

December 22, 2019

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



Tuesday, December 24

10:00 p.m. The Benefactors of the Parish

Wednesday, December 25

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

Saturday, December 28

4:30 p.m. George Cerny

Sunday, December 29

8:00 a.m. Julia & Anton Stryk

Full, Conscious and Active Participation in the Liturgy



Next weekend is *The Feast of the Holy Family*. Prepare for the liturgy by reflecting on these passages from your Bible.

First Reading: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

Responsorial Psalm: 128

Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-21

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

The Sanctuary Light
will be lit this week
for Rosalie & Joseph Stryk.



2019 DIOCESAN SERVICES APPEAL

2019 Assessment	\$7,813.00
Contributions So Far	\$ 5,655.00
Amount Yet to be Contributed	\$ 2,158.00

We thank the following for their recent contributions:

Tim Pospisil

Deloris Smolik

Rosemary Klekar

Kathleen & Martin Svatek

We thank all those who contributed towards our D.S.A. assessment so far. With your generous support we should be able to pay off our remaining debt to the bishop. We are counting on all who have not yet contributed to the fund to do their part.

ORIENTATION - FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



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 13th Annual Mass for the Feast Day of the Holy Innocents at Raphael's Refuge will be celebrated by Bishop Brendan Cahill. The Rosary is to begin at 9:15 a.m., followed by announcements and singing of Christmas carols. Mass is to begin at 10:00 a.m. Refreshments will be served following the Mass. All are welcome.

The Monument to the Innocents is located 2 miles west of Flatonia at 2715 W US Hwy 90. For directions or other information call 361-258-1514 or visit raphaelsrefuge.org.

Veselé Vánoce

My dear friends,

May you have a blessed Christmas. May Christ's coming among us bring happiness and peace to all families.

God bless,



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 26 – Dennis Olsovsky
December 27 – Diane Decker
December 28 – Leon Kubenka

MARANATHA!



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!

Communion to the Homebound on Christmas Day: Holy Communion will be taken to the homebound parishioners who called in their request.

Christmas Altar Flower Fund Donations: See insert

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.*



CHRISTMAS: THE MEANING

If asked what Christmas means, the average person would probably give a sentimental answer: "Christmas is for children," or "Christmas is about giving." "Tis the season to be jolly," announces a popular carol, or, in the words of another, "It's the most wonderful time of the year." In the long slide down the slippery slope of secular culture, these sentiments are now applied to "the holidays" in a general sort of way, and the word *Christmas* is suppressed, along with the lingering religious content that the word might carry with it.

In the hearts of the faithful, however, Christmas is and always has been a celebration of the birth of the Savior. It is a time we hold sacred because it is about the Lord whom we love. It is the feast of his Incarnation. It is a celebration of the mystery of God becoming man, so that human beings could share in the life of God.

The season of Christmas embraces both the Nativity and the Epiphany. The Nativity centers on Jesus' birth and the events immediately surrounding it. The Epiphany in turn celebrates three episodes of his early public manifestation: the visit of the magi, the baptism of the Lord, and the first miracle of Jesus – at the wedding at Cana, when he changed water into wine.

The Christmas season is a time when we retell some of our most cherished stories as a faith community. Not only do Christians meditate upon the marvelous infancy narratives, they also discern in these stories rich symbols of Christ's identity. He is the suffering Messiah, the light to the nations, the glory of Israel, the one promised to the humble faithful, to name just a few themes that Christmas touches.

Thus, the myrrh of the magi prepares for the death of the Messiah, the ox and the ass of the manger scene symbolize Jews and Gentiles alike, "feeding" at the trough of the divine revelation: and the Holy Family's search for shelter dramatizes the personal faith question, Who will take Christ into their homes and make him welcome?