

**The Bells of St. Mary's  
The Church of the Immaculate Conception**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT SEASON, YEAR A  
First Sunday of Advent  
December 1, 2019**

**From Fr. Anthony Columba Ekanem, MSP—Pastor**

What a beautiful way to start a new month! Today, December 1, the first Sunday of the month, is the First Sunday of Advent Season. It is a unique opportunity for us to prepare for the comings of the Lord during this time of year.

The season of Advent encompasses four Sundays and the weekdays leading up to the celebration of Christmas. The Advent season is a hopeful time of preparation. We should direct our hearts and minds to the second coming of Christ's. We should also direct our hearts and minds to the anniversary of the Lord's birth on Christmas. The final days of Advent which are from December 17-24, focus mainly on our preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord, Christmas.

Since Advent is a time of preparation, it also has a penitential element. Just like Lenten Season is to Easter, so too is the Advent Season to Christmas. It is a time of preparation, penance, and sacrifice to receive Christ anew at Christmas. That is why we wear the color purple. Unfortunately, many of us do not take the Advent season seriously since we are so busy with Christmas parties, shopping, and all the other realities of life. But the Church calls us to be counter-cultural and reminds us to take the Gospel more seriously. Our Archdiocese of New York has recommended that we have Advent Reconciliation on Monday, December 16, from 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm. Endeavor to go to Confessions at any of the nearby parishes. Since Advent is a remarkable season of preparation for a more excellent mystery called the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas, we refrain from the supreme carol of the Gloria (Gloria in Excelsis Deo), the song of the angels proclaiming the glorious birth of Jesus. Unlike secular society, we also refrain from singing Christmas carols or decorating the Church with decorations until Christmas Eve. To prepare our Church for the Christmas Mass, mark your calendar for Monday, December 23; we need plenty of volunteers to help clean and decorate the Church. We would also appreciate donations for the flowers.

Advent is the beginning of a new liturgical church year and another cycle of scriptural readings. We will begin cycle A, focusing primarily on the Gospel of Matthew. We just finished cycle C readings that focused mostly on the Gospel of Luke. Cycle B focused on the Gospel of Mark and Chapter 6 from the Gospel of John. In all three cycles, we read from the Gospel of John in the Easter Season.

In this new liturgical year, the liturgy invites us to come to the house of God. "Come, let us climb the Lord's mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob. (Isaiah 2:3) and the Responsorial Psalm, just like last Sunday again, reminds us, "Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord." (Psalm 122:1). The Gospel and the Seconding Reading deal with the Lord's second coming, which the first Christians believed was imminent. Both readings convey a sense of urgency with these phrases: 'Wake up,' 'Stay awake,' 'Stand ready.' The vision of a world at peace under God challenges Christians to work for this new world. Here we are called to act.

The First Readings of Advent (from Isaiah) are concerned with the Messiah and the messianic times. Isaiah kept the hopes of the people alive in very dark times. In today's reading, we have the theme of universal peace and salvation. Prophet Isaiah is calling all people to come in the light to the mountain of the Lord. St. Paul, on the other hand, encourages the Romans to live a life pleasing to our God, conducting themselves appropriately. "Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." (Romans 13:12).

In the Gospel reading, Jesus' speech emphasizes the same idea of not being caught off guard when He returns. Just as the flood brought with it a sudden change from life as usual to judgment, so it will be when the Son of Man comes back. See, how Jesus warns His disciples always be prepared, "for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." Jesus urges us to stay awake because we do not know the day or the hour when Christ will return.

The chief function of the season of Advent is to prepare us for Christmas. However, to understand Christmas, we have to start at the beginning - with the history of salvation. God's plan of salvation is centered and realized through Him. Advent looks back at the promise of His coming when that plan was made known. And it looks forward to His coming when that plan will reach its complete fulfillment. And, of course, His actual coming, which we are preparing for as we celebrate His birth at Christmas.

As we celebrate this season, this wake - up call, let us remember to invite our friends and family members to join us in our home to pray around our Advent Wreath for the grace we need to be ready when He returns.

Ask yourself:

What needs to be removed from my heart to prepare a home for Jesus?

As I look forward to the unfolding of Advent, how can I use this season to better myself spiritually?

**Stewardship**

\*Tithing - God's Plan for Giving on Sunday, 11/24/19 our Offering was \$ 3,227.00

\*Today's second collection is for our Christmas Flowers.

\*Last week second collection was for the Renovation of Organ  
we collected \$1,014.00 Thank you for your generosity.

Today, we will have our monthly food collection for the needy in our community. Thank you for your generosity in helping those less fortunate than ourselves

**Parish Family Directory:**

Please see Dianne to make your appointment for your parish family photo for December 21 & 22 and January 4 & 5. This family photo is only for the use of the parish.

First Friday—Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament In Honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

From 11:00 am 11:45 am, Prayer to the Sacred Heart & Holy Rosary

From 11:45 am 12:00 pm, Confessions

From 12:05 pm—Celebration of the Mass

**NEED FOR A NEW BOILER**

We are in need of a new Boiler for the Rectory. The one we have now is having some problems and it has been serving for more than 22 years.

ATLAS WELDING & BOILER REPAIR COMPANY who maintains the Heating—system for us, are proposing we get a new one because the parts are now obsolete and are difficult to find or fix. A new boiler will cost us approximately \$31,350 including labor.

**Sundays Readings:**

**First Reading:** Isaiah 2: 1-5 p. 17

On that day, "they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" prophesied Isaiah. "One nation shall not raise the sword against another." He went on: "Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord."

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, p. 18 Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

**Second Reading:** Romans 13: 11-14 p. 18 Paul urged the Romans: "It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed." Let us put on the "armor of light. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ."

**Gospel:** Matthew 24: 37-44 p. 19 Matthew's Jesus said that the Son of Man will come at an hour no one can expect. Therefore, all people must stay awake, keep a watchful eye, and be prepared.

## **Religious Education**

### **December:**

12/7/19 - Religious Education Classes

12/14/19 - Religious Education Classes

12/21/19 - We will have our Second Family Catechesis Celebration.

### **Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal**

“Giving Tuesday is a movement that began in 2012 in New York City as a response to Black Friday and Cyber Monday. It is always the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving, and this year, that’s Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>. It has already become a world-wide sensation where nonprofits of all types use the opportunity to bring attention to their mission. As a parish we are 5% of our goal for the Cardinal’s Annual Stewardship Appeal and need to raise \$2,235, more to reach it. Please consider participating in Giving Tuesday this December 3<sup>rd</sup> by making a donation to the Cardinal’s Appeal by Tuesday, and help our parish reach its goal while helping others. You will be joining others from our parish who already invested into the Appeal’s mission and are making a difference by helping needy parishes, Religious Education programs, Catholic schools, seminarians and our retired priests and religious. To participate fill out an Appeal envelope and drop it in the collection basket or mail it. You can also have impact by going online to [cardinalsappeal.org](http://cardinalsappeal.org). Make sure to select our parish so that we receive credit for your generosity. Thank you and may God Bless you during this Advent and Christmas season.”

We are inviting you to bring your family members and friends to join us in celebrating our blessings on Saturday, December 7 at 6:00 pm as we mark our Feast of The Immaculate Conception

We are asking parishioners to bring a tray of their typical culture dish or pastry, you can also bring beverages. There will be a signing sheet at the back of the Church and in the Rectory for parishioners to sign up. If you do not wish to bring a dish and you can also make a donation for additional supplies for the party.

To our parishioners please do not light up candles that are not purchased from the parish. We sell the appropriate candle for the safety of the Church. Candles that are not ours will be removed for safety.

### **Catholic Underground Central**

Annunciation Church 470 Westchester Avenue, Crestwood, NY

December 14, 2019 at 7:30 PM

Featuring ALVELIS

Refreshments sponsored by the Holy Name of Society @A.OLF

Adoration ~ Evening Prayer ~ Confession ~ Performance

### **Mass Intentions for the week of November 30 - December 8, 2019**

#### **Saturday, November 30, 2019:**

12:05 pm - Efrin C. Sr. Teresita M. Lindo + \* Rachel Mital & Family

5:00 pm - Rose Kunny + \* Tara Pratt Damian Esposito

7:30 pm - Nancy Magdalena Carrasco Borja + \* Elvis Delgado

#### **Sunday, December 1, 2019:**

7:30 am - For the Parishioners/ Para Los Parroquianos

9:00 am - Guadalupe Reyes+ \* La Familia

11:00 am - Dennis M. McMahan \* The Bonanno Family

#### **Monday, December 2, 2019:**

8:15am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Aida Aviles + \* Marta Vega

#### **Tuesday December 3, 2019:**

8:15am - Available/Disponibile

12:05pm - Carl & Vee Motta + \* Son George Motta

#### **Wednesday, December 4, 2019:**

8:15am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Aleykutty Patteril + \* George Patteril

#### **Thursday, December 5, 2019:**

8:15am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Elsamma Kandankary + \* George Patteril

7:00 pm—Gabriel Pedro \* Anna Duarte

#### **Friday, December 6, 2019:**

8:15 am - In Thanksgiving \* Jane

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

7:00 pm—Sagrado Corazon DeJesus \* Grupo Apostolado

#### **Saturday, December 7, 2019:**

12:05 pm - Availabe/Disponibile

6:00 pm - Rose Kunny + \* Marge & Bob Esposito

6:00 pm - Legion De Maria

#### **Sunday, December 8, 2019:**

7:30 am - For the Parishioners/ Para Los Parroquianos

9:00 am - German Talero Jr. \* Lilia Talero

11:00 am - Maria & Anthony Antao \* Esther & Eduardo Rodrigues

+Indicates deceased \*Indicates the person (s) who requested the Mass.