

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## 22 DECEMBER 2019

**Readings for Sunday, December 22:** Isaiah 7:10-14; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-24.

Jesus is Emmanuel, "God with us," risen from the dead. He is the king of glory.

**Readings for Sunday, December 29:** Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14; Colossians 3:12-21; Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23.

**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>    |
|----------------------|--|------------------------|
| 23 Dec. MON. 9:00 AM | Pearl Dori   | Her Sons               |
| 24 Dec. TUE. 4:00 PM | Philip & Carolyn Maddaloni                           | Daughter & family      |
| 25 Dec. WED. 9:00 AM | Pauline Harbach                                      | Husband, Joe           |
| 26 Dec. THU. 9:00 AM | Sophie L. Slobodin                                   | Tony & Theresa Vitacco |
| 27 Dec. FRI. 9:00 AM | Timothy Patrick Reilly                               | Mom & Dad              |
| 28 Dec. SAT. 4:00 PM | Steven & Mary Slaby                                  | Dave & Janet           |
| 29 Dec. SUN. 9:00 AM | People of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish |                        |



**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.

**HELP NEEDED** to decorate the Church for Christmas. Volunteers are asked to come help on Sunday, December 22 after the 9:00 AM Mass.

**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.

**THE PARISH OFFICE** will be closed Tuesday, December 24; Wednesday, December 25; Friday, December 27. Merry Christmas to you and your families!

**MAGNIFICAT BOOKS** - Those who purchased the Magnificat can pick up their JANUARY issue at the parish office.

**ST. GABRIEL OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER PARISH MEMORIAL FUND DONATION** received in memory of: **DEAN GULOTTA** from Pete & Lori LaRosa, St. Gabriel Women's Society, Shirley Birmingham.

### **MINISTRY SCHEDULE - December 28/29:**

#### 4:00 PM Mass

Celebrant - Fr. Hickey  
 Deacon Michael Murtha  
 Lector - Phyllis Villano  
 Extraordinary Ministers - Frank Durante, Sherry Durante, John Nester, Shelly Stockmal  
 Altar Servers - Michael Holmes  
 Greeters - Ginger Scheidt and Maria DiMarco

#### 9:00 AM Mass

Celebrant - Fr. Ortega  
 Lector - Tony Vitacco  
 Extraordinary Ministers - Rita Templin, Cindy Nore, Terry Donnelly  
 Altar Server - Maeve Donnelly  
 Greeters - Tom Marcheskie

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE DESK OF FR. GREGORY J. HICKEY

### *4th Sunday of Advent*

Our first reading goes back 1,000 years before Christ to the time of King David in Jerusalem. You need to recall that when Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt, almost 300 years before King David, God gave the people a special sign of His presence among them. That sign was the Arc of the Covenant. It looked something like this: a box in which were placed the 10 commandments, a lid of gold and on the lid were two angels. The box was carried by two long poles because no one could touch the Arc. The two angels provided a throne for their invisible God, Yahweh. As Moses and the people moved through the desert and eventually into the Promised Land, the Arc was kept in a tent. Only designated people, and eventually only the high priest, could enter the tent and offer sacrifice to God. The Arc was still kept in a tent during the reign of King David. David had built himself a nice comfortable palace and he decided it was not right that the Arc, the special sign of God's presence with His people, was still kept in a tent. So he told his prophet Nathan, that he would build a temple, a house for God.

Nathan said it was a good idea but God said "no." God said that David had shed too much blood in his role as king, so he would have David's son, Solomon, build the temple after David died. God was pleased with David's idea and blessed him. One of the special blessings David received was that David's line would never die out. One of his descendants would always be King over God's people. That's what is meant by the statement that God would establish a house for David. For about 400 years this proved to be true. Always the King of Judea was of the royal house of David. When the Babylonians conquered the Jews, that was the end of the kingship. However, the Jews never forgot the promise God made to David and always waited for one who would rescue God's people from their enemies and restore the kingdom of Israel. Since Kings were anointed when they assumed power, the king they looked for was called the anointed one – the Hebrew word of "anointed one" is Messiah, in Greek the word is Christos. In the gospel of the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel informs Mary that her son would be the fulfillment of these hopes. "The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

The angel Gabriel announced the birth of a king: "the Lord God will give him the throne of David, his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Fulfillment of the Prophecy) I love the interesting way St. Luke begins to tell us about this. He first of all introduces Mary, but not in the usual way we would introduce someone. We would have said, "I would like you to meet Mary. She's from Galilee and engaged to be married to Joseph." None of us would have dared to add to our introduction: "she's a virgin!" However, it is a very important point that St. Luke wants us to know and he tells us she is a virgin even before he tells us Mary's name. Why? Because Mary would conceive in a miraculous way, through the power of the Holy Spirit. That alone was spectacular, but that was only the beginning of the most unique and wonderful event this world would ever see. This king, who would be conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, would be more than the ordinary, run of the mill king. This king, the Messiah, the Christos, that is the anointed one, would be king over a kingdom that would never end. To top that, because he was conceived by God's own Spirit, he would be the "Son of God."

This is an awesome mystery that God took on human flesh and became like us in every way except sin. There is a special theological term for it: the Incarnation. The God, who dwelt among his people housed in a tent for many generations, now comes to live with his people as one of us, taking on our own flesh and blood. There is no in-between position we can take on Jesus. How we live our faith depends on how firmly we believe in this wonderful event. If we truly believe God has come into the world and into our lives through Jesus, shouldn't we try to spend time with him, shouldn't we try to get to know him better and follow him as well as possible? If we are not ready to do that, could it be that our faith is little more than a lot of words?

One final thought. I would like you to notice the respect God showed Mary in the Annunciation. God did not just tell her she would be the mother of such an awesome person. God asked her if she would be and waited for an answer. We have here a cue for how the Son of God can come to us more fully. We have here a cue for how Christmas can fully fill our hearts. We have a cue for how to enjoy the blessings of his kingdom that will have no end. As God did with Mary, God waits for each of us to answer him as to whether he is welcome. Are we able to say as Mary did: "I am the servant of the Lord. I will do whatever you want of me, Oh God."

There is much to reflect on this 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent especially with the history, the Scripture, and the lived out experience of the Gospel. Have a good week and as we celebrate Christmas this week, may you know the Peace of Christ.  
Fr. Hickey

### Parish Support

Due to an early printing schedule, figures from the December 15 Collection will be printed in the December 29 bulletin.

**“CONSIDER REMEMBERING YOUR PARISH IN YOUR WILL.” Call the parish office for details.**

### “ADVERTISER OF THE WEEK”

**DCS PAVING & SEALCOATING**  
610-495-5700

**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. There are a limited number of weekend Masses remaining. 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.



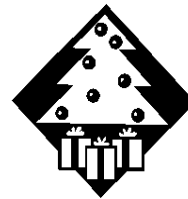
### Raffle Drawing

**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.**

**OFFERTORY GIFT BEARERS** - All parishioners are encouraged to volunteer to be Offertory Gift Bearers for the Masses on Saturdays, Sundays and Holydays. You can volunteer as a family or an individual. Please call the parish office to volunteer.

**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.



### 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.



### CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

#### Confessions:

No confessions on December 28

#### Christmas Masses:

Tuesday, December 24 at 4:00 P.M.  
Wednesday, December 25 at 9:00 A.M.

#### Solemnity of Mary Mass Schedule:

Holyday of Obligation  
Tuesday, December 31 at 4:00 P.M.  
Wednesday, January 1 at 9:00 A.M.