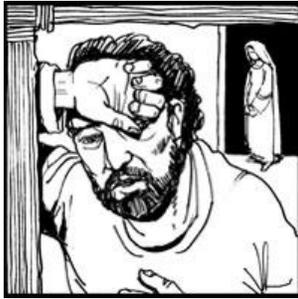


December 18, 2016

ADVENT

Fourth Sunday of Advent



The Dilemma of a Righteous Man

Joseph faced with the mystery of Mary's virginal conception of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, far from retreating quietly and in secret, leaving God alone to pursue his plan, abandons himself to providence. "He did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him."

MASS INTENTIONS



Saturday, December 24

10:00 p.m. Benefactors of the Parish

Sunday, December 25

8:00 a.m. The Welfare of All Parishioners

Full, Conscious and Active Participation in the Liturgy



Next weekend is *The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)*. Prepare for the liturgy by reflecting on these passages from your Bible.

First Reading: Isaiah 52:7-10

Responsorial Psalm: 98

Second Reading: Hebrews 1:1-6

Gospel: John 1:1-18

Parish Advent Penance Services

Wednesday, December 21,

5:00-6:00 p.m.

Come express your desire for holiness by embracing your brokenness. Join us celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Come and experience God's mercy.



2016 DIOCESAN SERVICES APPEAL

2016 Assessment	\$7,618.00
Contributions So Far	\$5,345.00
Amount Yet to be Contributed	\$2,273.00

We thank all those who have contributed towards our 2016 D.S.A. assessment so far. We are close to paying off our debt to the diocese. We are counting on you to make our quota for the year.

St. Mary's Restoration Endowment Fund Maintaining & Preserving Maticka Praha



We thank the following for their recent contributions:

In Memory of Joseph & Charles Olsovsky
Georgia L. Matusek, Houston, TX - \$2,000

In Memory of Rev. Marcus Valenta
Dianna & Benedict Kallus, La Grange, TX - \$50

In Memory of Louis Stryk
Gail & Dennis Stryk - \$20
Rhonda & David Stryk & Family, Pearland, TX - \$150

Dorothy & Robert Huebel, Sugar Land, TX - \$325

To make a tax deductible donation towards *St. Mary's Restoration Endowment Fund Maintaining & Preserving Maticka Praha* contact Fr. Gabriel at 361-596-4674.

ORIENTATION - 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Maranatha!

Today we light the fourth candle (violet) on the Advent wreath. The fullness of the lit wreath reminds us of the coming celebration of Christmas and our commemoration of the incarnation. The rhythm of Advent differs from that of Lent. It rises in a steady crescendo towards the full light of Christmas. The crescendo of Advent is reflected in the liturgical readings, which, beginning with the prophecies of the prophet Isaiah and John the Baptist, find their culmination on this Fourth Sunday of Advent in a series of readings that focus on the Blessed Virgin Mary and the annunciation of Jesus' birth. The readings bring together the major themes of the first three Sundays of Advent. Namely, promise, repentance, transformation and joy. We now stand on the threshold, eager for the doors to be opened so that we can step inside and enjoy the marvels prepared for us there.

REFLECTION

The Call To Faith

With the Fourth Sunday of Advent we are on the threshold of the Time of Fulfillment. Today's readings tell us that faith is required for us to step over that threshold. Before us are set two figures: two examples of human response to the call to faith: Ahaz, who failed the test because he was unable to take the blind step of faith into trust of God, and Joseph, who despite his dilemma is a model of faith. St. Paul, in the Letter to the Romans offers us three ways of living out this faith; as a slave of Christ, devoted completely to the service of Christ, as an apostle, one sent to proclaim the gospel by the way we live, and as one set apart for service recommitting ourselves to others in service.

With the completion of the Advent Season, we have arrived at the mountain of the Lord, the place where God dwells, the place where we began, but we now see it in a new light. As we ascend the mountain and enter into the presence of God, at the time that God comes into our lives, how do we celebrate this moment?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



December 18 – Mary C. Jasek

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!



December 22 – Virginia & Dennis Olsovsky

Jesse Tree in Church

Each year the Jesse Tree appears in Church during the season of Advent. The symbols placed on the tree are based on the Bible and are used to show the lineage of Jesus.

Jesse was the father of the great King David of the Old Testament, so Jesse is often looked upon as the first in the genealogy of Jesus.

This week reflect on these scripture passages daily.

Dec. 18 *Jesus is Lord:* Ex. 3:2; 20:1

Symbols: burning bush, stone tablets

Dec. 19 *Jesus is Flower of Jesse:* Isaiah 11:1-3

Symbols: flower, plant with flower

Dec. 20 *Jesus is Key of David:* Isaiah 22:22

Symbols: key, broken chains

Dec. 21 *Jesus is the Radiant Dawn:* Psalm 19:6-7

Symbols: sun rising or high in sky

Dec. 22 *Jesus is King of the Gentiles:* Psalm 2:7-8;

Ephesians 2:14-20 *Symbols:* crown, scepter

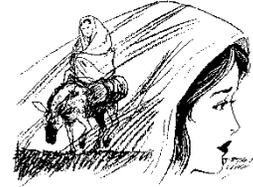
Dec. 23 *Jesus is Emmanuel:* Isaiah 7:14; 33:22

Symbols: tablets of stone, chalice and host

Dec. 24 *Jesus is Light of the World:* John 1:1-14

Symbols: candle, flame, sun

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS BULLETIN BOARD

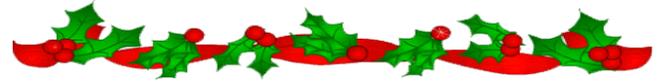


Advent is the season when we stand on the threshold of fulfillment. However, it is the fulfillment of an event that has already taken place. We remember it, we ritually reenact it so we never take it for granted, so we never forget that it is in and through history that the marvelous deeds of God are accomplished. Each year we pause to celebrate these events, not because they have not yet occurred but because they *have* happened and are happening now before our eyes. The celebration of anticipation is also the celebration of fulfillment, fulfillment of the promises made, fulfillment of our redemption, fulfillment of our transformation. Blessed are we who believe that what was spoken to us by the Lord has been fulfilled!



Parish Christmas Social

Everyone is invited to the school Wednesday, December 21 after the Advent Confessions for food and fellowship. Parishioners are asked to bring Christmas Cookies/Dessert. All are welcome.



Christmas Altar Flower Fund Donations are still being accepted.

Christmas Collection For the Poor – In the spirit of sharing blessings with our less fortunate brothers and sisters, a collection will be taken up at the Christmas Masses. *We encourage you to be generous.*

Communion to the Homebound – All homebound parishioners who want to receive Holy Communion on Christmas Day are asked to call Pat Masek by Dec. 22.

2017 Religious Calendars have been placed at the Church entrance. One calendar per family please.

Praha Cookbooks make great Christmas gifts. Contact Kathleen Svatek after church or call at 214-280-7828.

Christmas Cookies To The Homebound – We thank these ladies for baking cookies for the homebound and the elderly of the Parish: Georgia Cerny, Leona Herzik, Josie Kubenka, Pat Masek, Helen Schaefer, Gail

Stryk, and Kathleen Svatek.

The poinsettias and the cookies were very much appreciated by the 15 families that were visited by Santa.

