

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

1 DECEMBER 2019

Readings for Sunday, December 1: Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44.

Let us rejoice in the Lord's peace; let us live honorably as we await his return.

Readings for Sunday, December 8: Isaiah 11:1-10; Romans 15:4-9; Matthew 3:1-12.

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>
2 Dec.	MON. 9:00 AM	Stephen Ondik	Daughter, Monica
4 Dec.	WED. 9:00 AM	Edward Litishin	Paula & Denny Bolonski
5 Dec.	THU. 9:00 AM	Sigizmunds Pelna	Vincent, Mara, Gabi & Amanda Tammaro
6 Dec.	FRI. 9:00 AM	Fred Kemmerle	Monica Bauer
7 Dec.	SAT. 4:00 PM	People of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish	
8 Dec.	SUN. 9:00 AM	Silvino & Maria Almond-Rulli	Jack, Lori & families



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

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.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING on Monday, December 2 at 7:15 PM in the Rectory.

FINANCE COUNCIL MEETING on Thursday, December 5 at 7:15 PM in the Rectory.

WOMEN'S SOCIETY MEETING on Thursday, December 5 at 6:00 PM in the social hall. We will be making candy at this meeting.

CANDY SALE sponsored by the Women's Society next weekend, December 7 and 8 after the Masses. Light or Dark chocolate covered nut or raisin clusters - \$6.00 per ½ pound box; Light or Dark chocolate covered marshmallows - \$5.00 per ½ pound box.

SECOND SUNDAY HOSPITALITY & ST. NICK PARITY on Sunday, December 8 in the social hall after the 9:00 AM Mass. Come enjoy a cup of coffee and juice and some light pastries. There will be crafts and a visit from St. Nicholas. Bring your camera. Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

MINISTRY SCHEDULE - December 7/8:

4:00 PM Mass

Celebrant - Fr. Hickey

Deacon Michael

Lector - Patty Murtha

Extraordinary Ministers - Vincent Tammaro, Mara Tammaro, Nikki Gambino, Shelly Stockmal

Altar Servers - Michael Holmes

Greeters - Marie Hildebrand and Ginger Scheidt

9:00 AM Mass

Celebrant - Fr. Ortega

Lector - Tony Vitacco

Extraordinary Ministers - Cristin Buccagliola, Lori Carr, Jack Buccagliola

Altar Server - Tommy Miller and Madelyn Miller

Greeters - Tom Marcheskie

REFLECTIONS FROM THE DESK OF FR. GREGORY J. HICKEY

"1st Sunday of Advent"

Happy New Year! We begin a new liturgical year in the Church today and we will begin a new cycle of readings for Cycle "A." Although our society has begun its preparations for the birth of Christ, even as they are hesitant to mention His birth, the Church begins its preparations today. Our Liturgy, however, wants us to know that we are not only preparing for a special celebration four weeks from now, but our readings put before us the bigger picture. It's not just the celebration of Jesus' birth that we are to prepare for but also we must prepare for the day when He comes again to bring us His kingdom. Advent tells us that Christ is coming, but it also asks us, are we ready to meet Him? If we're not, His coming 2,000 years ago will have little or no value for us.

For some people His second coming will be a frightening time. "People will die in fright in anticipation of what is coming into the world..." But if we are prepared, not just for Christmas, but for Christ, the Lord tells us "stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand." His coming will be for those who have followed him faithfully every day. Each day brings forth victory and joy.

Doesn't it sound as if Our Lord is speaking to us today when He tells us: "Be on guard lest your spirits become bloated with indulgence and drunkenness and worldly cares." We have to struggle against this happening to all of us during this time of year. I'm going to add a thought of my own to this list of things Jesus tells us to guard against. Make sure to get enough rest. When we are tired, it's hard to stay organized, focused, and to keep our priorities straight, and to pray. If we don't pray and keep our priorities straight, Christmas will leave us feeling empty and relieved that it's all over.

The Gospel's suggestion for us today as we begin Advent is: "Be vigilant at all times and make time to pray..." Is there a better formula we can apply to this season to prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth or the coming of Christ at the end of our lives or at the end of time? I'm not going around like Scrooge saying "Bah, humbug!" to Christmas. I like decorations, lights, parties, cards and gifts, but to prepare ourselves for what this season of the year is all about, nothing will do the job better than prayer and good works.

You might consider attending daily Mass in the chapel for the Season of Advent. We have Mass on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Daily Mass is approximately 25-30 minutes and is a wonderful way to start the day. On Mondays, we have Eucharistic Adoration after the 9:00 a.m. Mass and Our Lord is exposed in the Monstrance till 4:00 p.m. Feel free to stop in for a few minutes on Monday and place yourself in the Lord's presence and speak to Him and let Him speak to you. You could visit neighbors who are in the hospital or stop and spend some time with those in nursing homes who do not receive many visitors. There are any number of things you could do to prepare yourself for the coming of Jesus at Christmas and you would be helping others as well as yourself.

Now is the time to do it. No doubt you have heard this poem before, but it won't hurt to repeat it. It is entitled "Today." I shall do much in the years to come, but what have I done today? I shall give out gold in princely sum, but what did I give today? I shall lift the heart and dry the tear; I shall plant a hope in the place of fear; I shall speak with words of love and cheer, but what have I done today? I shall be so kind in the after while, but what have I been today? I shall bring to each lonely life a smile, but what have I brought today? I shall give to truth a grander birth, and to steadfast faith a deeper worth, I shall feed the hungering souls of earth, but whom have I fed today? Happy Advent!

Have a good week!

Fr. Hickey

2020 MASS BOOK - Requests for Masses to be offered on a specific day for January thru June 2020 can be made at the parish office. Mass stipend of \$10.00 for weekday Masses and \$15.00 for weekend Masses must be paid at the time you request the Mass Intention.

CHRISTMAS WAFERS are available at the parish office. There are 5 wafers per packet. A donation of \$3.00 per packet or \$5.00 for 2 packets is requested. Wafers are available on a first come-first serve basis.

Parish Support

Due to an early printing schedule, figures from the November 24 collection will be printed in the December 8 bulletin.



Raffle Drawing

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.**



OUR ADVENT/CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE will be in the vestibule of church until Sunday, January 5. We are collecting items for Birthright of Pottstown. Items most

needed are: Infant clothes, sizes newborn to 6 months; socks, size 0 to 18 months; baby bottles; fleece sleepers; crib sheets; baby toiletry items (shampoo, body wash, hand sanitizer, etc.); swaddlers; heavy winter jackets, size 0 to 18 months; onesies; maternity clothes, especially large and extra-large. Help us decorate our Giving Tree by placing an ornament on the tree for each gift you give. Ornaments are in the box next to the Giving Tree.



ST. GABRIEL WOMEN'S SOCIETY

Sunday, December 15th at 1:00 PM

Lily's Grill, 115 E. High Street, Pottstown

(Parking on High St. or BBT lot across from Borough Hall)

Cheese & Veggie Tray

Soup or Salad

Chicken Marsala

Lemon Butter Flounder

Butternut Squash Ravioli

Dessert – Coffee – Tea

BYOB or buy wine at Lily's

\$25.00 Members – \$30.00 Non-Members

Paid reservations and entree choice

by Friday, December 6

THE PARISH OFFICE will be closed Tuesday, December 3 and Thursday, December 5.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Soon our parishes will be conducting the collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious. This annual appeal benefits 31,000 elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests—women and men who have consecrated their lives to serving God and the Church. We are blessed to have 74 religious congregations present and serving within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. These 74 religious congregations represent approximately 2400 men and women religious. Of this number, over 800 are retired.

With this in mind, many religious communities struggle to provide for their aging members. During the early and mid-twentieth centuries, the Catholic Church in the United States experienced a surge in vocations to religious life, with numbers peaking in the mid-1960s. Care for elderly members was provided largely by younger ones. Over time, however, the number of vocations decreased while lifespans increased. The result is far fewer younger members available to support the retirement and eldercare needs of senior members. In 2018, 68 percent of the religious communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) had a median age of 70 or older.

I recognize this is but one of numerous worthy causes in need of assistance; I ask simply that you give what you can. In thanksgiving for their faithful service, please join me in supporting the Retirement Fund for Religious and in praying for God's blessing on our nation's elderly religious.

The annual Retirement Fund For Religious collection will be held December 7-8, 2019 in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The appeal is coordinated by the NRRO.

In addition to sponsoring the annual appeal, the NRRO offers assessment tools, educational programming, services, and resources that promote quality eldercare and help religious communities plan for long-term retirement needs.

I ask prayers for our consecrated religious and encourage support for this national collection scheduled for December 7-8, 2019 in our local parishes. Thank you.

In the peace of Christ,

+Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.

Archbishop of Philadelphia

2019 DAY OF SANCTIFICATION FOR PRIESTS - The priests of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia assemble each year for a day of prayer and reflection on the Sacred Priesthood. This year our priests will gather with Archbishop Chaput at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary on Monday, December 2 for the 2019 Day of Sanctification for Priests. Please pray for all priests of the Archdiocese, especially this weekend and Monday, with the following prayer from the *Roman Missal*:

Lord our God, who in governing your people make use of the ministry of Priests, grant to these men a persevering obedience to your will, so that by their ministry and life they may gain glory for you in Christ. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.