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St. Philip the Apostle Parish

797 Valley Road, Clifton, NJ 07013

www.stphilip.org ~ (973) 779-6200



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2024



CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Saturday Evening 5:30 PM
Sunday.....8:00 AM, 10:00 AM (Broadcast) & 12:00 PM
Monday thru Saturday..... 9:00 AM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Every Saturday4:30 PM

HOLY HOUR

Every Friday9:30 to 10:30 AM

For a Communion visit and/or
Anointing of the Sick,
please contact the Parish office.



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

My Dear Parishioners,

Have you ever had a religious experience? I wonder what that question even makes you think of. Do you think of something extraordinary, angels in the sky, a voice from the clouds? If so, maybe you have never had an experience like that. Perhaps it makes you sad or even frustrated that you never have.

I think that many people think about religious experience like this is also partly why they look for the presence of God elsewhere. My life is, most of the time, far from extraordinary. Why would I expect something so out-of-the-ordinary in the midst of dullness and normality? People start to think that the fruitful place to look is somewhere else. It must be that eastern wisdom, mysticism from another culture, is where we will find that amazing, enlightening truth.

Part of what I love about the Christmas story is that it breaks this idea of God-elsewhere in pieces. God is not God-elsewhere. He is God-with-us.

The story from today's Gospel prepares us for this life-changing story of God-with-us, God in the everyday. On one level, the story is as ordinary as we might like. Mary goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth. One pregnant woman visits another. Of course, part of the reason for Mary's visit is presumably to tell the extraordinary news she has received from the angel Gabriel, but presumably part of the reason is also simply to support her cousin and to receive support.

You may say the story is very much a story of the extraordinary: Elizabeth's son, even in the womb, begins his role as the prophet of God, announcing the coming of God into our world. Yes, certainly. But it is not because Mary goes somewhere far away or does something unusual. Pregnant, she visits a pregnant relative. But God acts in that ordinary visit, and something remarkable happens.

We may feel that nothing remarkable ever happens in our lives, but that is not true. Every situation we are in, good or bad, God is there ahead of us, ready to do there his marvelous deeds. For one thing, every situation we find ourselves in is an opportunity for us to act with love, and real love is always from God, our cooperation with God acting in our lives. However quiet and small an act of real love may seem, it is always something

extraordinary, in its way even more extraordinary than a sky full of angels.

And the world we live in is a holy place. It's not just that God is everywhere, though he is, but that the holy, all-powerful God has made our world his home. That is what we celebrate at Christmas. God isn't God-elsewhere. He is God-with-us. Every part of our world, however dull or ordinary it may seem, has been sanctified, made holy, because God chose to walk this Earth.

Perhaps we feel sometimes not only that our lives are dull and ordinary, but that they are filled with difficulty and sorrow. That can be especially hard at Christmas, when we miss those, we've loved and lost, when we feel that everyone else is having such a happy time, and we too should be joyful. If you feel that way, please get in touch: the Church is there for you, and we are not too busy to love and support you in your loss. But when God became one of us, he promised that even those who mourned would find comfort. Even sorrow and loss can be a time when we meet God, times of the extraordinary.

We can lose the importance of Christmas in two ways. It's easy to get caught up in the ordinary. I think it's part of what makes even an explicitly Christian Christmas acceptable in our society: everyone can delight in the birth of a child, love the baby Jesus. But equally, we can marvel at the extraordinary and forget that it all came about because God acted in and through many ordinary moments of care, amid the difficult and dangerous political situation of first century Palestine, and he can do the same in your life and in mine. We can forget the divine dimension of Christmas, but it's equally easy to forget that the events we celebrate are the best kind of good news in whatever dull or even distressing circumstance we may find ourselves.

So maybe we don't find ourselves filled with Christmas joy. Maybe we don't feel we have used our time in Advent well and prepared ourselves. But Christ is coming anyway, not a long time ago in a place far, far away, but right here, right where we find ourselves. Whether we are ready or not, God-with-us is coming, and if we welcome him, our lives will be extraordinary.

Peace,
Fr. Monteleone

MERRY CHRISTMAS

*The St. Philip Parish Staff would like to wish you
and yours a very Merry Christmas!*



PLEASE NOTE

The Parish Office will be closed on Tuesday and
Wednesday,
December 24th and 25th and will reopen on
Thursday, December 26th.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2024

Christmas Eve Masses

Tuesday, December 24
4 PM, 7 PM and 10 PM

Christmas Day Masses

Wednesday, December 25
8 AM, 10 AM and 12 PM

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Vigil Mass,

Tuesday, December 31
5:30 PM

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Wednesday, January 1
9 AM

OF THE BLESSED MOTHER & CANDLES

The great season of Advent is full of rich symbolism, especially in regard to the contrast of light and darkness.

For example, Jesus is known as the “light of the world” and his birth was made known to the Magi by a bright star, as they recounted to King Herod, “For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him” (Matthew 2:2).

Stars then play a vital role in the symbolism of Christmas, pointing the way to Jesus Christ.

The Virgin Mary is similarly known under such titles as “Star of the Sea,” and is often referred to as a “star” that leads other people to her Son, the true “light” that shines in the darkness.

In Advent and throughout the Christmas season, the Church proposes an ancient hymn known by its Latin name, *Alma Redemptoris Mater*. It was written by St. Herman the Cripple in the 11th century and is recited after the conclusion of Night Prayer.

It is a beautiful prayer, one that highlights this symbolism and points our hearts towards Bethlehem, in eager anticipation of the birth of the Savior.

Below is the Latin and English translation of this beloved hymn, which can easily be turned into a prayer throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons.

*Alma Redemptoris Mater, quae pervia caeli
Porta manes, et stella maris, succurre cadenti,
Surgere qui curat populo: tu quae genuisti,
Natura mirante, tuum sanctum Genitorem,
Virgo prius ac posterius, Gabrielis ab ore
Sumens illud Ave, peccatorum miserere.*

Loving mother of the Redeemer, gate of heaven,
star of the sea, assist your people who have fallen
yet strive to rise again,

To the wonderment of nature you bore your
Creator,

yet remained a virgin after as before,
You who received Gabriel’s joyful greeting,
have pity on us poor sinners.

Some parishioners have noted the new arrangement of candles in the sanctuary. The candles on the main altar and by the tabernacle date back to 1964 when the church was reopened after the fire. I had them refurbished for the parish. They serve as a link to our past and present. The

tall wooden candlesticks will re-appear in the future. Sometimes for different liturgical seasons the candle arrangements will differ. I like the fact that we have such choices and these items only add to beauty of our church. Let us be the light the world so desperately needs. Enjoy the beauty of this Advent season.

Fr. Monteleone

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 will be available in the vestibule of the Church.



ST. PHILIP PREPARATORY SCHOOL



Pre-K 3-4 class is working on describing the Christmas Holiday. They have learned about sizes, patterns and the meaning of this wonderful holiday and most importantly they have learned about the birth of our baby Jesus. They also are discussing the Winter season by using their imagination in creating their own snowmen and snowflakes.



SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITIES

LIFE MINISTRY

Merry Christmas

"For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace."

Is. 9:5

EQUAL RIGHTS For Babies in the Womb

SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

PRIME TIMERS

January Party Time

If you're over 50 and want to have some fun why not join our Prime Timer Senior Social Club. We meet at 1:30pm (1pm for coffee-and), in Marian Hall on the first Friday of each month. Our next meeting will be January 3rd when we will have our post-holiday light lunch. The cost is only \$15 for sandwiches, salads, etc. If you want to come please make out your check for \$15 to St. Philip's Prime Timers and drop it off or mail it to Prime Timers at the parish Office 797 Valley Rd. Clifton, N.J. 07013. Mark the envelope Jan. Luncheon. We need to have a final count of attendees by Dec. 30th. At this meeting we will also hear a great presentation by Jean Reanue on the history of Clifton and this area of Passaic County. A dinner-theater trip to Hunterdon Hills Playhouse to see Bill Haley and the Comets on March 7th is also in the works. Come out and join the fun.

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

TUITION RAFFLE

1st Place - \$6,800 Tuition for 2025/26 for SPPS
or any Catholic Educational Institution

2nd Place - \$300 Flynn O'Hara Uniform Co.
Gift Card

3rd Place - \$150 St. Philip Prep
Spirit Wear Gift Card

Drawing date: Friday, March 7, 2025 at 10 p.m.
Tickets are \$50

No substitution of the offered prize may be made,
and no cash will be given in lieu of the prize.

*Tuition payment will be made directly to the
Catholic Educational Institution.

Winner need not be present at the time of drawing.
To purchase a ticket, email: sppshsa@gmail.com

TRICKY TRAY

St Philip Prep Tricky Tray is coming up in March!
Our HSA is asking for basket donations. We are
looking for all size baskets to use for our prizes at
the tricky tray. The baskets can be left in the back
of the church or dropped off at our school office. If
you have any questions please call our HSA
President at 862-247-3899.

DIOCESAN NEWS

Jubilee Opening Mass

Sunday, December 29, from 3 – 5 pm

The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist

(381 Grand St., Paterson, New Jersey)

Pope Francis encourages all Catholics to celebrate
and participate in the Jubilee of Hope throughout
the year of 2025. Each parish/institution of the
Diocese of Paterson will be represented at the
opening Mass at the Cathedral on Dec. 29, 2024
with Bishop Kevin Sweeney. A pilgrimage to Rome
and a local pilgrimage will be made available for all
parishioners. For details about the opening Mass,
the pilgrimages, and to learn about the many Jubilee
events that will be happening in our diocese, visit
the diocesan homepage.

For more information, visit

<https://rcdop.org/jubilee-2025-rcdop>



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PILGRIMAGE TO ITALY 2025

Pilgrimage to Italy for Jubilee Year 2025

Fr. Emerson is organizing a pilgrimage to Italy for
the Jubilee Year from

September 22-October 3, 2025.

For more details see the parish website at
www.stphilip.org or email Fr. Emerson at
efrancisco@stphilip.org



Pilgrimage Update:

**Application Form for Participation in the
Pilgrimage is now available in the Parish Office
or at the doors of the Church**

Deadline of submission is December 31, 2024
(subject to change)

PILGRIMAGE TO ITALY MEETING

There will be a Meeting for those who
are still deciding, and those who are
interested and/or have questions about
the Pilgrimage to Italy. Come and join
us for the presentation and discussion!
A representative from the travel agency
will be flying from Italy to join us.

Date: January 11, 2025 (Saturday)

Time: 7:00PM

Place: Marian Hall

KIDS KORNER



KID'S KORNER

Gospel Today
Fourth Sunday of Advent | Luke 1:39-45

Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was filled with The Holy Spirit, and she felt her baby move upon Mary's greeting. Elizabeth said to Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Luke 1:42

Year C

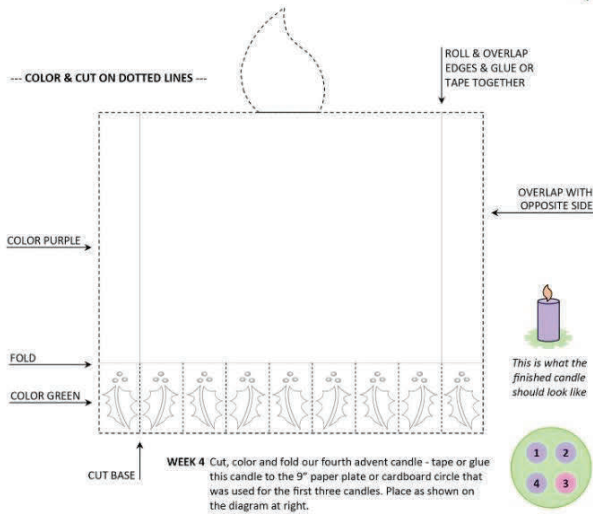
WEEK 4, evening lighting prayer

Prayer said by Father or head of household

"O Lord, stir up Thy power, we pray Thee, and come; and with great might help us, that with the help of Thy Grace, Thy merciful forgiveness may hasten what our sins impede. Through Christ our Lord, Amen".

Father or head of household lights all the candles.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



PARISH GIVING

SUNDAY COLLECTION: DECEMBER 10, 2023, \$17,630.00

SUNDAY COLLECTION: DECEMBER 15, 2024

WEEKLY COLLECTION \$ 10,238.00

ONLINE GIVING DONATION \$ 6,663.00

TOTAL \$ 16,901.00

WE PRAY FOR...

Recently Deceased...

Anton F. Meindl

A Time to be Healed...

Rita Frank, Kathleen Teresa Fitzpatrick Brown,
Lou Piatti, Caitlin Buggy, Irene Chmura,
Edward Honan, Marge and Barbara Sikora,
Arlene Pompeo, Diane Albanesius, Dona Piasiecki



MASS INTENTIONS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024

- 8:00 Ed Kovacs
- 10:00 Catherine "Kitty" Makowski
Emanuel Calon Rodriguez
Marguerite Hausz
Giovanna and Antonio Caradonna
- 12:00 Thomas Turner- 7th Anniversary
Roseann Weitner

MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2024

- 9:00AM Salvatore Monteleone
Marilyn Can

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2024 CHRISTMAS EVE

- 4:00 PM Elvira Maldonado
John Anderson, Jr
- 7:00 PM Charles Marvin
Natalino Selvaggio
- 10:00 PM Joseph Scafidi
Encarnacion Conocer

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2024 CHRISTMAS DAY

- 8:00 AM All the People of the Parish
- 10:00AM Salvatore LoBalbo
Joseph Besteri- 1st Anniversary
Domenico and Josephine Pagano
- 12:00 PM Marlene Chidiac
John Michal

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2024

- 9:00 Louise Stolarz
Beatriz Jumao-as

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2024

- 9:00 Rev. James Daly

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2024

- 9:00 Louis Sinnou and Family
Simon Chavez
- 5:30 Helaine Pohle
Daniel Thomas DiGioia
William Gary Crum

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2024

- 8:00 All the People of the Parish
- 10:00 Joseph Dressel
Wilfredo Asuncion, Jr
Salvatore DePadua, Jr
Leandro Salme
- 12:00 James Elbert
Sal DePadua

CANDLE FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 22nd

In memory of Roberta Soccol



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