

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

17 DECEMBER 2017

Readings for Sunday, December 17: Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28.

John witnesses to one who is to come, one far mightier than he, one who will proclaim freedom and deliverance from sin and death. As we await his coming again in glory, let us join with Mary in singing the praises of God.

Readings for Sunday, December 24: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38.

St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish Special Day of Prayer is Monday.
Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament: Monday after 9:00 A.M. Mass to 4:00 PM in the Chapel.

MASSES FOR THE WEEK

<u>Date</u>		<u>Intention</u>	<u>Requested By</u>
18 Dec.	MON. 9:00 AM	Elizabeth Colgan	Diane, Sandra & Dale
20 Dec.	WED. 9:00 AM	Jack Birmingham	Wife, Shirley
21 Dec.	THU. 9:00 AM	Catherine Stevens	Tony & Theresa Vitacco
21 Dec.	THU. 7:00 PM	James Hegedus	Ursula Frain
22 Dec.	FRI. 9:00 AM	Marie Dellaquila	Husband & family
23 Dec.	SAT. 4:00 PM	Rosemary Rice	Rice & O'Connell Families
24 Dec.	SUN. 9:00 AM	People of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish	
24 Dec.	SUN. 5:00 PM	People of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish (Christmas Vigil Mass)	



ETERNAL REST grant unto them, O Lord. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace, especially ANGELINE TESTA.

PRAY FOR THE SICK AND SUFFERING of the parish especially those in homes and hospitals.

REMEMBER OUR TROOPS: Pray that God will bless and protect our young men and women in the military.

Thank You! To everyone who helped with our **St. Nick Party!!!** Everyone had a wonderful time! Thank you to the Durante and Tammaro families for set-up, Frank Durante for repairing and painting our present sleigh, to all the wonderful Catechists and Aides who helped and cleaned up, to Jim and Denise Bucciaglia for the 2nd Sunday help, and to all the families who came out and brought baked goods to share. **Merry Christmas!**

THE ROSARY PRAYER GROUP leads the recitation of the Rosary every Sunday before the 9:00 AM Mass. They also pray the Rosary before the 9:00 AM weekday Masses. All are welcome to join in these special Marian devotions.

<u>MINISTRY SCHEDULE - December 23/24:</u>
<u>4:00 PM Mass</u>
Lector - Tony Vitacco
Extraordinary Ministers - Frank Durante, Sherry Durante, John Nester, Shelly Stockmal
Altar Servers - Michael Holmes
Greeters - Patty Wade and Monica Bauer
<u>9:00 AM Mass</u>
Lector - Jim Mich
Extraordinary Ministers - Rita Templin, George Siver, Chris Gerasimowicz
Altar Server - Domenic Gerasimowicz
Greeter - Jack and Lori Carr

REFLECTIONS FROM THE DESK OF FR. GREGORY J. HICKEY

3rd Sunday of Advent - Gaudete Sunday

Many of us remember when we had Mass in Latin; this day was known as Gaudete Sunday. That means “rejoice” or “be joyful.” The liturgy continues to communicate that theme of joy with rose colored vestments and readings that tell us to rejoice. So on this Sunday, I thought you would enjoy a little humor.

A couple was always fascinated by old churches and whenever they traveled if they came near an old church, they had to stop and look inside. Once in a small town church, they saw an oddly shaped bell and asked the person cleaning the church what the strange bell was used for. They were told “That bell is reserved for calamities, like fires, floods, or a visit from the archbishop.

Finally, if laughter really was the best medicine, hospitals would have found a way to charge us for it long ago.

Laughter fades away, but there is something that lasts and sustains us all the more and that is joy. It goes deeper than just being funny. We heard the prophet in today’s first reading telling God’s people, during an especially difficult time in their history, to “sing for joy.” They should sing for joy not because things were wonderful, but because God was in their midst. We heard Paul in prison tell the Philippians to rejoice always. The scriptures give us different ideas about joy than our culture does. Our society seems to tell us joy stems from what we have. The scriptures tell us our joy comes from what we have (for the Lord is in your midst as Zephaniah tells us) but it also comes from what we have in some future time, something we can trust in because God is faithful to His promises.

Some of the things that keep us from having joy are: feeling sorry for ourselves, constantly putting other people down to make ourselves look better, putting ourselves down and not capitalizing on our assets. Since we are all human and we make mistakes we have to learn the healthy ways of dealing with guilt or shame. Constantly beating ourselves up is not one of them. When we hold on to anger and resentment, it eats us up inside and does not produce joy. We have to forgive. Thinking that having more things is going to make us happy is only a momentary high. It leads to fear and worry and St. Paul tells us to have no anxiety at all. That might sound impossible but there are so many things that cause anxiety, which we can do nothing about, and we have to leave them in God’s hands.

If self-pity, guilt, unforgiveness, anger, resentment, fear, and worry work against us having joy, then what will lead us to joy? St. Paul tells the Philippians “rejoice” as if it is something for them to choose to do rather than it being something that just happens to them. I think it was Abraham Lincoln who said most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be. Dr. Hans Selye, the scientist who developed and researched the concept of stress, would agree. He said: “It’s generally not the things outside of us that create stress for us, but it’s the way we respond to these things.”

We need to not only be good but we are called upon to do good things. Otherwise, we will not feel good about ourselves. The people in today’s Gospel ask the Baptist, “What should we do?” John gave them a few specific ideas. All we have to do is read the Gospels or the 10 Commandments and we will get the idea that there is more to a good life than just to say, “I believe.”

Finally, I think gratitude is the final key to unlock the way to joy. Being grateful is an intentional thing; it is an attitude that all of us are called to develop. St. Paul said: “In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.” A heart that is ungrateful is not happy. This is not all that can be said about joy but it’s probably enough for us to think about this week.

My closing words for today are do not make yourselves so anxious this season that you lose the joy that can only be found in knowing Jesus’ love. The Lord, your God, is in your midst.

Have a good week!

Fr. Hickey

THE WOODEN YARDSTICKS AND RULERS we are collecting for Fr. Hickey’s friend are for special projects for special people. Years ago, banks and retail businesses gave them to customers as promotions. Now they give out pens and refrigerator magnets, so yardsticks have become scarce. Please give your donations to Tony Vitacco or drop them off at the parish office. Many thanks for your generosity!

Parish Support

WEEKLY BUDGET.....	\$5,000
DEPOSIT FOR DECEMBER 10, 2017.....	\$3,943
Regular Sunday Collection -	\$2,867
Parish Giving -	\$130
Christmas Flower Collection -	\$297
Immaculate Conception Collection -	\$649
WEEKLY DEFICIT.....	(\$1,057)
Year to Date Budget.....	\$120,000
Year to Date Collections.....	\$97,676
Average per week Collections.....	\$4,070
Year to Date Deficit.....	(\$22,324)
Average per week Deficit.....	(\$930)
<i>DECEMBER 11, 2016</i>	
Deposit.....	\$4,651
2016-2017 Deficit to Date.....	(\$24,252)
Difference from previous year.....	\$1,928



PARISH LOTTERY RAFFLE TICKET based on the PA Pick 3 Evening Number. Winning ticket number must be the exact number drawn for the PA Pick 3 Evening

Number. Tickets are \$5.00 each and are sold on a monthly basis. The prize for the winning ticket is \$50.00 on weekdays and \$100.00 on Sundays and one specially-designated weekday. Tickets are available after the Masses on weekends and at the parish office on weekdays. **This is our major fund raiser for the parish. We encourage each family to purchase at least one ticket each month. Your support is greatly appreciated.**

LOTTERY CALENDAR RAFFLE TICKET WINNERS

- December 4 - #367 - John Nester - \$50.00
- December 5 - #464 - unsold
- December 6 - #002 - unsold
- December 7 - #812 - Grayson Arendt - \$50.00
- December 8 - #936 - unsold
- December 9 - #415 - Gene Harding - \$50.00
- December 10 - #038 - unsold

MASS ATTENDANCE for December 9/10:

- 4:00 PM Mass - 151
- 9:00 AM Mass - 126
- Total Attendance - 277
- Mass Attendance for December 10/11, 2016 - 399

“CONSIDER REMEMBERING YOUR PARISH IN YOUR WILL!” For further information, please call the parish office.

“ADVERTISER OF THE WEEK”

POTTSTOWN ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY
610-326-7880

2018 MASS BOOK - Requests for Masses to be offered on a specific day during 2018 can be made at the parish office during regular business hours. The Mass stipend of \$10.00 must be paid at the time you request the Mass Intention.

OFFERTORY GIFT BEARERS: All parishioners are encouraged to be Offertory Gift Bearers for the Masses on Saturdays, Sundays and Holydays. Please call Kathy at the parish office to volunteer.

REDNER’S REGISTER TAPES: Thank you to everyone for collecting the Redner’s register tapes. Money we receive from these rebates are put towards our Parish Religious Education Program (PREP). Just a reminder that the Redner’s tapes only count when you use a Save-A-Tape card and that information prints out at the bottom of your receipt. If you do not use the card, we can not use your tapes. You can obtain a Save-A-Tape card at the Customer Service Desk at any Redner’s. A container for the Redner’s Register Tapes is in the vestibule of church. You can also drop off your Redner’s Register tapes at the parish office.

MOO MONEY FUND RAISING PROGRAM - Our parish is a participant in the Moo Money Fund Raising Program offered by Turkey Hill. For every 500 milk lids turned in with the Moo Money label, the parish will receive \$25 from Turkey Hill. Money the parish receives from Moo Money will be used to offset our Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) expenses. A container for the Moo Money lids is in the vestibule of church. You can also drop off your Moo Money lids at the parish office. Thank you for supporting this fund raising program.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Confessions

Saturday, December 23 at 3:30 PM

No confessions on December 30

Christmas Mass Schedule

Sunday, December 24 at 5:00 PM

Monday, December 25 at 9:00 AM

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Mass Schedule

Monday, January 1 at 9:00 AM



CHRISTMAS WAFERS are available at the parish office. 5 wafers per packet. A donation of \$3.00 per packet or \$5.00 for two packets is requested.



OUR ADVENT-CHRISTMAS GIVING

TREE is in the vestibule of church until Sunday, January 7. We are collecting items for Birthright of Pottstown for the babies and mothers in need in our area. Items most needed are: 3

month girls outfits, diapers up to size 3, baby wipes, socks up to size 18 month, receiving blankets, baby wash cloths, bibs, bottles, onesies size newborn and 0-3 month, maternity tops size L and XL and Leggings size XL for expectant mothers. Help us decorate our tree by placing an ornament on the tree for each gift you give. Ornaments are in a box next to the Giving Tree. Thank you for your generosity!



HANDMADE BABY BLANKETS - The Women's Society is selling hand-made baby blankets. Cost is \$10.00. The blankets make a very nice gift for a new baby or as an additional something extra when giving a gift card.

RADA CUTLERY - The Women's Society is selling RADA Cutlery. Items available include a 6-1/2" paring knife, Vegetable peeler, Server spoon, 8-1/2" utility steak knife, 11" large slicer and 8-1/2" serrated knife. To purchase any of the RADA Cutlery or for more information, please call Louise Roberts (610-323-5765).

METANOIA is an active community of Catholic young adults in western Montgomery County who support Catholics in their 20s and 30s who are looking to deepen their faith and meet fellow Catholics in the area. Upcoming event: Tuesday, December 19 - Christmas Party at Appalachian Brewing Co., Collegeville. Doors open at 7:00 PM; Talk starts at 7:30 PM. For more information contact metanoiayoungadults@gmail.com or visit www.facebook.com/users/metanoiayoungadults.

WOMEN'S HEART ATTACK & DISEASE SURVIVORS

SUPPORT GROUP - Meetings at St. Ignatius School - Room "C", West Lawn. Starting January 11, 2018 at 7:00 PM and every second Thursday thereafter. For more information email HeartSisters111@gmail.com or call Chrissy (484-955-4372) or Bev (610-781-5557).

ARCHDIOCESAN HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE

- Walk where Jesus walked. Pray at the site of Jesus' conception at Nazareth's Basilica of the Annunciation and His birth in Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity. Sail on the Sea of Galilee. Walk the Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. February 1-11, 2018. For more information contact Susan (1-800-842-4842) or susan@select-intl.com or visit www.selectinternationaltours.com.