

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

23 DECEMBER 2018

Readings for Sunday, December 23: Micah 5:1-4a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45.

From Bethlehem shall come one who will rule Israel. Born of Mary, the servant of the Lord, he will protect and save us, offering himself once and for all in doing the Father's will.

Readings for Sunday, December 30: 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28; 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24; Luke 2:41-52.

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>
24 Dec. MON. 4:00 PM	Philip & Caroline Maddaloni	Daughter & family
25 Dec. TUE. 9:00 AM	People of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish	
26 Dec. WED. 9:00 AM	Roger Villano	Wife & family
27 Dec. THU. 9:00 AM	Timothy Reilly	Mom & Dad
28 Dec. FRI. 9:00 AM	Jack Birmingham	Wife, Shirley
29 Dec. SAT. 4:00 PM	Steve & Mary Slaby	Janet & Dave
30 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.

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 invited to join in these special Marian Devotions.

2019 MASS BOOK - Requests for Masses to be offered on a specific day during 2019 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.

THE PARISH OFFICE will be closed Monday, December 24; Tuesday, December 25; Thursday, December 27 and Friday, December 28.

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

MINISTRY SCHEDULE - December 29/30:

4:00 PM Mass

Lector - Melanie Warzeski
 Extraordinary Ministers - Vincent Tammro, Mara Tammro, Shelly Stockmal, John Bracaglia
 Altar Server - Michael Holmes
 Greeters - Marie Hildebrand and Nikki Gambino

9:00 AM Mass

Lector -Rocco D'Emilio
 Extraordinary Ministers - Cindy Nore, Rita Templin, Jack Bucciaglia
 Altar Server - Domenic Gerasimowicz
 Greeters - Sylvia and 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 the 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 of 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 4th 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 on Tuesday, may you know the Peace of Christ.

Fr. Hickey

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Confessions

No confessions on December 29

Christmas Mass Schedule



Monday, December 24 at 4:00 PM

Tuesday, December 25 at 9:00 AM

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Mass Schedule

Monday, December 31 at 4:00 PM

Tuesday, January 1 at 9:00 AM

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES!

Parish Support

Due to an early print schedule, figures from the December 16 collection will be printed in the December 30 bulletin.



OUR ADVENT/CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE

will be in the vestibule of church until Sunday, January 6. We are collecting items for Birthright of Pottstown. Items most needed are: size 0 to 3 diapers (especially size 3); Wipes...we never have enough of these; Hand sanitizer for diaper bags; Shampoo, baby wash, diaper cream...no powder please; Size Newborn through 18 months infant cloths for boys and girls (especially 0 to 3 months and 18 months); Receiving blankets and changing pads; Bibs; Bottles; Hooded bath towels and crib sheets; small infant toys for ages newborn to 3 months; Maternity clothing, especially extra large sizes; Maternity leggings. 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.



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.**

MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER MATT CUBBLER - January 3 at 7:30 PM in the social hall. A public speaker who captivates his audience through his personal story of struggle and triumph. His accomplishments include: Army Intelligence Analyst, Police Officer, Entrepreneur, and Author of "A Brother's Love: A Memoir." Everyone is invited to attend this inspirational and educational program. Note: Women's Society Meeting on Thursday, January 3 will begin at 6:45 PM before the speaker.

HOAGIE VOUCHERS will go on sale in January after all January Masses. 8" hoagie vouchers from Valentino's in Stowe will be \$7.00. When you redeem your voucher at Valentino's, you will have your choice of Italian, Ham and Cheese or Turkey Hoagie. Vouchers will not expire until March 31, 2019 so you can begin using them in January and come back for more until the end of January then use them until March 31.