Day

Sunday, December 20

8:00 a.m. Special Intention for Lena VanDyke —  
Rob, Deb, and Annisce  
11:00 a.m. Frank J. Manco, Jr. -- Patty Manco



The Church encourages frequent, even daily, Holy Communion, but if at any time we cannot go to Mass, in or out of this season of the coronavirus, we can still unite ourselves to the Eucharist by making a spiritual Communion. When we make an Act of Spiritual Communion, we express our faith in Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist and ask him to unite himself with us.

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least  
spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.  
Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



○ Come, ○ Come, Emmanuel

Dear Parishioners,

The first line of last Sunday's gospel reading introduced "Jesus Christ, Son of God." Today's readings (particularly the first, and also the responsorial psalm) show him as "Savior". These together were the earliest affirmation of faith in Jesus: "Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior," in Greek, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός Θεοῦ Υἱός Σωτήρ - Iesus Christos Theou Uios Soter. The initial letters of these words taken together – ΙΧΘΥΣ, ICHTHUS – happen to mean 'fish'. And so, the fish became the secret sign of being a Christian in the times of persecution. It can be seen scratched on the walls of the catacombs in Rome.



John the Baptist was a rough-cut individual, appearing from the desert, fulminating against the people, and offering a "baptism of repentance." We mustn't think yet of Christian baptism. John's was a kind of moral baptism. They were turbulent times, and people were looking for a powerful and charismatic leader. John could be the one. The people thronged to him, wanting to signal their identification with him through a symbolic cleansing of sin: immersion in the Jordan (the word 'baptism' means 'plunging').

But John was clear about the limits of his own message. He pointed to another and greater leader to come. "I baptize with water... he baptizes with the Holy Spirit" (Jn 1:26, 33). In other words, I plunge you in water, but he will plunge you in God's Spirit.

There is a world of difference between what we might call 'salvation from below' and 'salvation from above'. Today there is a great attraction in the first: our world has countless self-improvement programs, and many people are greatly helped by this or that one. However, there is some built-in limitation in all of these. What if I were to succeed in improving myself, according to my own view? It is always in danger of being a Pyrrhic victory, because the 'I' that is improving itself may be entrenching itself even more deeply in itself. In Zen they call it 'polishing the tile', after an anecdote about a monk who was attempting to turn a tile into a mirror by polishing it. The best things, we discover, are given, not produced. In Christian terms we speak of the "grace of God". The word 'grace' means 'gift'. A gift is from beyond, so I can receive it in simplicity of heart, without the ego's double-binds. This is 'salvation from above'. Far from excluding the other, it comes most often when the other has been taken to its limit and has run aground. If I improve myself, I can experience a certain satisfaction, but when the grace of God floods me, I know what is meant by joy. Joy is from beyond.

The contrast between John the Baptist and Jesus is fascinating, and the Liturgy gives us many opportunities throughout the year to study it. Jesus once said, "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (John 11:11; Luke 7:28).

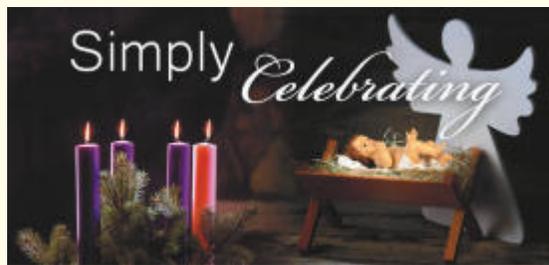
God Bless!  
Msgr. J. Riccardo

### CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Anyone wishing to make a donation toward the cost of the flowers for Christmas may do so anytime between now and Christmas.



There is an envelope in your packets for this purpose. If you are making your donation in memory of a loved one, just write his/her name on the envelope. A list will be posted in church on Christmas.



### **Resources for Advent and Christmas offered by the Diocese of Erie to help you celebrate the season in a year like no other**

Did you know there are Christmas carol sing-alongs online you can enjoy with friends and family over Zoom? Were you aware of the “Spread the Love” campaign created by the Diocese of Erie’s *Faith* magazine, complete with templates for writing letters to loved ones or to those seeking help at various charitable organizations over the holidays? Are you interested in a listing of all the Masses being offered in parishes and via livestream in the diocese on Christmas Eve and Christmas day?

These resources and more are now available at *Simply Celebrating*, a new micro-site launched by the Diocese of Erie to help people fill Advent and Christmas with meaningful and fun activities in a year like no other.

Find it at [www.eriecd.org/christmas.html](http://www.eriecd.org/christmas.html).



©Religious Graphics, Ltd.

### SCRIP PROGRAM

Scrip Cash and Carry is available in the School Office.



For your safety, **please use the walk up window next to the principal’s office to purchase your Scrip. It is currently available Monday - Friday, 8:00am - 2:20pm.**

You can also use the Scrip “PrestoPay” feature that provides electronic delivery options (i.e. electronic credit to spend online or refill a merchant’s card that you already have in your possession). Questions about PrestoPay can be directed to the Scrip program coordinator.

Thank you for supporting SSCD School through your participation in the Scrip Program.

**Remember to place your orders by today, December 13, for Christmas delivery.**

### CHRISTMAS OPLATKI

Oplatki, or Christmas Wafers, are now available in the office.

The wafer, bearing a simple design commemorative of Christ’s birth, is broken by the head of the family and distributed to each member at the Christmas Vigil meal. A simple prayer for God’s grace and the welfare of the present and absent members of the family is said as the wafer is distributed.



Just stop in the office during regular business hours to pick up a package of Christmas Wafers along with information about this tradition and suggestions for the prayer. The donation is \$3.00.

### MUSIC AND PRAYERS AT MASS

Since we are not currently able to have our books in the pews, we are providing sheets with the hymns and prayers for Mass for your use.



Please pick one up from the table when you come in and then either take it home with you or throw it away after Mass. Please do not return it to the table. They cannot be reused. Each person will then have access to an unused hymn sheet when they come in to church.



For the benefit of those who are unable to, or who are concerned about returning to Mass at this time, SSCD is live streaming Mass twice a week. Look for this graphic on our parish website, [sscdchurch.com](http://sscdchurch.com), and click the link on Fridays at 9am and Sundays at 11am to join.

If you have any questions, just call the office.

SAINT VINCENT DePAUL WEEKLY FOOD DONATION

Food Donation next Sunday, **December 20th - Boxed Au gratin Potatoes.**

Thank you for your continued support.

SAINT VINCENT DePAUL VOLUNTEERS

**Saturday, December 19 -**

Sam & Terri Puleio

PRAYER CHAIN

To add a name to the Prayer Chain, call Pat Rougeux, 938-4464 or Anna Smochek, 427-2456.

If you are unable to reach either of them, you may call the office weekdays 9am - 4pm.

OFFERTORY CONTRIBUTIONS

**Thank you for your continued support throughout this unusual time.**

One way for you to easily support our parish is through on-line giving. There is a link for you to access this on our parish website, [sscdchurch.com](http://sscdchurch.com).

If you prefer to mail your offertory envelopes to the office, drop them in the mail slot in the breezeway, or put in the collection basket at church, please continue to do so. Thank you!

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

If we don't have your email address, or if your address has recently changed, please contact us at [sscdofc@comcast.net](mailto:sscdofc@comcast.net) so we can get you in our address book.

We will never share your e-mail address. Help us to stay in touch with you!



CASH GIVEAWAY

Home & School Association is sponsoring

***“Warm Winter Winnings”***

a 50/50 Cash Giveaway.

Tickets are just \$5 each and the prize will be 50% of all ticket sales

**with a maximum payout of \$15,000 if all tickets are sold!**

The drawing will be held at school on the first day of Winter,

**December 21, 2020, at 2:30pm.**

Tickets are available at the church and school offices, or call 938-6540.

**Please return your sold tickets to the church or school office by this**

**Friday, December 18th.**

*All proceeds will go directly to the support of our school.*



Download **FORMED** at no cost to you:

- Go to [formed.org/signup](http://formed.org/signup)
- Select our parish
- Register with your name and email address
- Check that email account for a link to begin using FORMED



## WORSHIP & MEDITATION



### FIRST READING

I rejoice heartily in the LORD,  
in my God is the joy of my soul. (Is 61:10a)



### PSALM

My soul rejoices in my God. (Is 61:10b)



### SECOND READING

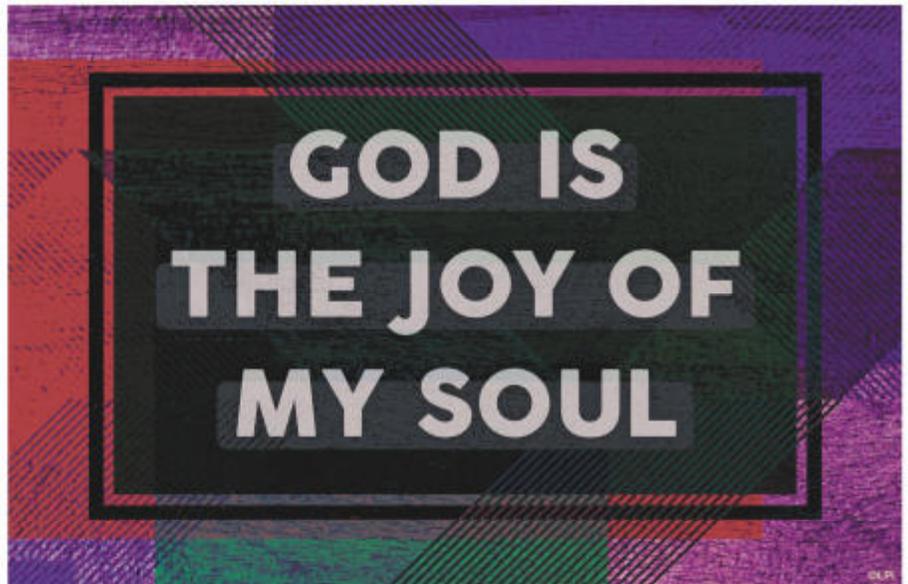
May the God of peace make you  
perfectly holy  
and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body,  
be preserved blameless for the coming of  
our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thes 5:23)



### GOSPEL

"I am the voice of one crying out in the desert,  
Make straight the way of the Lord." (Jn 1:23)

*Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001,  
1998, 1970 CCD. The English translation of Psalm  
Responses from Lectionary for Mass © 1969, 1981,  
1997, International Commission on English in the  
Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.*



### GOSPEL MEDITATION

#### Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

Did you ever stop and realize that there is no earthly gain that can ever really satisfy us? Think of winning the Lotto. On this side of the winning ticket, it's all about the money, the new car, house, vacations, bank accounts, and infinite pleasures. The possibility of acquiring all of these earthly securities brings us back again and again to the purchase of a ticket. Then, one day we win! Our dreams are fulfilled, and happiness is on the horizon. Then one day, we wake up and realize that nothing has really changed, and I am not as satisfied as I thought I was or would be. I find myself living in my incompleteness and with my profound sorrow and grief. I did not find joy.

Glimpses of joy are possible but not by material means. They are brought to us through incredible experiences of connection that bring us face to face with real and authentic faith, hope, and love. And, they are glimpses and do not last. The moment we find ourselves looking back at them, they are gone, and we find ourselves remembering the moment in memory. To carry joy within us is to realize that it is not something I create, manufacture or even acquire. It is not able to be purchased. It is a gift. My need for joy mirrors my need for eternity, for a Creator who has a claim on the very essence of who I am and desires a home within me. As C. S. Lewis discovered, joy is a surprise that speaks to my very soul and is given as gift by the God who loves me.

The beauty of Advent is found in discovering the beauty of the gift of joy. God has visited his people for no other reason than to show them where and how to find joy! All of our human and earthly joy experiences are always only glimpses. They never satisfy us, sustain us or fulfill us. It is only God who is the joy of my soul. Real, Divine experiences of joy catch us off guard, make us stop and become aware, bring a feeling of awe and rightness and have an eternal Otherness about them. Nothing created by humans can ever come close to this. We probably will not fully realize the truth of all of this until we actually meet God face to face in heaven one day. Then, in that sacred moment when our hearts leap for joy we will understand what we have been tirelessly searching for all along. Intense gratitude will most surely follow.

**Prayer in Time  
of Pandemic**

Lord Jesus,  
You came to bring salvation  
to our world. You humbled  
yourself to accept death on a  
cross. Be with us as we  
confront the spread of the  
coronavirus with courage  
and hope. Be present to the  
sick and to those who  
accompany them  
in their suffering.  
Strengthen our medical  
professionals and caregivers;  
comfort families who are  
separated from one another.  
Protect those who  
are at risk of the virus  
in their work.

Grant wisdom to our civic  
officials and perseverance to  
scientists. Spare us from the  
ravages of this illness and  
console us in our uncertainty  
and fear.

Unite us in hope, enlighten  
us in faith, and give us the  
grace as a Church  
to love one another  
as You have loved us.  
Through the intercession of  
our Heavenly Mother,  
we make this prayer as we  
place our trust in You.  
Amen.

Imprimatur, April 8, 2020  
The Most Reverend Lawrence T.  
Persico, J.C.L., Bishop of Erie

**TWO EASY WAYS TO STAY  
IN TOUCH  
WITH YOUR PARISH!**

Visit our Parish Website anytime at  
[www.sscdchurch.com](http://www.sscdchurch.com)

**Download Our NEWEST App!**

iPhone users Text:

*ParishApp1* to 800-950-9952

Android Users Text:

*ParishApp2* to 800-950-9952



**SANCTUARY CLEANERS THIS WEEK**

**SSCD** - Sandy Hinderliter, Mary Claire Johnston,  
Arlene Stewart, Dorothy Vilkinofsky  
**St. Anthony** - Freda Martino, Julie Mondì

**SS.C.D. Apartments at Sutton Place**  
**1 & 2 bedroom Apartments**  
**Non Smoking Facility • No Pets**  
**For application call 814-938-6540**

**A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE**

Today's gospel reports "I am the voice of the one crying out in the desert." Who in your family is crying out with their crazy schedules, suppers that start too late and end too early, cars that don't start, misunderstandings, piles of laundry, unmatched socks, and stretched food budgets? Although the list feels endless, there is one who hears you. The words spoken at mass, "The Lord is with you," are not just a hope, they are a fact.

**REJOICE**  
for the LORD is near!

©Religious Graphics, Ltd.



**OFFERTORY FIGURES**

Because of an early publishing deadline for this week's bulletin, the offertory figures do not appear on this page as they normally would. Figures for December 6th will be printed in the bulletin on December 20th.

**Readings for the Week of December 13, 2020**

- Sunday: Is 61:1-2a, 10-11/Lk 1:46-48, 49-50, 51-54 [Is 61:10b]/1 Thes 5:16-24/Jn 1:6-8, 19-28
- Monday: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a/Ps 25:4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9 [4]/Mt 21:23-27
- Tuesday: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13/Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19 and 23 [7a]/Mt 21:28-32
- Wednesday: Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21c-25/Ps 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14 [Is 45:8]/Lk 7:18b-23
- Thursday: Gn 49:2, 8-10/Ps 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8, 17 [cf. 7]/Mt 1:1-17
- Friday: Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 [cf. 7]/Mt 1:18-25
- Saturday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17 [cf. 8]/Lk 1:5-25
- Next Sunday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29 [2a]/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38

©LPi

