

We light the third candle on the Advent wreath today. Its color is different from the others. Why is that? To answer that question, we refer to Sacred Scripture, in particular, the New Testament. In Saint Paul's Letter to the Philippians, the apostle writes: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice." (Phil 4:4) It was the Introit for Mass on the Third Sunday of Advent every year. We refer to the Third Sunday of Advent as *Gaudete Sunday*, coming from the Latin word "*gaudium*," the equivalent of the English word "joy." We rejoice at the nearness of the Lord's coming today.

The color for *Gaudete Sunday* is rose. And, thus, the priest may wear a rose-colored chasuble today in honor of the Lord's nearness to us in His birth. The Messiah's birth brings Divinity to earth and makes it possible for us to go to heaven. Joy is our response to the gift of redemption; it fills our hearts this year and every year.

Joy fills our hearts too when we celebrate in **Lessons and Carols** on the Third Sunday of Advent. As the bulletin has stated multiple times already, this spiritual exercise begins at **2:30 PM today**. It runs but an hour in length in the church. There is a reception immediately following **Lessons and Carols** in the church basement. Kindly join us for the collation or gathering as we begin our preparations for Christmas.

Signaling our proximate preparations for Christmas are what are known as the *O Antiphons*. The *O Antiphons* are used at Vespers or the Church's Evening Prayer when the Magnificat is prayed. Between December 17th and December 23rd, these *O Antiphons* call our attention to the titles for the Lord Who comes to us as *Emmanuel*. These titles are also found in the verses of the beautiful Advent hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*.

In recent columns, I made remarks about various aspects of the Sacrament of Penance. You may remember that I wrote briefly about contrition and a firm purpose of amendment. Now, I would like to say a word or two about penance – the name of the sacrament. Penance is what we undertake to make amends for our sins. In fact, in the early Church, there was something called the *Order of Penitents* which Christians entered to show their sincerity of undergoing conversion and reform of life. It is also what we are assigned by the confessor. He gives us a penance: a prayer to say or an act to carry out. It is a satisfaction we make because our sins have brought about a loss, a diminishment. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says "absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused. . . . [T]he sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin." (1459)

As we move closer and closer to the celebration of the Nativity of the Lord, let me encourage you to make use of the Sacrament of Penance. Confessions are heard on **Wednesday, December 20th between 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM**. We have added this time slot for those who find it difficult to come on a Saturday afternoon. Even if Saturday afternoon is not difficult for you, it's always good to have another period for confessions so that penitents will not have to wait excessively right before Christmas. We will try to have two priests available between 4:00 and 4:45 PM on **Saturday the 23rd**.

Remember that next weekend, the 23rd and 24th, the Church marks the Fourth Sunday of Advent. And later in the day on the 24th, our **Christmas Mass Schedule** is in effect. The Vigil Mass begins at 4:00 PM. It is followed by Midnight Mass at 12:00 AM. On Monday the 25th, Masses are at these times: 8:00 AM; 10:00 AM and 12 noon - the same as our regular Sunday schedule.

Following Christmas Day, there is a period known as the *Octave of Christmas* which extends to January 1st. As you know, the Church celebrates the first day of the new calendar year the **Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God** – which, this year, does not have the precept binding Catholics in the United States to attend Mass. Still, we have two Masses for the Solemnity: a Vigil Mass on Sunday, December 31st and a Mass mid-morning on Monday, January 1st. Please consult the schedule you received in the mail or the one posted on the bulletin boards of the church.

Finally, I want to make some comments about your financial support of Saint Margaret. We are obviously coming to the end of the calendar year, and Christmas is one of the two liturgical feasts drawing the biggest congregations of the year. It is also a time when parishioners are inclined to give larger donations to the church than they ordinarily do. And, by all means, I encourage you do just that: give a larger donation to Saint Margaret than you usually do. Indeed, I habitually say: give **generously** and **sacrificially**. I invoke that same phraseology now. Your parish needs your generosity and sacrifice more than ever.

Early in 2024, I will treat the subject of parish finances at greater length than I am doing here and now. As I have said before and I say it again now, our collections the first and second weekends of the month are decent, but we cannot have collections on the third and fourth weekends as low as they have been in all the time I have been at Saint Margaret. But more on this next month.

Until the next time.

Msgr. Batule

Christmas Schedule 2023

Confessions

Wednesday, December 20th

5:00 PM—7:00 PM

Christmas Masses

Sunday, December 24th

4:00PM

12:00 Midnight

Monday, December 25th

8:00 AM

10:00 AM

12:00 PM



Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 17th ~ 2:30 PM in the church.

We invite all parishioners to join us. The service consists of biblical readings and hymns as we await the birth of Our Savior.

The Music Ministry will lead us in the singing portion of the prayer service.

***Hospitality will be held immediately following
in the auditorium. All are welcome !***



“If people spent an hour a week in Eucharistic adoration, abortion would be ended.”

- St. Teresa of Calcutta



DIOCESE of ROCKVILLE CENTRE

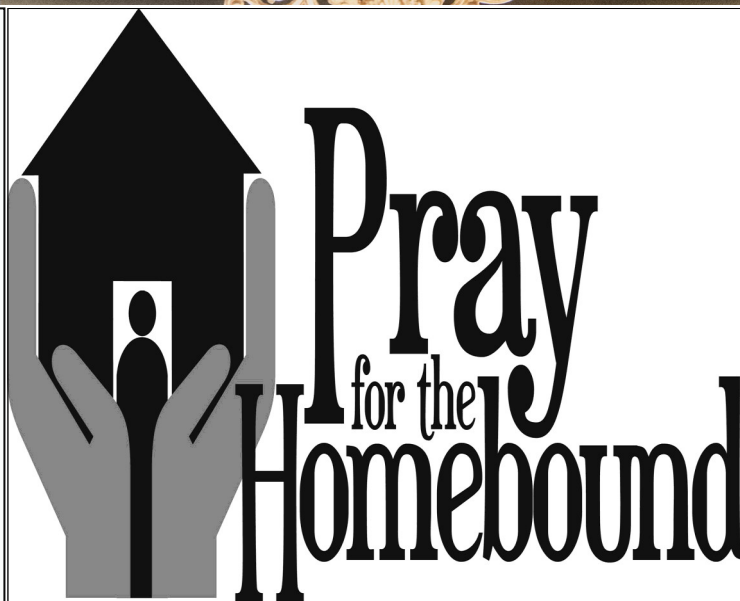
**Office of Human Life,
Family and Bioethics**



St. Margaret's Spousal Bereavement

Both individual and group bereavement counseling services are available for those who are mourning the loss of their husband or wife. All confidential sessions are held on a weekly basis and participants need not be St. Margaret's parishioners. For more information please contact

Barbara Gottfried at (631) 698-6053



New Parishioner?

Moving out of the parish?

Kindly fill out the form below—drop it in collection basket or mail to Parish Center. It will help us keep our files up-to-date and welcome newcomers

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

Telephone _____

New Parishioner _____ Moving _____

Bible Study Group

Bible Study group meets every Wednesday from 10am to 11am in the parish center. Deacon Ed Hayes will be the

facilitator.

Please bring your Bible.



Sunday, Dec 17, 2023**Oh, Antiphons!**

At evening prayer tonight, the church begins to invoke seven names for Jesus traditionally called the O Antiphons. These names—Wisdom, Sacred Lord, Flower of Jesse's Stem, Key of David, Radiant Dawn, King of All Nations, Emmanuel—suggest to us how the stories of the Old Testament foreshadow the arrival of God-With-Us. As Mary Winifred observes in *Hasten the Kingdom: Praying the O Antiphons of Advent*: "The Word, which joyfully shouted all the galaxies into being, left All Power and came silently into the womb of a young girl." Seek to encounter Jesus today in wise people, books, and practices.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (O WISDOM)

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28 (8). "[John] came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him."

Monday, Dec 18, 2023**Pray for safe passage**

Today's O Antiphon of Advent, the second of seven leading up to Christmas Eve, is "O Sacred Lord and Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai: come to rescue us with your mighty power!" Today is also International Migrants Day, which recognizes the contributions of migrants, their challenges, and their human rights. Migrants number in the hundreds of millions the world over—some by choice but many forcibly displaced. Jesus and his family became migrants fleeing for their lives soon after the birth that we are preparing to celebrate. Make safe migration and the humane treatment of migrants everywhere your prayer intention with this O Antiphon.

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O SACRED LORD AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL)

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25 (194). "When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home."

Tuesday, Dec 19, 2023**Grafted onto Jesus' family tree**

Near Bethlehem stands an olive tree scientists say is 5,000 years old. It's not uncommon for olive trees to reach the ripe old age of 900+ years in Mediterranean countries. Once they grow so old that they stop bearing fruit, olive trees are cut down to mere stumps. But that stump? Leave it alone for a couple of years, then suddenly new shoots spring forth. A shoot or root in this context does not symbolize fragility but rather hardness and promise. Such are the descendants of the House of David, a spiritual family tree that includes Jesus and us. If you don't mark Advent with a Jesse tree, review the tradition—and pray the Jesse Tree Litany, a version of the Litany of the Saints.

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O FLOWER OF JESSE'S STEM)

TODAY'S READINGS: Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1:5-25 (195). "Though you are barren and have had no children, yet you will conceive and bear a son."

Wednesday, Dec 20, 2023**Stand together**

On this International Human Solidarity Day, enacted by the U.N. in 2005, we remember Blessed Michael Piaszczyński, who in the early 1900s taught at the diocesan seminary of Łomża, Poland. Modest and compassionate, Father Piaszczyński had a deep respect for Judaism and even invited rabbis to speak at his school.

During World War II he was imprisoned by the Nazis and often shared his bread with elderly Jewish inmates. Piaszczyński died in the camp in 1940. He was beatified by his compatriot, Pope John Paul II, in 1999. What are small ways you can show solidarity with your fellow humans, especially those who seem different from you?

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O KEY OF DAVID)

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-38 (196). "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."

Thursday, Dec 21, 2023**Radiant reminders**

Monks, nuns, and others who take part in evening prayer are now chanting the O Antiphons, a rich series of references to the coming Christ recited from December 17-23. Today's antiphon proclaims: "O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death." Look around you today and seek out the many lights associated with Christmas: Advent candles, strings of light, Posadas candles, fires for holiday gatherings. Let each one remind you of the light of Christ coming into the world.

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O RADIANT DAWN)

TODAY'S READINGS: Song of Songs 2:8-14 or Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Luke 1:39-45 (197). "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Friday, Dec 22, 2023**The "O Hail No" antiphon**

Few have direct experience of royalty, and so the words "queen" and "king" might do little other than remind us of some TV or streaming series. For some though, the terms hit hard because within their culture, people experienced oppression and violence from ruling classes. Singing the O Antiphon, "O King of All Nations," then, might not evoke a hopeful experience of God. How might we tap into the deeper meaning of the antiphon? What words and images can help us experience the longing for God who brings peace and right relationship, who removes barriers that divide, and who breathes life into our tired bodies?

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O KING OF ALL NATIONS)

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Samuel 1:24-28; Luke 1:46-56 (198). "My spirit rejoices in God my savior."

Saturday, Dec 23, 2023**We stand corrected**

John Kanty (1390-1473) was a Polish priest, philosopher, physicist, and theologian. He helped develop early scientific theories of inertia that Newton would later use to formulate his laws of motion. Kanty's theories also helped Galileo figure out the orbital motions of the planets around the sun. During Kanty's time, the Catholic Church taught the geocentric model that the planets and the sun orbited around the Earth. In 1632 Galileo's work was condemned by Pope Urban VIII, and he was placed under house arrest for the rest of his life. Kanty was canonized in 1767, around the same time Rome finally capitulated to Galileo's heliocentric model of the solar system. Give thanks for the church that corrects its faults.

MEMORIAL OF JOHN OF KANTY, PRIEST (O EMMANUEL)

TODAY'S READINGS: Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Luke 1:57-66 (199). "Then fear came upon all their neighbors, and all these matters were discussed."

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time

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Hands Needed!

Our Music Ministry is in need of someone to assist in placing the words on our screen during Mass. All that is required is clicking the next screen with one button. Please see Dan, our Music Minister, after Mass or call at 631-732-3131 x117.

Prayerfully Consider



Heart of the Island Council Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus is a membership organization founded by Fr. McGivney in 1882 on the principles of Charity, Unity & Fraternity. The members of our local council serve in many ministries of the Church. Prospective members call Tom Piderit at 631-682-8711.

Faith Formation

2023/2024 Minutes with the Pastor/Director

<u>Date</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Level</u>
12/3	6&7	1/21——1&2		3/10——1&2		5/5——1&2	
12/ 10——	3,4&5	1/28——6&7		3/17——6&7		5/12——6&7	
12/17——	1&2	2/4——3,4&5		4/ 7——2,3&4		5/19——3,4&5	
1/7	3,4&5	2/11——1&2		4/14——1&2			
1/14——	6&7	2/25——6&7		4/21——6&			



Parish Social Ministry



Food Pantry Needs

PLEASE bring all donations to the front door of the Parish Center during office hours or bring to the box in the rear of the Church.

*We are in need of **Toothpaste, Bar Soap, Peanut Butter, Cereal, Shampoo, Toilet Paper and Grape Jelly***

*A very special **THANK YOU** to all!*



Christmas Wish List

St. Margaret's Outreach is asking for donations of new items for children & teens in need this Christmas Season.

We can always use socks, hats, gloves, scarves, coats, pajamas and gift cards. Please bring unwrapped to our parish center before December 19th.