

Parish News...

From the Pastor's Desk

There will be no Polish Masses on Sunday December 12th and Sunday December 19th, Masses have been rescheduled

Wednesday, December 8th is the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin and is a Holy Day of Obligation

The Parish has Oplatek Christmas Wafers (Angel Bread) available again this Christmas. They are available in the front of the Church for \$3.00. For those who are not aware of this Polish tradition, it is a beloved family tradition of breaking of the oplatek on Christmas Eve. The oplatki is meant to remind families of the Eucharistic bread at Mass and makes a further connection between Christmas and the gift of the Eucharist, the presence of God among us. Oplatek (plural – oplatki) is a thin wafer made from flour and water similar in taste and consistency to the hosts that are used for communion during Mass. Oplatki are often stamped with an elaborate Christmas scene.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops “ The Advent season is a time of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to Christ’s second coming at the end of time and also to the anniversary of the Lord’s birth on Christmas. The final days of Advent, from December 17 to December 24, focus particularly on our preparation for the celebrations of the Nativity of our Lord (Christmas) “

Many of our homes have advent devotions to prepare us for the birth of Jesus. During the Season of Advent, I will do my best to focus on some of the most known Advent devotions.



There is a tradition called the **empty manger**: This tradition is when an act of service, sacrifice or kindness is done in honor of the Baby Jesus a birth present, a person will receive a piece of straw to put into the manger. Then on Christmas morning the Baby Jesus is placed in the manger. Families are encouraged to make Jesus' bed as comfortable as possible through the good deeds. In the process, explain to the family that Christ's incomparable self-gift at Christmas and Easter enable us to be a part of God's family.



December 6th is the feast of St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas was known for selling off his own items and then giving the money to the poor. He would commonly leave coins in people's shoes and dedicated his entire life to serving people who were sick and suffering. This is how he gained his saint status, and is what inspired St. Nicholas Day (also commonly known as Feast Day or the Feast of St. Nicholas. the history of St. Nicholas and his good deeds was part of the inspiration of the modern-day Santas Claus and Father Christmas which is why there are some current traditions of leaving gifts in peoples boots or shoes (or stockings) On this day a child puts a shoe out the night before St. Nicholas day in hope that the kind bishop with his mitter, staff and bag of gifts will pay off.

St. Mary of Mt. Carmel/Blessed Sacrament Church in Utica

St. Mary of Mt Carmel/Blessed Sacrament Church in Utica - along with Chelsea Opera, a New York City-based opera company now in its 18th season, will present

Bending Towards the Light... A Jazz Nativity, a holiday show composed and arranged by Anne Phillips, on December 9, 2021 at 7:00 PM at St. Mary of Mount Carmel/Blessed Sacrament Church. 648 Jay Street, Utica, NY in memory of Nicholas S. Priore, Esq. This will be the 5th annual performance in Utica of the Jazz Nativity, suitable for families and audiences of all ages. The performance is free to the public, with free will donations accepted. All guests will remain masked during the performance, and socially distanced seating areas will be available.



Parents, please remember that all people entering the building are required to wear a face mask. NO exceptions. There will be extra if needed for the children if required

This year the Christmas Mass at 4pm on December 24th, the Parish celebrated the Christmas Pageant with the children. If your child is interested in being an angel (the parish has limited costumes to be used, so please contact me if interested), shepherds and animals. If interested please contact me. 315 527 8399.

Looking for donations of Christmas Ornaments for the Faith Formation Christmas. If your family would like to donate an ornament for the tree, please bring it to the class next week.

The Faith Formation program will be sending Christmas Cards to nursing home residents in the area for a bit of Christmas cheer. If your family would like to send some Christmas holiday spirit to these patients, please bring it to me by December 12. The children will be making cards in class as well.

Mass Schedule

Saturday 4pm

Sunday 7:30 AM, 8:30AM, 10AM Polish Mass and 11am

Let's remember that as Catholics, it is important to attend Sunday Mass. At Mass we are able to stand mystically at the foot of the cross and witness for ourselves the same self-sacrifice of Jesus, in an unbloody manner. Mass is a celebration of this sacrifice. It is the active participation of all that come together in the place of worship. While Faith Formation before the 11AM Mass, all families are welcome to this Mass. If unable to attend this Mass, please attend the Church Masses. Faith Formation Classes alone do not teach your children about their faith. It is important they see their faith in the Mass.



Second Sunday of Advent

First Reading: BAR 5:1-9

Responsorial Psalm: PS: 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 5

2nd Reading: Phi 1:4-6, 8-11

Gospel: Luke 3:1-6



While I have found these wonderful reflections on the Sunday Gospel, it is not meant to take the place of the Sunday Mass. Remember to attend Mass to hear Fr. Arthur or Deacon Kirk's a much better spiritual teaching of the Gospel reading

Today we relight the candle of HOPE. Now we light the candle for the second Sunday in Advent. This is the candle of PEACE. As we prepare for the coming of Jesus, we remember that Jesus is our hope and our peace.

From the prophet Isaiah: "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." —Isaiah 9:6-7

Reflection: Prepare

1. The gospel reading mentions very important people (VIP) yet it is to a man in the wilderness that the Word of God was revealed. A great lesson to be learned here. John the Baptist lived in the desert seeking only the presence of God while the great men of his time lived in their palaces seeking the adulation of people.
2. The desert is a desolate place away from the bustle and hustle of city life where the voice of God is drowned out by noises from every direction. John the Baptist could not have chosen a better place to prepare him for his ministry. Indeed, modern life is not only hectic but noisy and full of distractions.

That is why it is always best to go for a walk in a desolate place, perhaps in a forest, where we can focus all our attention on God alone. If it is not possible, we can just shut the door of our room (Matthew 6:6), switch off the television and stick our mobile phone in a drawer so we can concentrate on listening to the voice of God. The point is we need complete silence because common sense dictates that it is in quietness that we hear God's voice.

3. John proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Repentance is a condition for salvation. God loves us to send His only begotten Son to deliver us from death and eternal damnation yet we need to accept first that we are sinners, then repent and change our ways.

4. The cry of John the Baptist was and still is to prepare a way for the Lord and to make straight His path. When a special visitor comes to our residence, we will make sure that everything is in order. We will spend a day or even a week cleaning, maybe repainting and fixing everything to show the very best impression and to give our visitor a comfortable stay in our house. Don't we do that to Jesus our savior? The season of advent is the best time to do it. Let us fix our life, clean our mind and heart, and put on the garment of faith, hope, and love to welcome Him.



In our Bible lesson today, we hear the voice of John the Baptist crying out to the people, "Prepare the way for the Lord. Fill in the valleys and level off all the mountains. Make the crooked roads straight and the rough places smooth."

Do you think John the Baptist really wanted the people to work on the roads? (Pause.) What John really wanted was for the people to get ready for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He was telling people to get their hearts right and return to God.

No matter how good people may think they are, there are always some crooked ways and rough places in their lives. There are things such as dishonesty, selfishness, pride, jealousy, and many more. John wanted the people to make those crooked ways straight in preparation for Jesus' coming.

During the Christmas season, we, too, can prepare by looking at our hearts and smoothing out rough places like dishonesty and selfishness. And the good news is, God will help us. Let's ask Him to do that right now.

Dear Father, we want to be ready for You. Make our crooked ways straight and our rough places smooth. In Jesus' name, amen.

Weekly Prayer

- . This week prayer is on the second week of Advent. Let us continue to prepare our families for the Birth of Our Lord Jesus.**





Syracuse Dioceses Information:

COVID Update:

In response to the Delta variant of the coronavirus and the CDC Guidelines that recommend a return to mask wearing indoors in our seven counties, Bishop Lucia is **highly recommending mask wearing** during Masses and during any indoor church related event. All Eucharistic ministers are asked to wear a mask during the distribution of the Eucharist and to use hand sanitizer prior to the distribution.

All other protocols remain the same and can be found on the diocesan website: <https://www.syracusediocese.org/assets/Uploads/Updates-Celebration-of-the-Sacraments-in-Time-of-Pandemic-5.21.21.pdf>. For information on the Catholic Church's position on the vaccination, please visit <https://www.syracusediocese.org/about-us/httpswww-syracusediocese-orgabout-uswww-syracusediocese-orgabout-us-covid-19-information/>

Advent Ember Days

Advent Ember Days are **December 15th, 17th, and 18th**. Ember Days are **days of prayer and fasting** that mark the changing of times and seasons in order to bring about deeper spiritual renewal. On these days, the Church “entreats the Lord for the various needs of humanity” and gives thanks to God for various blessings received (*Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*, 45). Bishop Lucia invites both the clergy and the faithful of the diocese to participate in the following Ember Days for the **synodal process**. A list of this year’s Ember Days and suggested activities for prayer and fasting can be found [here](#).

From Care of Our Home Committee:

ADVENT WEEKLY REFLECTION FOR 2021: Week 2

To prepare the way of the Lord, and make straight God’s path, let us reflect on how much God has given to us in overflowing love as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As we wait in joyful hope, let us be aware of God’s many gifts to us, such as the Earth which is the vehicle so essential for life and also our consciousness that the Earth is a great gift we are called to cherish. What can we as individuals and as communities do to better cherish God’s Earth so as to make God’s path to us more straight?? The Lord truly has done great things for us!

From the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry:

Registration is now open for the Syracuse Diocese Pilgrimage for Life youth trip to Washington, D.C.!

On this powerful 3-day experience, participants will travel to Washington D.C., attend Mass with Bishop Lucia, enjoy a guided walking tour of the monuments, see the Smithsonian Museums, join an evening [Youth Rally](#) with Sr. Josephine Garret, CSFN and music by Dave Moore, and of course, participate in the **National March for Life**. This is open to youth in grades 7-12. \$199 per person includes: travel, lodging, and most meals; tickets to Life Is Very Good Youth Rally; and a tour of the National Monuments.

Click [HERE](#) for more information and to register.

Office of Family/Respect Life

1. *March for Life - January 20-21, 2022*

Join this one-day pilgrimage to Washington, DC for adults and families! This trip includes Mass with Bishop Lucia at the National Basilica, participation in the March for Life with the diocesan group, transportation, meals and a diocesan scarf. The bus will pick up passengers in four locations, Utica, Syracuse, Cortland and Binghamton. Cost: Adults \$50. Young Adults (18-25) \$25. Maximum Family Rate: \$125. For more information, contact Jen Brown at 315-472-6754 Ext. 7 or email familyrepsectlife@syrдио.org. To register online go to march4lifesyracuse2022.eventbrite.com.

World Marriage Day

The Diocese of Syracuse will celebrate *World Marriage Day* on Sunday, February 13, 2022 by hosting a special Mass with Bishop Lucia at the Cathedral at 2:00pm. Couples married 20, 25, and 50+ years in 2022 will be recognized by receiving a certificate during Mass. A mailing will arrive next week with flyers, posters and a letter with information from Bishop Lucia. See attached flyer for posting or social media.

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