

St. Anthony de Padua Catholic Church Newsletter.....

December 17, 2020.

Fr. Joseph, Deacon Gerald and the Staff would like to take this time to wish everyone a

Blessed Merry Christmas and **Blessed New Year.**

May the **PEACE OF CHRIST** be in each of our Families to end a year filled with many Challenges.

At this time we would like to remind and update the Parish Family as to what has been going on throughout this year. We started out the year with masses and no indication that eventually all churches would be shut down. The Easter Masses canceled. The older people will tell you they have never in their lives experienced anything like this before. But when the Church was able to reopen we jumped on it. To reopen the Archdiocese said we had to form a committee which involved Ushers, people to sanitize, come up with a plan to keep everyone safe, especially Fr. Joseph and Deacon Gerald.

Deacon Gerald made a map of the inside of the Church of the pews for seating arrangements.

Anne Starr researched the Disinfectant which would kill off the Corona Virus on surfaces. Jeff Thomson put in the “Remehalo” which is an air purification system. It is designed to send out ionized aggressive advanced oxidizer into the room to destroy the pollutants at the source, in the air and on surfaces!

We asked for Masks and had parishioners make and donate them and also had different ones donate throwaway ones.

Rules and regulations were put out for all per the Archdiocese to follow and as they changed so did the Parish. We stayed on top or tried to. Change isn't easy when this was all new. There are those who live in fear, those who are fearless and those that are in between. In the beginning we had no knowledge of anyone we knew, with the virus, but as time goes on... family, friends and people we know now have had the virus, have the virus or have died from the virus. It has become too real.

We are so blessed as a Parish Family to have those on a daily basis that take care of the church for your safety. Different parishioners have said they feel very safe coming to mass.

Deacon Gerald stepped down as Parish Business Manager because his priority was to Patsy due to her health. Please continue to keep the both in your prayers.

In Deacon stepping down the staff knew they had to step up. We involved the Parish Council and Finance Committee. During the whole time the Church was closed and after, we made sure the church was taken care of. We kept up with the Diocese through emails and phone calls. We took advice from them to keep Parishioners in the know. Bulletins were mailed out to certain elderly people that do not have the internet. Still to this day, Jackie Kocurek takes bulletins to a small group weekly and every week bulletins are mailed out to a small group. These are parishioners that are sickly or up in age.

A drop box was installed in the Church Office front door by John Wendel so parishioners could drop their donations off during the week. More parishioners are taking advantage of the On-line giving. 2021 Church Envelopes are in the back of the church to be picked up.

The Confessional has been moved to the cry room for the time being until Churches open up to full capacity. Fr. Joseph will be hearing Confession this coming Wednesday, December 23rd after the 6:00 pm mass, basically 6:30 pm. Also, Confessions are the norm on Saturday from 4pm to 5pm and by appointment.

Masses are still at a 25% capacity, which are basically 70 people per mass. With our small parish we could not open to a 50% capacity. Cardinal DiNardo encourages the elderly and those fearful of attending weekend masses to attend the week day masses being they are not a crowded mass and you can social distance easier.

At this time only the Priests and Deacons can distribute Holy Communion to the sick.

A small group of Eucharistic Ministers were trained to help distribute Holy Communion at Mass when Fr. Joseph needs them. They are not to take Communion to the sick. Only the Priests and Deacons.

The Music Ministry has been there since we opened back up in May. It would be sad to celebrate mass without music. Thank you to Evelyn, Ron Barker, choir and all who bring their joyful voices to the Lord. Being there are no books, Evelyn plays music people should know and has sheet music for people to use. The mass with readings and responses is an insert in the bulletin weekly.

During the Advent season, parishioners were invited to bring containers of water to be blessed so families could have Holy Water in their homes.

Religious Ed [CCE] has mainly gone Virtual. Confirmation Classes meet on Scheduled Sunday's. The Youth Group meets when scheduled.

Legion of Mary meets on Monday's at 9:30 am.

RCIA meets on Tuesday at 7pm.

The Catholic Charities "Share Your Blessing" went really well this year. Most of the tags on the trees were to help families in Danbury in need for Christmas. Thank you to Celia Lewis for organizing this event.

We want to personally thank you for your donations to St. Anthony's. With the loss of income from our annual bazaar this past May, it has been difficult financially. Since we could not host our Annual Bazaar, there have been numerous Fundraisers being held. We asked for any ideas, creative ideas for Fundraisers. So God blessed us with great cooks. St. Anthony's was always known for their food and that awesome Cookbook for the Churches 100 year Anniversary. Families have stepped up with their support and we have had sponsors support each Fundraiser. We are a very blessed community working together for our little Church and not letting her be closed down. We are blessed for those who step up and help with each of these events. We would like to thank Anne and Steve Starr and Ann Geissen who have headed these Fundraisers, and for the Wendel Family "Velva Ann's Family Catering," [BBQ Sandwich Fundraiser], and the Danbury Knights of Columbus [Fish Fry Fundraiser].

Our fundraisers are helping make up of lost funds. Our goal is \$90,000 which is what we have made from the bazaar previously. Thank you for being an active and faithful member of our parish. By giving to our church on a weekly/monthly basis, you're showing that St. Anthony's has a meaningful place in your heart. We just wanted to write this to let you know that you're in our heart, too.

Without givers like you, our church can't have an impact or influence in our parish and community. With your support, we are able to maintain monthly parish responsibilities. We earnestly appreciate your ongoing support and want to let you know we're here for you. If there's ever anything we can do for you and your family, don't hesitate to reach out. You are a valued member of our church family. And your financial support is making a difference.

We would like to thank Pat Vrazel who came up with the Thanksgiving Challenge and for Gwen Fief who helped get it going. It was encouraged that each family give \$100 or what they could afford or what they usually give at the Annual Bazaar. The goal was to raise \$10,000. At this time the Challenge has exceeded the goal -- \$33,510.00. WOW!!!! Thank you Pat, Gwen and the Holy Spirit blessing you with this idea.

Christmas Mass Information:

- This year Christmas Masses will not be the same as in the past. **You have to remember this year is not a normal year.** Those that have been attending church weekly are familiar with the Social Distancing, Masks, Hand Sanitizing, receiving Holy Communion only in the hand while wearing a mask. Remember we are following the mandatory laws of the State of Texas along with the Rules and Regulations of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

- Since the Church reopened in May, the weekend masses have not filled to the 25% capacity. Being they have not, Fr. Joseph felt that we did not need an extra mass for Christmas. Please remember the Children's 5:30 pm mass will be Live Streamed. *As always....if you are sick or feel sickly, please stay at home.*

Christmas Mass Schedule:

Dec. 24th -- 5:30 pm Children Christmas Mass – **This mass will be the only mass Live Streamed** [watch on Facebook or the Churches Website – www.staopdtx.org]

- ***Due to COVID cases rising there will be **NO OVERFLOW** into the St. Anthony Center. This is for the safety of all parishioners.
- ***The Church will be at 25% capacity as always and once the 25% is filled [70 people or less] no one will be allowed into the Church.
- ***Please remember per the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston at this time, due to COVID, Holy Days and Sundays are not mandatory Holy Day of Obligation.

Dec. 25th -- 12am Midnight mass – There will be **NO OVERFLOW** to the St. Anthony Center. Only 25% Capacity [70 people or less] No Live Steam at this Mass.

Dec. 25th -- 9:00 am Christmas morning mass – There will be NO OVERFLOW to the St. Anthony Center. Only 25% Capacity [70 people or less] No Live Stream at this Mass.

New Year's Eve Mass / Adoration and New Year's Day 1st Friday Mass / Adoration Schedule:

2020 –out with old, 2021 –in with the new.

- This New Year's Eve Mass will be at **9:00 pm** in the evening.
- Adoration will begin at **9:30 pm and continue to 9:00 am** New Year's Day.
- New Year's Day Mass will be at **9:00 am**
- and Adoration will begin again at **9:30 am and continue to 9:30 pm.**

There will be a sign-up page in the back of the Church. We are asking Parish Families to sign up for an hour. We are praying for a better year. We are praying for a healthier year; for those without jobs; for all our Struggles. Fr. Joseph is praying for each hour to be filled.

Fr. Joseph and Deacon Gerald continue to pray for all of you daily. Not seeing those familiar faces in church and missing Parish Family is a sad time for all of us in this community, especially the children. Let us continue to pray that this coming year we can all be back in church together, in meetings, groups, hold the Annual Bazaar, not have to social distance, or wear masks, pray for hugs, visits and the children can attend CCE in person.

Just for information: Monday, December 21, 2020 – Saturn & Jupiter are supposed to be so close together, which hasn't happened in years, in which they will be so bright – it is being called the Christmas Star of Bethlehem.

“May a Christmas star shine into your heart

and burn in your spirit bright,

May Jesus' peace bless you

and bring true joy to you tonight.”