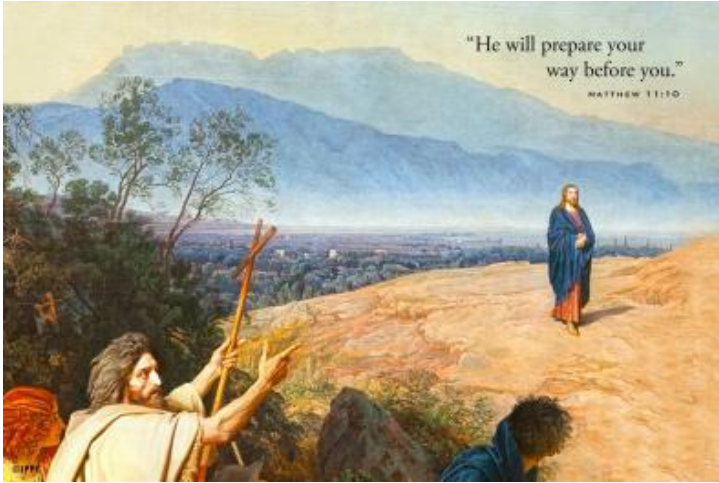


# 3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 11, 2022



## THIS WEEKEND'S READINGS

**First:** Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

**Second:** James 5:7-10

**Gospel:** Matthew 11:2-11

**FOCUS:** *Make your hearts firm because the coming of the Lord is at hand.*

On Gaudete Sunday, we rejoice with all the earth in anticipation and preparation for Jesus' birth and the coming of his kingdom. We, like John the Baptist, are blessed and included in the kingdom of heaven, not because of what we do but what Jesus does for us.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD:

In the first reading, Isaiah describes how the earth will rejoice when the Lord comes to save his people. In the second reading, James encourages patient hearts, for the return of the Lord is at hand. In the Gospel, Jesus praises John the Baptist as God's messenger and assures John's disciples that he is the one John has sought.



## MASS INTENTIONS

**5 p.m.:** Nancy Wood, Charles Watson  
and Monsignor Thomas J. Shelley

**10 a.m.:** Joseph Casertano, Esther Harris  
and the Ryan, Borst & Costello families

## TREASURER'S REPORT

November 27- December 4: Totaled \$ 5,472.03

Envelopes: \$ 3,029.00 – Online: \$ 2,443.03

THANK YOU!

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, we confess that we do not understand your justice. It is foreign to us, completely different from human structures of justice and accounting. We confess that your mercy and healing and accounting makes no sense to us, and we spend far too much time trying to figure it out when we could, instead, spend time sitting with Jesus.

Why do we do that God?

We confess we do not know.

Teach us to spend time with you.

Teach us to look for Jesus  
in unexpected places we pray. Amen.

## THE NATIVITY STORY

One way to put Christ back into the Christmas season is to participate in **The Nativity Story**, a brainchild of Fr. Sean's from several years ago.

Although this event is implemented through our Religious Education program, it is open to the entire parish.

Participants will gather in the hall at **6:30 p.m. on Friday, December 16**, and weather permitting, process to the outdoor Nativity where the celebration begins. The procession then continues into the main church for a series of Scripture passages read by children, and the accompanying reflections led by their parents, along with hymns and prayers.



Festive fellowship follows back in the hall while snacking on favorite Christmas cookies that the participants are asked to bring - and sipping on hot cocoa that the church will provide.

Please sign up, sheets are in the hall, so we are prepared with beverages and programs.

## PAGEANT & YOUTH CHOIR PRACTICE

Pageant and Youth Choir practice will take place at the same time but separately after Mass this **Sunday, December 11**. All those interested in participating in the annual **Christmas Eve Pageant** will meet with Mrs. Suchy, while the Youth Choir members will rehearse with Mrs. Garry.



The dress rehearsal for both groups will take place at 6:30 p.m. **Tuesday, December 20**.

## LAST WEEK'S MASS ATTENDANCE

5 p.m. Saturday: 68

10 a.m. Sunday: 159

Immaculate Conception: 45

## CELEBRATE WITH US!

**Christmas Eve Mass/Children's Pageant**  
5 p.m. Saturday, December 24

**Christmas Eve Vigil Mass**  
8 p.m. Saturday, December 24

**Christmas Day Mass**  
10 a.m. Sunday, December 25

**Solemnity of Mary, Vigil Mass**  
5 p.m. Saturday, December 31

**Solemnity of Mary**  
10 a.m. Sunday, January 1

## WHY THE CHURCH USES CANDLES

Every time we attend Mass, there are candles on the altar. Sometimes two. Sometimes four. Sometimes six or more. In nearly every church, there are votive candles, too. For us Catholics, they are omnipresent, automatically turning our thoughts and minds to prayer, to worship, to God.



Candles - with their light-giving flame - represent Christ, the Light of the World. Candles are traditionally made of 100 percent beeswax, which symbolizes the pure flesh of Our Lord, received from His immaculate Virgin Mother. (Although candles are not required to be pure

beeswax, they must at least contain some percentage of that wax.) The wick, enrobed in the wax, represents His soul, and the flame His divinity.

Because we offer Christ Himself on the altar in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, it is only fitting that such a powerful symbol be a required element at Mass.

The layers of meaning run deep. Candles also symbolize our prayers rising up to God. Candles contain the idea of sacrifice as well because they are an offering made by human hands that is consumed as they are burned. During the Mass, candles are a vivid representation of Christ offering Himself to the Father through the hands of the priest.

Candles represent the burning light of faith, and the flame reminds us of the Holy Spirit, the very Love of God dwelling within the hearts of the faithful and sanctifying our prayers and sacrifices.

Our use of candles need not be confined to those times that we are physically in church. Many people light candles at home as part of their personal prayer.

## FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

Please remember our **Food Pantry**, the use of which has more than quadrupled since pre-COVID times. There have been multiple inquiries this week alone!


We are able to keep up and provide healthier options because of our partnership with the Food Bank of the Hudson Valley – and your generosity!


Your donations of **unexpired** and non-perishable foods are appreciated. Almost all our pantry staples are low at this time – with the exception of canned soup.


Thank you!





## ADVENT UPDATE

 For **Greeters, Lectors and Altar Servers** who wish to serve during Christmas and the Solemnity of Mary (New Year's) weekends, there are signup sheets on the bulletin board between the church and Deacon John Hall.


 If you are able, consider being an angel and claiming one of the seven remaining names of **children in need of Christmas gifts** from the virtual Giving Tree. Contact either Therese Quinn (845-313-0256; [eat@frontiernet.net](mailto:eat@frontiernet.net)) or Mary McCabe (914-420-0842; [mmmk94@frontiernet.net](mailto:mmmk94@frontiernet.net)). Gifts are due by next **Sunday, December 18**.

 "Who is that Man Wearing Camel's Hair" is the title of an **Advent reflection on St. John the Baptist** that will be presented at 10 a.m. this **Tuesday, December 13**, by Fr. Maurice Cummings, O.Carm., at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Coffee and cake will be served. For information, call Carol Bezak, Shrine director, at (845) 343-1879.

 The Christmas boxes are being assembled after the 10 a.m. Mass next **Sunday, December 18**. If you have a few moments to spare, remember that many hands make light work.

 Reconciliation Monday is next **Monday, December 19**. There will be priests available at **Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Middletown** from 2-4 and 6-8 p.m. There will be **NO** priests available at that time at St. Paul's.

However, confessions will be heard at 3:30 p.m. this **Saturday, December 17**, at St. Paul's.

 The names of deceased loved ones who are being remembered with Christmas flowers are due by Friday, **December 16**.

