

THIRD SUNDAY *of Advent*



Saint Philip the Apostle Parish
CLIFTON, NEW JERSEY

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

My Dear Parishioners,

We are drawing close to celebrating the Solemnity of the Lord's Nativity, Christmas Day, on December 25th. The Lord is very near and is coming quickly, as the Liturgy of the Church keeps reminding us. It is the recurring theme in the season of Advent.

The nearness of the Lord should be a comfort to all believers. The Redeemer of all people is coming, desiring that all of us partake of everlasting life. Christ our God came among us as a human being, toiling and suffering for us, sharing our existence to the full, showing us how to live and how to hand ourselves over in the service of God and neighbor.

The Lord calls us to give of ourselves, what Christ also called "losing oneself," to truly find oneself, whereby we attain complete fulfillment, realized in Christ who dwells in our hearts.

The scripture readings assigned for the third Sunday of Advent, when the vestment color changes, remind us of the Lord's nearness and how pleasant and rich the mystery of God's coming really is. The color assigned by the Church for today's liturgy is rose, recalling the fragrant offering we make to God and calling to mind what many consider to be the most fragrant of flowers, the rose.

Madison, New Jersey is called "the rose city," for the millions of cut roses sent by train to New York City throughout the year. So many people love the smell and look of roses. Our Church in her liturgy wishes us to know that our God can be compared to the powerful beauty and fragrance of the rose. Of course, it is only a comparison since God transcends the beauty and goodness of all things.



In the first lesson for this Advent Sunday, the prophet Zephaniah tells the people to rejoice in the fact of God's mighty deeds: the removing of enemies and all misfortune, with nothing to fear. Why? Because the Lord the Savior is in the midst of the people, renewing them in God's love. In the actual context of the scripture text, originally composed in Hebrew, these are words about returning to Jerusalem after prolonged exile and imprisonment in Babylon. That is precisely what everyone needs, namely, a return from estrangement and belonging to something greater than self, to the God who saves us.

The people of Israel longed to be able to return to their homeland. Likewise, we who were created to share in God's eternal banquet in heaven, must now walk in faith, hope, and love through this life, drawing closer to God with every breath we take. That can happen if we allow ourselves to be transformed by our infinite and all-loving God.

We are sinful creatures, yet called to greatness and holiness, something that is possible by the active working of God in our souls, what is called supernatural grace. It cannot be weighed or measured but is more real than anything we have ever had or experienced.

The Gospel passage this Sunday focuses on God's coming in our midst, without doubt or delay. God is Love and

where love is found, there is God. As such, the power of God's light cannot be defeated by the darkness of sin and error.

Christ will be with us always, as he promised, with a call to extend Christ-like love to all we meet, the poor and rich, the infirm and healthy, the young and old. Christ came to change everything and everyone, to be our light in the darkness and our strength in all our weakness and doubt.

Like the prophet Zephaniah, Saint Paul also speaks this Sunday about rejoicing in the Lord and dismissing all anxiety from our lives. It is a fundamental theme for all who follow Christ, but something we always need more of.

Along with waiting for the Lord and rejoicing in God's goodness, every spiritual journey requires a strong dose of patience as well. That is manifested in consistency in our work, keeping the commandments, sticking to our obligations, which leads us to happiness and holiness. This takes much time and effort, practice, and the development of good habits, seeking virtue rather than vice. We may fail regularly, but are called to get up again, fortified by God's grace and the Sacraments of the Church and those around us who encourage us in doing good.

It is often when we are most ready to admit our limitations, our weaknesses, that we are able to receive the help we need, and most especially the outstretched hand of God. We must do our part as well, disposing ourselves to receive God's help, with "a broken, humbled heart," as the psalmist expressed it in Psalm 50 (51). The Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation is a powerful help in our ongoing conversion of heart.

In this Advent season we ask with expectant hope for help from God, who has redeemed us in Jesus Christ. In serenity and patience, we are invited to hear God's voice calling out to us each day, to lose ourselves that we may be found doing God's work, that is, loving all and serving them without counting the cost.

May the Eucharist, Holy Mass, where we commemorate the supreme sacrifice of God's love for us, in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, help us know more profoundly God's great gifts. May we be more ready and willing to hand over our lives for love of God and others.

We carry on in the season of Advent with gentle expectation of truly meeting the Lord who has loved us into being and invites us to taste immortality.

Peace,

Fr. Monteleone

PARISH SCHEDULE

CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Saturday Evening 5:30 PM
Sunday...8:00 AM, 10:00 AM (Broadcast) and 12:00 PM
Mondays thru Saturdays.....9:00 AM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Every Saturday 4:30 to 5:00 PM

Please call the Parish Office
if you would like a priest to visit
a sick family member at home or in the hospital.

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ADVENT SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITIES

ANNUAL SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

Please join us on **Sunday, December 12, 2021, at 3:00 PM** for a *Service of Lessons and Carols*. Hear readings and beautiful music provided by our **Adult** and **Youth Choirs** and **Handbells**. Come meditate on the spirit of Christmas with us

ADVENT PENANCE SERVICE

Tuesday, December 14, 2021, at 7 PM in the church.

SIMBANG GABI 2021

The Filipino Catholics of our parish invite everyone to join the annual ***Simbang Gabi*** Novena Mass in preparation for Christmas on Thursday, December 23, 2021, at 6 PM in church to be celebrated by his excellency, Most Reverend Kevin J. Sweeney. Fellowship and reception will immediately follow Mass in the Auditorium.

CHRISTMAS AT SAINT PHILIP'S 2021

Christmas Eve Masses

Friday, December 24

- 4 PM – Fr. Nico (Youth Choir)
- 7 PM – Fr. Kevin (Handbell Choir)
- 10 PM – Fr. Monteleone (Adult Choir)

Christmas Day Masses

Saturday, December 25

- 8 AM – Fr. Kevin
- 10 AM (Broadcast) – Fr. Monteleone
- 12 PM – Fr. Nico

Feast of the Holy Family

Sunday, December 26

- 10 AM (Broadcast) – Fr. Kevin
- 12 PM – Fr. Nico

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (New Year's Eve)

Friday, December 31

Vigil Mass at 5 PM – Fr. Nico

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (New Year's Day)

Saturday, January 1, 2022

11 AM – Fr. Monteleone

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study Sessions are held on Mondays in the Jubilee Wing Room at 11 AM

POLISH OPLATKI

The tradition of the Oplatki originated in Poland. This Christmas custom began with a simple white wafer, baked from flour and water. The wafers are designed to display Christmas images, such as the Nativity. The Oplatki are enjoyed by families, typically right before the Christmas Eve meal. Packages of Polish Oplatki are available in the vestibule of the Church.

LEGION OF MARY

St. Philips branch of the Legion of Mary is accepting new members. The Legion was founded in 1921 in Dublin by Frank Duff. It now has millions of members. At St. Philips, our group meets weekly on Mondays to say the Rosary, pray, report on acts of kindness for the past week and plan acts of kindness for the coming week. If you are interested, please call Veni Evangelista at 973-393-5120 or Barbara Jean Sikora at 201-638-9440

ADVENT SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

GIVING TREE

Pope Francis challenges us to answer God's call for us to be protectors *"showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about."*



The holidays give us the perfect opportunity to answer the call to help people in our very own community in need of help. After Mass today, please stop by the church vestibule to pick up a gift tag off our **Giving Tree** - or visit our parish website to make an online donation - to benefit a local organization during this Christmas season!

Please return all gifts by the 12:00PM Mass on December 19, 2021.

ADVENT SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

ROSARY SOCIETY

The next meeting of the Rosary Society will be held on Monday, **December 13th in Marian Hall**. The meeting will begin with Mass and the Rosary at 6:30 pm. All are welcome!

IN OTHER NEWS

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Blood Drive Sunday, December 19th

Our Knights of Columbus are sponsoring a blood drive from 7 AM to 1PM in the Auditorium on Sunday December 19th. Blood supplies are always low during the holiday season. Come to the auditorium before or after any Mass. Bring an ID and wear your mask as covid protocols are still observed.

During this season of giving what better way that giving the gift of life.



HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Calendar Raffle

The Home and School Association (HSA) will be selling the calendar raffles after all the masses this weekend and next weekend, **December 18th and 19th**. Tickets are \$10 each for 90 chances to win! A chance to win money makes a great Stocking Stuffer!

ST. PHILIP PREPARATORY SCHOOL

St. Philip's Student Council is currently running a Christmas Bell fundraiser. All proceeds will go to help the Father English Community Center restock its food pantry for people in need for the holidays. The competition between the class has been fierce. The halls of the school are truly decked out for the holidays because of our very generous students who want to help others.



DIOCESAN MINISTRIES APPEAL

2021 Diocesan Ministries Appeal

"Let Your Light Shine"

With the year coming to an end, many people plan to make a final year-end charitable contribution that has the most impact. Please consider the Diocesan Ministries appeal which helps so many of your brothers and sisters in Christ. In fact, tens of thousands of people are supported by the work of our Diocese with assistance from the Appeal. All of us can play a part in the Diocesan Ministries Appeal- as either a contributor to the cause or as a recipient of its mission- and all are blessed as a result. Please make the Diocesan Ministries Appeal a priority in your year- end philanthropy. Gifts can be made by check, credit cards, through gifts of securities or online at www.2021appeal.org. May God bless you for your generosity!

GOD BLESS THE NEWLY BAPTIZED



Lillian Mae

PRIESTS' SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 18, 2021

5:30 PM Fr. Monteleone

DECEMBER 19, 2021

8:00 AM Fr. Nico

10:00 AM Fr. Jared

12:00 PM Fr. Kevin

WE PRAY FOR...

THE DECEASED: Donald C. Lee, Edward J. Wozny, Sr.

THE SICK: Luca Ataide, Jennifer Rascher, Mary Grace Heyrich, Debbie Werthmann, Susan Stierlen, John Riccardi

PARISH GIVING

SUNDAY COLLECTION: DECEMBER 6, 2020 \$ 24,171.00

SUNDAY COLLECTION: DECEMBER 5, 2021

Weekly Collection \$ 12,232.00

Online Giving Donation \$ 7,629.00

Total \$ 19,861.00

Second Collection- Retirement Fund \$ 3,076.00

MASS INTENTIONS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2021

8:00 Eleanor and Hugh DeGhetto
Edward Ray

10:00 Paul S. Tyahla
Garry DeVos- 1st Anniversary
Deceased members of the Kerner Family
Margarte Blanco

12:00 F. Paul Marschalk- 56th Anniversary
Susanne Shahin

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2021

9:00 Ronald Daniels

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2021

9:00 Roberta Vincent

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2021

9:00 Danilo V. Caparz

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2021

9:00 Roslyn Meola

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2021

9:00 Kris Thiruvathukal

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2021

9:00 Salvatore Zisa- 1st Anniversary

5:30 Margaret Hreha
Janet M. Galanti
Roberta Soccol-1st Anniversary

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021

8:00 All the People of the Parish

10:00 Catherine "Killy" Makowski
Josephine Pagano
Lena Rean

12:00 Frank and Laura Slasinski
Elena Parillo Bridi
Enrique Hizon



CANDLE THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 12th

In Memory of Rosario Llamas



OFFERTORY GIFTS THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 28TH

In Memory of Salvatore Zisa- 1st Anniversary

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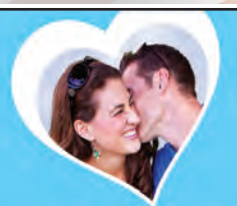
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