

Third Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2023

This Sunday is traditionally called Gaudete Sunday because of the first word of its entrance antiphon, "Gaudete in Domino semper: iterum dico, Gaudete," ("[You all] Rejoice, in the Lord always: again I say rejoice"). We rejoice because the Lord is near; our joyful period of waiting is rapidly coming to a close. On the third Sunday of this season, we finally find reference to that which we are liturgically preparing to remember in the Collect.

O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation, and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

With this emphasis upon the upcoming feast of the Nativity, it could be tempting to consider this part of the Advent as discontinuous with the previous two weeks. However, to do so would cause us to miss the main point of the season: namely, that by remembering Israel's longing for the Messiah, we are prepared to meet Christ in the Parousia. If the first two weeks of Advent focus on this reality of Christ's second coming, then the latter two weeks are the Church's way of holding up as an example of how we ought to wait. The entire season is really a sacramental sign that points to the reality of our human condition at all times.

As an example to illustrate this, I offer my own experiences in childhood. When I was a boy, my brothers and I anxiously awaited the coming of Christmas morning – perhaps more because of the presents than the Christ-child – but nevertheless with great hope. As Christmas approached the excitement was palpable and on Christmas morning, we would awake very early in the morning to see what was under the tree and in our stockings. It is that sort-of wake-up-early-in-the-morning type of attitude that we should have at all times with

regard towards our hope in the Savior who is coming. The joyful hope my brothers and I had in earthly goods during the Advent and Christmas season is supposed to be a sign of our joyful hope in Jesus Christ, the only one who is worthy of such a hope.

Thus, when we await the feast of the Nativity, which is a sign of the Parousia yet to come, we should stand in hopeful, and joyful expectation that God will fulfill his promises to us. The concept of faithful, joyful waiting of the coming of the Messiah is at the heart the Advent season, which is itself a microcosm of the whole life of the Christian, who hopes in God, despite the many trials of this present vale of tears. Commenting on this phenomenon of waiting in hope, Pope Benedict XVI writes, "Mankind has never ceased to hope for better times; Christians hope that the Lord passes through the whole of history and that he will one day gather up all our tears and labors, so that everything will find its explanation and its fulfillment in *his* kingdom." We are a "people who walked in darkness", but we "have seen a great light," which is the coming fulfillment of the promises of God in the person of Jesus Christ. In the Collect, we ask that we be able to "celebrate ... always" the joys of such a salvation, this is a plea that we might not forget the truth of the Incarnation. We are to keep the reality that God became man always before our eyes, and by this action allow our lives to be marked with great joy and great hope for our salvation who has come and will come again.

12 Benedict XVI, *The Blessing of Christmas*, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 24.

13 Isaiah 9:1

Act of Love

O Lord God, I love you above all things
and I love my neighbor for your sake
because you are the highest,
infinite and perfect
good, worthy of all my love.
In this love I intend to live and die.

Amen.



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Faith Formation



Dec. 21st at 5:00pm in the Church -
1st Reconciliation for all parents & students
preparing for 1st Communion.

Advent Penance Service

Thursday, Dec. 21st
10:00 am - 11:30am
and
5:30 pm - until all have been heard



Help our Social Outreach Ministry collect coats that will be donated to Churches Touches Lives for Christ (CTLIC) for those in need.

Together, we can make sure everyone stays warm this winter!

New and Gently used coats of all sizes will be accepted.

Donation boxes will be located in the Narthex of the Church.

WALK WITH THE
HOLY FAMILY

Las Posadas



Join us as we celebrate our
Annual Las Posadas Procession
Wed. Dec. 20th at 6:30pm

Las Posadas is a remembrance the Holy Pilgrimage of Joseph and Mary and all are invited to walk with us around campus.

Hot chocolate and refreshments will be served in the O'Reilly Building

It's that time of year again ...
Christmas Flowers

If you would like to purchase a poinsettia for a loved one (deceased or living) to help make St. Mary's Church look beautiful for the Christmas season, please pick up a flower donation envelope in the church entry. Write the donor's name and that of your loved one on the envelope.

Cost per flower \$15.00.
All Flower Orders due by Mon, Dec. 18th.

Help decorate
the Church
for Christmas
so we can
welcome
Christ well!



Join us 9 AM on December 23rd

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December 23rd, 24th and 25th 2023**5:30 PM Mass**

Lector: N. Pekar
 EM: M. Hudkins, L. & M. Lockhart
 Greeters: J. Sladacek, B. Lenart, R. Wilde
 Altar Servers: R. Sagredo, H. Guenat-Ramirez,
 A. Ware

7:30 AM Mass

Lector: M. Guenat
 EM: Dcn. B. Rodriguez, H. McGahan,
 R. Krumnow, D. Kaminski
 Greeters: R. Coufal, J. Flinn, J. Wimberley,
 L. Lagut
 Altar Servers: S. Upchurch, M. Collins

9:30 AM Mass

Lector: S. McAtee
 EM: Dcn. M. Hoelscher, J. & N. Glover
 Greeters: K. Bartz, E. & T. Degenhardt,
 M. Jimenez
 Altar Servers: A. Sandoval, K Edwards, A. Gonzales

4:30 PM Mass

Lector: M. Morris
 EM: Dcn. M. Hoelscher, D. Keller, E. Bigon,
 D. Kaminski
 Greeters: R. Krumnow, B. & D. Stewart
 Altar Servers: Ja. & Ju. Jolly, R. Sagredo

6:30 PM Mass

Lector: J. Solis
 EM: R. Henderson, Je. Glover, J. Albers
 Greeters:
 Altar Servers: A. Pelawatta, L. Barton, L. Henderson,
 H. Guenat-Ramirez

12:00 AM (Midnight) Mass

Lector: B. St. Amour
 EM: Dcn. M. Hoelscher, D. Kaminski,
 R. Castillo
 Greeters:
 Altar Servers: B., C., & S. Stoebner, A. Gonzales

December 25th, 2023**9:30 AM Mass**

Lector: L. Comeau
 EM: Dcn. B. Rodriguez, R. Oujezdsky,
 R. Coufal
 Greeters:
 Altar Servers: K. Edwards

THE WEEK AHEAD

Date	Event	Location	Time
Mon. Dec 18 th	No Quilting Angels	Merry Christmas	
	No Crafters		
Tuesday - Friday	Adoration	Adoration Chapel	9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Tues. Dec 19 th	Knitting & Crocheting	O'Reilly Building	10:00 am
	Boy Scouts	O'Reilly Building	6:00 pm
	Men of Joseph Christmas Party	Ave Maria Room	7:00 pm
Wed. Dec 20 th	RE Las Posadas	O'Reilly Building	6:30 pm
Thurs. Dec 21 st	RCIA	O'Reilly Building	6:00 pm
	Advent Penance Service	Church	10:00 am - 11:30 am & 5:30pm
Sat. Dec 23 rd	Church Decorating	Church	9:00 am

**CHALICE FOR VOCATIONS****Open to all parishioners.****To sign-up, call Debra Hollingsworth
at (713) 586-9800.**

Thank you for participating in this prayer initiative
 and may God richly bless you with every good gift as
 you pray for priestly vocations!

Dec 24th	Debra Hollingsworth	9:30am
Dec 31st	Bruce & Stephanie McAtee	9:30am
Jan 7th	Brian & Patricia St. Amour	11:30am
Jan 13th	Debra King	5:30pm
Jan 21st	Vicki & Nestor Centeno	9:30am
Jan 28th	Rex & Gladys Hengst	9:30am

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Parish Giving

December 10, 2023

Sunday Collection	\$	10,429.44
Parish School	\$	101.00
Building Fund	\$	120.00
Ret. Clergy & Religious	\$	1,466.00
Immaculate Conception	\$	876.00
World Home Mission	\$	11.00
Other	\$	40.00
Helping Hands	\$	110.00
Total	\$	13,153.44

Note: totals include online giving

* Weekly Operating Expenses: \$11,500.00



Join us for our Annual
New Year's Eve
"Black-eye Pea Party"

Dec. 31, 2023
immediately following
Midnight Mass
in the Regina Caeli
Room

**December 18th - December 24th 2023**

Monday	NO MASS	
Tuesday	8:15AM	Santacroce & Danowski Families
Wednesday	5:30PM	† Hermino Rueda
Thursday	8:15AM	Genevieve & Joe Dike 50th Wedding Anniversary
Friday	5:30PM	† Maria Elena Pedroza
Saturday	8:15AM	Deceased members of the Zortz Family
	5:30PM	† Gilbert Lefner † Agnes & † Lee Tschoerner
Sunday	7:30AM	† Bernadine & † Billy Goonan
	9:30AM	For the People
	4:30PM	† MaryAnn & Edwin McCrea Joy & Christopher Asbach
	6:30PM	Rachel Oujezdsky (Birthday)
	12:00AM	† Theresa Mireles

CHRISTMAS AT ST. MARY'S

Mass for 4th Sunday of Advent (12/24)
5:30 PM (Sat), 7:30 & 9:30 AM (No 11:30 AM Mass)

Christmas Eve

Mass for the Vigil of Christmas 4:30 PM and 6:30 PM

Vespers and the Office of Readings 10:30 PM

Singing of Christmas Carols 11:30 PM

Solemn Christmas Mass during the Night

12:00 AM, Midnight

Christmas Day

Lauds (Morning Prayer) 8:30 AM

Mass of Christmas Day 9:30 AM

Octave of Christmas

Dec. 26 -27 No Daily Masses

Dec. 28 Daily Mass, 5:30 PM

Dec. 29 Daily Mass, 8:15 AM

Dec. 31 Normal Sunday Mass Schedule

Holy Hour with Vespers, and Office of Readings, 11 PM

Jan. 1 Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Mass, 12:00 AM

Black Eyed Pea Party, 1 AM

Mass, 9:30 AM

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Jan. 1 Mass, 12:00 AM

Black Eyed Pea Party, 1 AM

Mass, 9:30 AM

Solemnity of the Epiphany

Sunday, Jan. 7, Normal Sunday Schedule

Join us to continue celebrating with the

arrival of the Wise Men! Bring a friend to

Mass today and join us for breakfast

afterwards.

