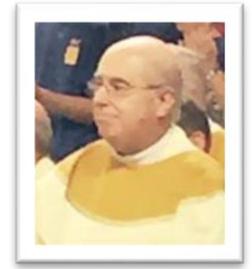


Third Sunday of Advent

December 11, 2016



The Good News – Jesus Christ

Bad news can get us down. Yes, it can discourage us. There are times when you may feel like canceling your subscription to the daily or weekly papers. There are moments when you may be tempted to throw something at the TV set. I have so far resisted those temptations. My TV is still intact, and yes, I still read the papers.

On this Third Sunday of Advent, I am not suggesting we pretend that there is no bad news or that it has somehow disappeared. What I am suggesting is that we look at the Advent wreath. Three candles are lit. The light coming from our wreath is getting brighter. Why? Because we are getting closer and closer to the celebration of our Lord's birth, the birth of the Light of our world.

As we make our way through the month of December, we are getting closer and closer to the good news. The Good News is Jesus Christ. He is the Good News despite the fact that his birth did not make the front page of the Jerusalem Times 2000 years ago. The Good News that he was born in a little town about 5 miles south of the capital city of Israel!

First century Israel was full of bad news as well. But in all of the suffering that Israel endured through oppression, persecution, slavery, and wars, the prophecies of Isaiah kept HOPE alive. The prophecy we hear in today's first reading. The prophecy symbolized by our Advent Wreath. The people of Israel rallied and truly believed that the desert and parched land would exult someday...and bloom with beautiful flowers...that they would someday see the glory of the Lord...that God would come to save them.

And we believe that God did just that. On a chilly night in a Jerusalem suburb. When God's Son was born of a woman, the Patroness of our Parish, His Mother.

I don't know about you but I think the Good News of Jesus Christ far overshadows all of the bad news we read about or hear about or watch on TV.

On this Third Sunday of Advent I have a suggestion. Let's allow the Word of God to give us a shot in the arm. Through the poetry of Isaiah who led his people out of their long exile in Babylon. Their ordeal has come to an end, and they are on their way home. If we stay centered on God, we can survive anything.

Yes, we hear and read a lot of bad news these days. But rather than allow the media to focus our attention on the bad news, let's try to pay more attention to the great prophet and poet, Isaiah, and the John the Baptizer. Two people who knew what they were talking about and weren't afraid to talk about it. Two people who are pointing the way toward the best news, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Msgr. Larry Bronkiewicz

Pastor



MASS READINGS & INTENTIONS

MONDAY, December 12

Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab/Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47

7:00 AM Irene Mackin
12:00 PM Karen Borrello

TUESDAY, December 13

Zep 3:1-2, 9-13/Mt 21:28-32

7:00 AM Lucy Rodhouse
12:00 PM Carey Depuy

WEDNESDAY, December 14

Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21b-25/Lk 7:18b-23

7:00 AM Faustina Datu
12:00 PM Mary Sherlach

THURSDAY, December 15

Is 54:1-10/Lk 7:24-30

7:00 AM Lillian Sturz
12:00 PM Mary Cail

FRIDAY, December 16

Is 56:1-3a, 6-8/Jn 5:33-36

7:00 AM Ryan Adams
12:00 PM Maureen Hyland - 3rd Anniversary

SATURDAY, December 17

Gn 49:2, 8-10/Mt 1:1-17

8:00 AM Peter L. Casagrande, Jr.
4:30 PM Sophie, Lee & Harry O'Brien

SUNDAY, December 18

Is 7:10-14/Rom 1:1-7/Mt 1:18-24

Church

7:30 AM Mary and Conrad Sponberg
9:15 AM Diane May
11:15 AM Leslie Marie Parkel

Hall

10:30 AM Lisa Cataldo - 12th Anniversary
12:00 PM David Kulo
5:00 PM Carey Depuy

Our next Pre-Baptism Class (required for parents who have not had a class within five years and wish to have their child baptized) will be held this **Wed., Dec 14th** from 7:30-8:30pm in the Barn. Call our Parish Office to register.



GOD'S PLAN FOR GIVING

WEEKLY YEAR-TO-DATE

December 4, 2016 \$28,041
December 6, 2015 \$27,734

Christmas Flowers

December 2016 \$5,376
December 2015 \$5,309

*This week's second collection, Retired Religious Fund
Next week's second collection, Hospitality House*

Retirement Fund for Religious

Across the United States, hundreds of Religious communities lack sufficient financial resources to meet the retirement and healthcare needs of their aging members. This annual appeal benefits nearly 33,000 senior religious priests, sisters and brothers, providing them vital support for medications and nursing care. This is a good opportunity to say "thank you" to the many faithful priests, sisters and brothers of religious congregations who have dedicated their lives to teaching, serving the poor, caring for the sick, and bringing the love of Christ in various ministries to countless men, women and children.



Please remember our sick in your prayers, especially Theresa Avento, Joseph Barone, Mary Jo Calamai, Megyn Caldwell, Patti Capilli, Dina Casavecchia, Bill Casey, Virginia DeSerio, and Emmy Jane Jones. (For the sake of of privacy, only immediate family members may add someone to our prayer list. Individuals will be removed monthly unless we are otherwise notified.)



Wedding Banns I. Daniel White and Susan Thomas Bray

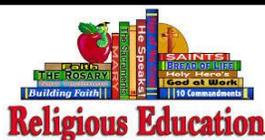
Candle Intentions



Adoration Tabernacle Candle is Burning in Loving Memory of Francis Yost

FREE CHRISTMAS EVE MASS TICKETS

All Free Christmas Eve Mass tickets have been distributed for the 3:30, 4:45, 5:30 and 6:30pm Masses. If you received tickets and no longer need them, please drop them off at the Parish Office so we can pass them along to another family. Thank you! ALL OTHER CHRISTMAS MASSES DO NOT REQUIRE TICKETS.



Our Annual Religious Education Kindergarten and 1st Grade Nativity Pageant will take place this Sunday, December 11th at 3pm in our Parish Hall. All Parishioners are welcome!

GIFTS FOR ALL: Liturgy of the Word for Children with Special Needs began Sunday, November 13, at our 10:30am Mass in our Parish Hall, and is scheduled for the following dates: December 18, January 8 and January 29. Please see the website for more dates in the future. We are in need of volunteer staff for the following positions: Special Ed Teacher, Peer Witnesses and Music Minister. Please call Pat Postiglione, Director of Religious Education (438-6538), or Sharol Signorelli (438-2302) for more information.

RESPECT LIFE COMMITTEE



Every child who, rather than being born, is condemned unjustly to being aborted, bears the face of Jesus Christ, bears the face of the Lord, who even before

he was born, and then just after birth, experienced the world's rejection. And every elderly person...even if he is ill or at the end of his days, bears the face of Christ. They cannot be discarded, as the 'culture of waste' suggests!"
www.smcr.org/respect-life

DEFENDING OUR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY



May the leaders who were elected last month be guided by the Holy Spirit as they fulfill their positions.

If you haven't done so already, please voice your opposition to the federal health care mandate by calling U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell at 202-205-5445, and your newly elected representatives. Let them know that the mandate is in violation of our First Amendment right to religious freedom.

20th ANNIVERSARY



Saint Mary School
 RIDGEFIELD

Our Amazing Alumni

One thing that makes Saint Mary School special is the dedication of our Alumni. Whether they return to SMS to attend the Christmas Pageant, to volunteer at the Father Daughter Dance, to play basketball in the Catholic Schools Week Middle School vs. Teachers and Alumni Basketball Game, or to volunteer when they are home from college on break or have a day off from High School, our Alumni continue to be a part of our family long after they graduate from SMS.

Saint Mary School is currently enrolling students in select grades of Preschool through Grade 8 for the 2016-2017 school year, as well as accepting applications for the 2017-2018 school year. For more information, or to set up a tour, please contact Anna O'Rourke at (203) 438-7288, or visit www.smsridgfield.org.

Senior Citizen Christmas Luncheon

Our **Senior Citizen Christmas Luncheon** will be held on Tuesday, December 13th at 12 noon in our Parish Hall. That day the Noon Mass will be celebrated in the Church, not the Parish Hall. **The MacDonald-Pin Dancers** will perform their Christmas show. Donations are very much appreciated. Please phone Saint Mary School Office at [203-438-7288](tel:203-438-7288) to make your reservation. The deadline for reservations is Monday, December 12th.

FAITH FORMATION CORNER



Reading the Bible

Today's Catholic is called to take an intelligent, spiritual approach to God's Word in the Bible.

Below are points for more fruitful Scripture reading:

--Bible reading is for Catholics. The Church encourages Catholics to make reading the Bible part of their daily prayer lives. Reading these inspired words, people grow deeper in their relationship with God and come to understand their place in the community God has called them to in himself.

--Prayer is the beginning and the end. Reading the Bible is not like reading a novel or a history book. It should begin with a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds to the Word of God. Scripture reading should end with a prayer that this Word will bear fruit in our lives, helping us to become holier and more faithful people.

(continued next week...)

www.usccb.org

CATHOLIC ACTION

St. Peter's Run



This is a wonderful group activity! Please join our Catholic Action Team prepare and deliver lunches to the children of our Sister Parish, St. Peter's, Bridgeport on Saturdays. As there are no soup kitchens open in Bridgeport on the weekends, food support is greatly needed for the families of our Sister parish, especially during the winter months. We ask that you consider providing a bag lunch meal to about 200 children of St. Peter's who are enrolled in their Religious Ed program. Reimbursement for the cost is available. Thank you for considering serving Christ through the poor. Please go to this link to signup <http://bit.ly/2eZYCf> or go to www.smcr.org.

DONATE: Food Pantries

During the month of December, all food collected goes to Dorothy Day Hospitality House. Suggested food items include cereal, pasta, canned food, vegetable oil and baby food. Also needed: full-size toiletries. Thank you!



SMMC GIVING TREE

Thank you to all who contributed to our Giving Tree this year! It's Christ's love in action! Over 650 people in need were helped this Christmas season because of your generosity. Thank you! Thank you!



You Can Play an Important Role in Our Ministry

Do you know someone going through a difficult time who could benefit from the focused care, encouragement and support of a Stephen Minister? If you know of someone who is hurting, talk to one of our Stephen Ministry Leaders, Mary Ann O'Grady – 203-438-5610 or Jack Hughes – 203-665-0054. They can talk with you about how we can connect the person you know with one of our Stephen Ministers. It's a great way to show how much you care!

PILGRIM VIRGIN



The Advent Season is here. To honor the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, consider inviting the Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Fatima to your home to pray the Rosary daily, a wonderful Marian devotion. The message from heaven for us is more urgent than ever to pray for world peace and the conversion of sinners. To invite the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima to your home contact Elma Stoveken at 203-894-1341.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

O = permanent or substitute adorer urgently needed.
X = 1 additional adorer needed.
Empty boxes = there are 2 or more adorers.

| | Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 12M-1am | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 1am-2am | X | O | O | X | O | X | X |
| 2am-3am | O | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 3am-4am | O | X | X | X | X | O | X |
| 4am-5am | O | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 5am-6am | X | X | | | X | | X |
| 6am-7am | X | | X | X | X | | X |
| 7am-8am | X | | X | X | X | X | X |
| 8am-9am | | | | X | | | X |
| 9am-10am | X | X | | X | X | X | X |
| 10am-11am | X | | | X | | X | X |
| 11am-12N | X | | | | | | X |
| 12N-1pm | X | | | | X | X | X |
| 1pm-2pm | O | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2pm-3pm | X | X | X | X | | X | X |
| 3pm-4pm | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 4pm-5pm | X | | X | X | X | | X |
| 5pm-6pm | X | | X | X | X | | X |
| 6pm-7pm | X | | | X | X | X | X |
| 7pm-8pm | X | | | | | | X |
| 8pm-9pm | | | | | | X | X |
| 9pm-10pm | X | X | | | X | X | X |
| 10pm-11pm | | | X | X | | X | X |
| 11pm-12M | X | | X | | X | X | X |

As the Advent Season progresses, let us take this time to visit our Adoration Chapel in preparation for the coming of Christ or better still take a needed scheduled hour or be a substitute in the chapel. Please sign up by calling Bill or Monica @ 914-533-2832. God bless!

EVERY Thursday evening, 7-9pm, in our Adoration Chapel, the Chaplet of Mercy, 7 Sorrows of Our Blessed Mother and 15 decades of the Rosary are sung and prayed. Please join us!



ST. MARY PARISH MEN'S MINISTRY

Membership in the STMMM is a lifetime invitation to come whenever you can! Once a member always a member. Come join us any Saturday @ 6:30AM for bagels, coffee and fellowship. Perhaps your spiritual life needs a tune-up. Come and see how Jesus' teachings can enrich your life and the life of your loved ones. stmmm.org

MARQUETTE COUNCIL OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS



Don't you want to be the best role model for your child? The easiest way is to share the faith with your children by spending time with them and "walking the talk." Connect the words to action! Join the Knights of Columbus for the opportunity to serve our church and community together WITH your children. We are looking for Dads and their kids to help us throughout the year. Contact John McNicholas at jmpmcnich@yahoo.com or visit www.kofc245.org for more info.