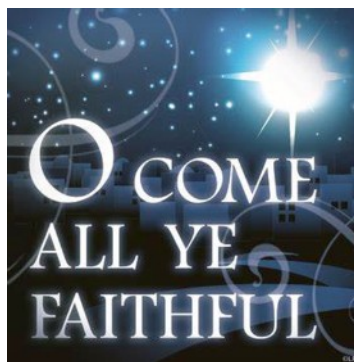


Parish News...

Starting this Saturday, anyone attending any Mass regardless of vaccination status will be required to wear a face mask in the Church.

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



The Christmas Mass at 4pm on December 24th, the Parish is scheduled to have the Christmas Pageant. Due to the recent mandate from the Governor's Office & Oneida County, anyone attending this Mass will be required to wear a mask from age 2 and above. With this change I will need to discuss with Fr. Arthur upon his return to determine if at this Mass will have the children re-acting the Gospel. If Fr. Arthur indicates the children will be re-acting the Gospel, All Children will be required to wear a mask NO EXCEPTION. Please continue to read my newsletters for the update for this mass.

During the past two weeks of Advent, I have been sharing Advent traditions with all of you. Last week's Homily from Fr. Arthur on the true meaning of Christmas was very inspirational and hit home regarding how we forget the true meaning of Christmas. I want to share his homily again with all of you. I hope I do it justice.

He started by telling a story of a man who had built a home for his family. He had yet to place smoke detectors in the home. The man had plans to put the smoke detectors in home but had yet to follow up with putting them in. The home caught fire and tragically family members were lost.

Father then talks about the Gospel of today and how John the Baptist is telling the people of the time to prepare the way for the Lord. At Christmas time we would be preparing for the Birth of Jesus. It is thru His birth and resurrection that forever changed the world. There is no person in over 2021 years that has made such an impact in the world.

Sometimes we forget the true meaning of the season. We are more involved in decorating our homes. The focus for Christmas of late has become about the gifts our loved ones and Santa Claus for the children.

The question is are you like the man with the smoke detectors who was not prepared or are you prepared for the birth of the Christ Child? We need to remember that about preparing for the birth of the Christ Child who was born for our salvation

Lastly, the most important part of his homily is that we must remember that December 25th is not a holiday but rather a **HOLY DAY**.

This week we lit the 3rd candle on the Christmas wreath. This week's candle is pink and is known as the candle of joy. This candle is otherwise known as the Shepherd Candle, this candle reflects the joy that comes through Jesus' arrival, and through the salvation he has gifted us.

Christians may wonder why the church decided to make this particular candle a different color than the others.

Although Christians have presented several reasons for the pinkish nature of the candle, from a tradition where priests would wear pink vestments to parents eagerly awaiting the joy of a child's arrival by painting the room pink, the rosy candle has its roots in something known as **Gaudete Sunday**.

During this third week of advent, this Sunday celebrates the passage [Philippians 4:4-7](#) its verses extolling readers to "rejoice" for "indeed the Lord is near."

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.

Adult Catechism: Please come and learn about your beautiful church and how it brings blessing to yourself and others in deepening your faith. It is the 1st Sunday of every month @10am in the Cow Palace.



Faith Formation

With the winter weather upon us, I need to inform families of the winter school protocol for the school. Should it be necessary to cancel classes due to the weather, I will have it announced on the local weather channels as well as send out a mass email advising that classes are canceled no later than 8am. Should a family feel the weather is too bad for the family to come to faith formation, I leave up to the family's decision to decide if they should come. Safety for your family should always be first.

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

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.



Third Sunday of Advent

First Reading: Zep 3:14-18A

Responsorial Psalm: IS:12:2-3,4, 5-6

2nd Reading: Phi 4:4-7

Gospel: Luke 3:10-18



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

John's message is primarily a call for change of mind (repentance or metanoia) and a change of direction (conversion). Practically, he is telling us to be sorry for our sins and to turn back to God. In order to prepare for the coming of the Lord, he has given specific instruction for everyone such as sharing and being just to others. Otherwise, we will face the grave consequence of being burn with unquenchable fire.

The instruction of John the Baptist is not too difficult to do unless we have hardened our heart. Sharing our time, talent and treasure with the needy is a good start. Then we look into our behavior and see what injustices we have been inflicting on others. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we will have the courage to admit them and the will to stop doing them. Not only that, we will make restitution by returning what is not rightfully ours and compensating the loss of others due to our actions. In short, John is telling us to do what is good that we have not been doing and to stop doing the bad things that we have been doing.

John's lifestyle was authentic. He preached what he practiced. There was no hypocrisy in him. No wonder he was a magnet for others. May the season of advent allow us to start listening to his words and change our ways so that we can truly be made worthy to meet our savior Jesus Christ.



Katie has more presents under the Christmas tree than I do!" he cried.

His mom explained that getting gifts under the tree isn't what Christmas is really all about because Jesus is our greatest gift.

- Have you ever felt the way this boy did? Explain.
- How did that experience affect your joy in that moment?

Christmas should be a time of joy. Today, we'll learn our true joy is in Jesus' birth, not the presents we get. In fact, God tells us that giving is even better than receiving.

In the Bible, John the Baptist was sent to prepare people for the coming of Jesus. He told them to repent of their sins and prepare their hearts for the coming of our Savior.

"What should we do?" they asked.

John replied, "If you have two coats, give one of them to the one who has none. If you have food, share it with those who have none."

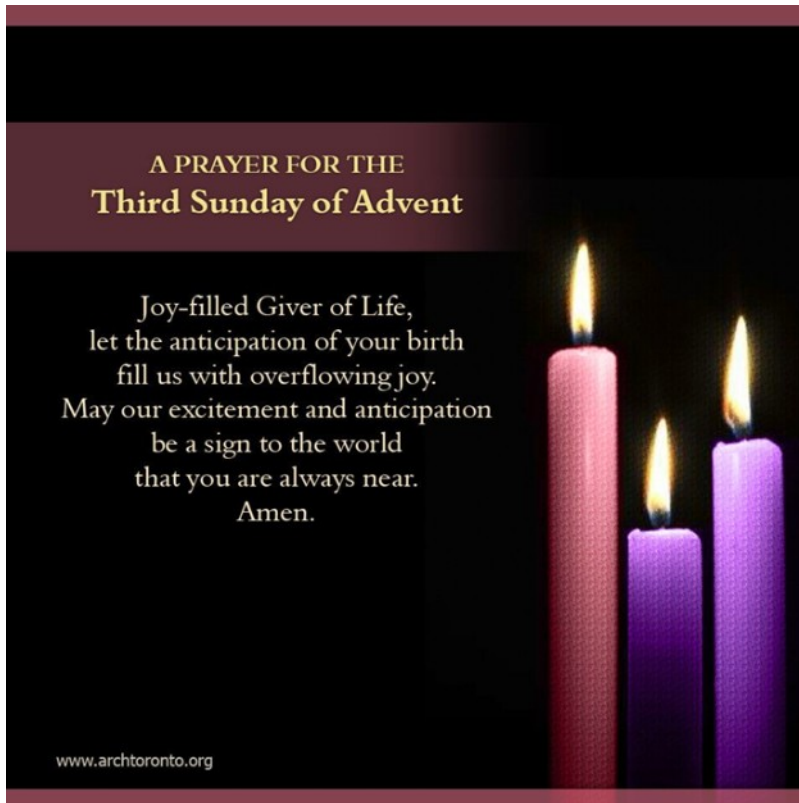
This message is for us, too. If we want to experience the real joy that Jesus wants for us, then we must learn to share. By sharing what God has so generously given to us, we will receive an even greater gift -- the gift of joy.

- What is one way you can give others joy during Christmas?

Dear God, help us to learn that it is through remembering Jesus' birth and giving to others that we receive true joy at Christmas. In Jesus' name, amen.

Weekly Prayer

This week we start preparing our hearts and homes for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ on December 25. This week prayer is on the 3rd week of Advent. Let us continue to prepare our families for the Birth of Our Lord Jesus.



A PRAYER FOR THE
Third Sunday of Advent

Joy-filled Giver of Life,
let the anticipation of your birth
fill us with overflowing joy.
May our excitement and anticipation
be a sign to the world
that you are always near.
Amen.

www.archtoronto.org



Syracuse Dioceses Information:

COVID Update:

New York State has instituted a mask mandate in all public places effective December 13 to January 15. It is being done as a safety precaution and out of the utmost concern for one's neighbor. Bishop Lucia expects that all parishes in the Diocese of Syracuse will cooperate with this important public health matter and comply with the mask mandate.

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

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@syrdio.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 flier for posting or social media.

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