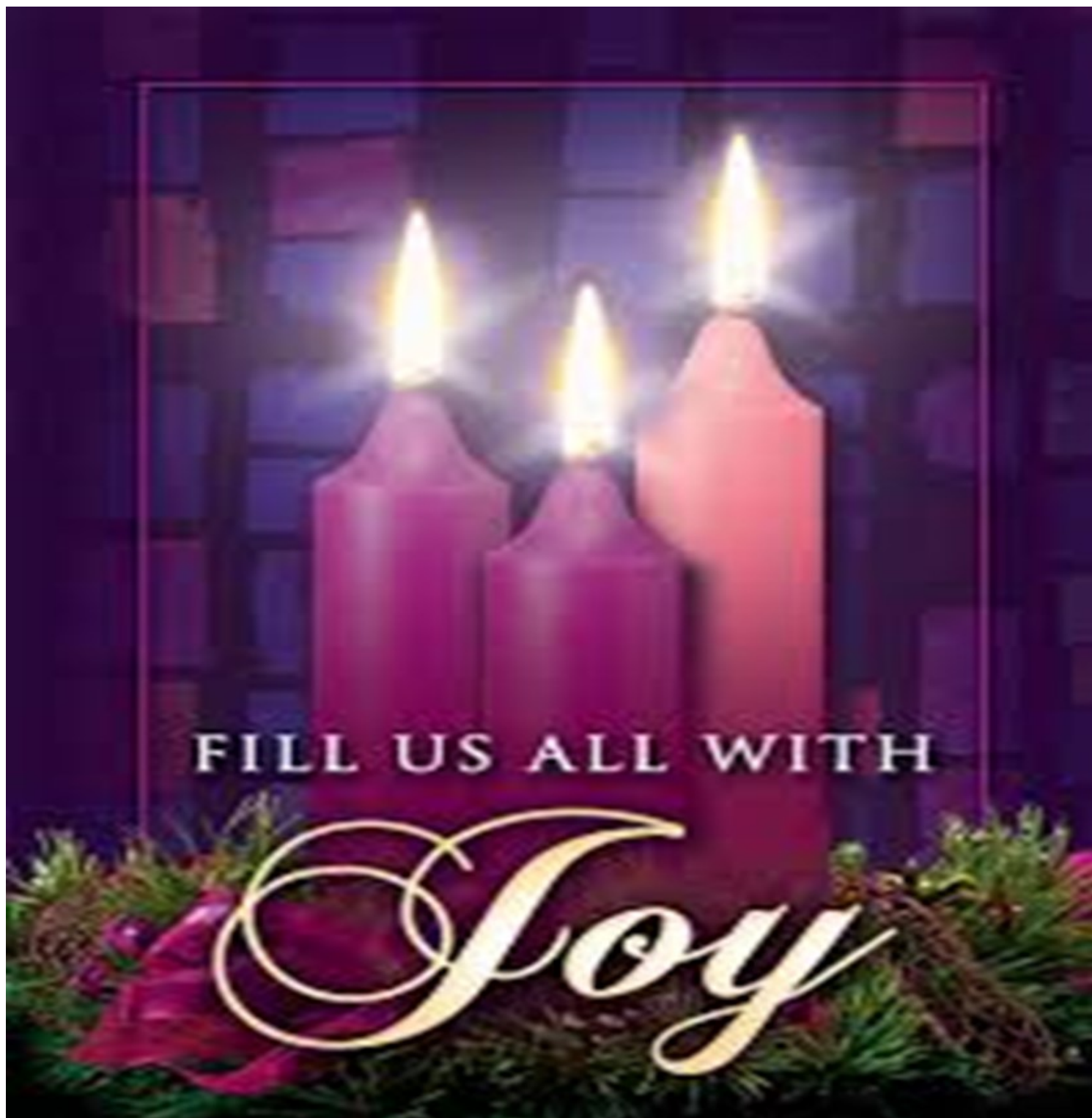


THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES OF
ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINA

REVEREND JEREMIAH N. MURASSO, PH.D., ED.D., PSY.D., PASTOR
REVEREND PATRICK KANE, PAROCHIAL VICAR



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 17, 2023

Mass Intentions for the Week

SATURDAY, December 16 - Vigil – 3rd Sunday of Advent

4:00pm OLOP + Anthony Amendola
by Wife & Family

4:30pm SVDP + Paula Ann Marie Conte
by Husband, Calvin

SUNDAY, December 17 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

8:00am OLOP + Vincent Falco
by Family

9:00am SB + Camera & Spadacenta Families
by Madelyn & Vin

10:00am OLOP + George Fortino (Anniversary)
by Wife, Rita

11:15am SVDP + Annette Talbot
by Family

MONDAY, December 18 - Weekday

8:00am OLOP + Michael Ader
by Clancy-Palumbo Funeral Home

8:00am SVDP + Charles Scalesse (1st Anniversary)
by Family

TUESDAY, December 19 – Weekday

8:00am OLOP + Francisco & Anna Maria Teixeira
by Daughters

8:00am SVDP + Emilio Infante (Birthday)
by Family

WEDNESDAY, December 20 – Weekday

8:00am OLOP + Gerrie Amendola
by Tom & Helene Cummings

8:00am SVDP + Fred & Mary Coloso
by Children, Grandchildren
& Great-Granddaughter

THURSDAY, December 21 - St. Peter Canisius

8:00am OLOP + Cora & Harold Hall, Jr.
by Marianne Hall

8:00am SB + David Nazrio, Sr.

FRIDAY, December 22 - Weekday

8:00am SB + Jennie Criscuolo
by Son, Henry

SATURDAY, December 23 - Vigil – 4th Sunday of Advent

4:00pm OLOP + Jack Leary & Maureen Leary Minnick
by Lisa Leary

4:30pm SVDP + Bea Acqua
by Catherine

SUNDAY, December 24 – Christmas Eve

8:00am OLOP + Living & Deceased Members of St. Pio

9:00am SB + Living & Deceased Members of St. Pio

10:00am OLOP + Living & Deceased Members of St. Pio

11:15am SVDP + Living & Deceased Members of St. Pio

STEWARDSHIP

Regular Collection \$8,780.00

Utility Collection \$3,837.00

Immaculate Conception \$2,592.00

December 23 & 24 Second Collection:
None

Thank you to the many of you who have been so generous and responsive in these difficult times.

SCRIPTURE READING

Sunday: Is 61:1-2a, 10-11/Lk 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54
(Is 61:10b)/1 Thes 5:16-24/Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

Monday: Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19/Mt 1:18-25

Tuesday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17/
Lk 1:5-25

Wednesday: Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6/Lk 1:26-38
Thursday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Ps 33:2-3, 11-12,
20-21/Lk 1:39-45

Friday: 1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd/Lk 1:46-56

Saturday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and
14/Lk 1:57-66



Holy Hour
Come spend time in
the presence of Jesus.

Every Monday, immediately following morning Mass at Our Lady of Pompeii, there is one hour of **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**.

CONFESSION SCHEDULE:

Our Lady of Pompeii: Saturday at 3:00-3:30pm

St. Vincent de Paul: Saturday at 3:30-4:00pm

SILENCE.

Please, be mindful that many parishioners arrive early prior to the start of Mass in order to sit reflectively with the LORD in prayer. Please, be mindful of the level of your voice and that voices carry from the back of the church to the front. Please, maintain a subdued tone when speaking so that other's quiet time is not disturbed.



2024 MASSES - SAVE THE DATE!

The 2024 Mass Intention Book opened on
Thursday, June 1, 2023.

Kindly have your requests ready when
scheduling. We will continue to have a limit of 3
weekend Masses per individual booking.

**Payment due at time of
booking.**

St. Pio of Pietrelcina Parish

Address: 355 Foxon Road, East Haven, CT 06513

Phone Number: (203) 469-0764

Office Hours:

Foxon Road: Mon-Thu 8:00-12:00 & 1:00-3:00;
Fri 8:00-12:00

Taylor Avenue: Mon. & Fri. 10:00-2:00

E-Mail: stpioofpietrelcina@gmail.com

Website: stpioofpietrelcinaeh.com

MINISTRY & EVENT CALENDAR

<p>SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17</p> <p>Lessons & Carols - 2:00pm at Our Lady of Pompeii Church</p>	<p>SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 Christmas Eve</p>
<p>MONDAY, DECEMBER 18</p> <p>Holy Hour - 8:30-9:30am in Our Lady of Pompeii Church</p>	<p>MONDAY, DECEMBER 25 Christmas Day - Parish Offices Closed</p>
<p>TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19</p> <p>Bible Study - 7:00pm on Zoom Contact Christine Sandford at 203-469-7823</p> <p>Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>	<p>TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26 Christmas Day - Parish Offices Closed</p> <p>Bible Study - 7:00pm on Zoom Contact Christine Sandford at 203-469-7823</p> <p>Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>
<p>WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20</p> <p>Bible Study - 6:30pm at SVDP Parish Office Contact Marie Connors at 203-468-1184</p> <p>Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27</p> <p>Bible Study - 6:30pm at SVDP Parish Office Contact Marie Connors at 203-468-1184</p> <p>Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>
<p>THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21</p> <p>Scriptural Rosary - 6:00pm at OLOP Chapel Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>	<p>THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28</p> <p>Scriptural Rosary - 6:00pm at OLOP Chapel Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>
<p>FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22</p> <p>Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>	<p>FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29</p> <p>Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>
<p>SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23</p> <p>Men's Group - 7:30am-9:00am at SVDP Parish Center</p>	<p>SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30</p> <p>Men's Group - 7:30am-9:00am at SVDP Parish Center</p>



Have you recently lost a friend or family member?
Are you having difficulty concentrating and enjoying everyday activities?

Rajnet352@comcast.net or
Phone: 713-898-2563
Barbara Natarajan



THANK YOU, to the Porto Funeral Home & the DeLucia Family for their generous donation of poinsettias that were donated to St. Pio of Pietrelcina Parish at Our Lady of Pompeii & St. Vincent de Paul, which were locally grown by the Vaiuso family at the Vaiuso Nursery in Branford, CT.



Parish Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve
Sunday, Dec. 24
OLOP: 4:00pm: Fr. Borino
SB: 4:00pm: Fr. Charman
SVDP: 4:30pm: Fr. Patrick

Midnight Mass
SVDP: 11:00pm: Fr. Patrick

Christmas Day
Monday, Dec. 25
OLOP: 8:00am: Fr. Krugel
OLOP: 10:00am: Fr. Krugel
SB: 9:00am: Fr. Borino
SVDP: 9:30am: Fr. Murasso
SVDP: 11:15am: Fr. Murasso

The Candles burn this week for these special intentions:

Our Lady of Pompeii Candles

Sanctuary Lamp (Right Side) ~ In Memory of Billy Richmond & For All the Souls in Purgatory

Sanctuary Lamp (Left Side) ~ In Memory of the Mauro & Elko Families

Chapel ~

Sacred Heart of Jesus ~

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Icon ~

Pascal Candle ~ Fr. John Lavorgna

St. Vincent de Paul Candles

Sanctuary Lamp (Right Side) ~ In Memory of the Balzano & Avitable Families

Sanctuary Lamp (Left Side) - In Memory of Ronald Paolillo

Our Lady's Altar ~ Kathleen Youngs

by Cousin, JoAnn MacCatherine

St. Joseph's Altar ~ Giuseppe Patricelli by Wife, Maddalena & Family

Pascal Candle ~ Barbara & Maurice Connolly

St. Bernadette Candles

Sanctuary Lamp (Right Side) ~

Sanctuary Lamp (Left Side) ~

Pascal Candle ~ Harold Donegan

PRAY FOR THE SICK OF OUR PARISH

Nick Vessicchio, Sally Ann Fallon, Lynette Ely, David T. Boyle, Richard Lucibello, Carmel Ferretti, Bryan Surprenant, Sharon Spadacenta, Marie Zambrano, Helen Langelo, Brian Savo, Gerry Andrea, Alan Poirier, Connie Rasimas, Jane Pyka, Harry Clark, Lou DiNola, Geraldine Licciardi, Joseph Anyzeski, Fran Sofo, Elizabeth Kuen, Deborah Sanning, Paula Ferrara, Tina Marie Fionia, Joseph Parise, Frank DelGrego, Moira Ferguson, Danielle Joubert, Frances Polaski, Pauline Condon, Rose Anna Izzo, Angelo DeMatteo, Patricia Aulenti, Michael Pascale, Alyce Richmond, Mark Schettino, Patty DiMilo, Rose Rogalski, Elaine Smith, Karen Rescigno, Virginia Pisano, DJ DiVincenzo, Sgt. Anthony Rybaruk, Philip & Sally DeMilo, Anna Concelmo, Anna Marie Nappi, Brian Higney, Rich Tortora, Denise Bailey, Joseph Peterson, Marion Mahl, Paula Ruddock, Pamela Willis, Laura Luzzi, Brian Wilson, Maureen Redmond, Kristianne Argentino, Shirley Perrelli, Bill Izzo, Andrew & Catherine Criscuolo, Patricia Miles, Joe Coscia, Deborah Verab, Dona Marie, Christina Meoli, Michelle Smith, Ron Mattei, Angela Riccio, Charlene Tantalo, Al Forgione, Gabriella Garrity, Beverly Fucci, W.D. Merkle, Phyllis Anastasio, Cheryl Barbara, Laura-Phyllis Esposito, Diana Vitelli O'Brien, Meghan Keeney, Gennaro Milone, Jo Vuolo, Felicia DeRoche, Mike Barnett, Richard Costanzo, Carole & Frank Casapulla, Michael Bowen, Linda Montone, Mary Diamante, Carol Esposito, Fred & Barbara Brow, Christopher Farrell, Roberta Sanders-Gray, Jeannette Winston, Marilyn Sisson, Ryder Feeley, Theodore Siwinski, Michael Enders, Nicholas Cerillo, Edwina Cinque, Rudolph Pohlman, Linda Esposito, Renee Flynn, The Cooper Family, Lynn Ely, Ethan Roche, Frances Graney, Barbara Kapusta, Megan Maturo, Rose Paula Dziedulonis, Taras Mychajlowskyj, Denise Steiner, Mary Ann Anastasio, Gloribeth R., Stacie Bouchard, Al Sappinetti, Guy Racino, Michael Polaski, Martha Catel, Eddie Villecco, Isaiah Colville, Jennie Nazario, Joan Proto, Caitlin Rustic, Michael Filion, John Torello, Mauro Antonio Bezanilla, Matteo Criscuolo, Robert Filion, Lucy Carbone, Dorene Izzo, Lucille Palange, Carmine Riccitelli, Sr., Louise Amato, Mark Houston, Avery Bye, Alex Bernaitis, Vincent Pisano, Ann Hamilton, Barbara Bellucci, Michael Bulger, Joseph Bonie, Mary Katherine Hart, Billy Carr, Andrea Pepe, Anna Sabatino, Audrey Elder, Theresa Polio, Mike Liso, John Mongillo, Sr., Bill Morrison, Juan & Family, Vern Kelly, Barbara Corso, Terrence King, Monica Cantore, Fr. Lawrence Boch, Antoinette Comiskey, Diane DiLungo, Frances 'Jean' Massimino, Luca Small

Please send prayer requests to stpioofpietrelcina@gmail.com so that our parishioners and friends can be remembered in our prayers.

**Midnight Run
Taylor Avenue Campus**

The Midnight Run for **January** is the **2nd Monday**, which is **January 8th**. Donations of brown bag lunches, water, juice boxes and toiletries are appreciated. These donations can be dropped off to Sue Stacey's home, 82 Forbes Place, up until 7pm on **Monday, January 8th**. Thank you and God bless you for all donations. Stay safe & well.

**Midnight Run
Foxon Road Campus**

On the last Monday of each month, we bring 75 bagged lunches to the Columbus House Overflow Shelter.

Donations Needed:

ShopRite Gift Cards or

Gallon Size Ziploc Bags

Quart Size Ziploc Bags

Peanut Butter & Jelly

Juice Pouches

Raisin Boxes

Fruit Cups & Pudding Cups

Granola Bars

Individual Packaged Cookies, Crackers or Chips

We are also looking for small amounts or full skeins of yarn, it will be used to make hats and scarves for the midnight run. Please leave your donations at any entrance of the church. Thank you.

Midnight Run is the **LAST** Monday of **EVERY** month from Our Lady of Pompeii Church from 6-7 pm. Thank-you for being so generous!



St. Bernadette Food Pantry located at the East Shore Senior Center is open every Saturday from 10:00am-11:00am. We are always in need of non-perishable foods. Top choices are, canned: tomatoes, tomato sauce, vegetables, tuna fish, soups and fruits. Pasta, mac & cheese and peanut butter. Consumption guidelines provided to us from the CT Food Bank: Expiration/Code Date Extensions past expiration: high acid foods (i.e. tomatoes) 12-18 months. Low acid foods (canned meat, most vegetables) 2-5 years. Food in jars, 12 months past expiration, dry cereal 6-12 months, rice/pasta (dry) 1 year. Questions, please contact Deb or Rico at 203-468-7489

thank you

Thank you to Porto Funeral Home for their generosity in providing the beautiful calendars for 2024 at Our Lady of Pompeii.

From the Pastor's Pen
Reverend Jeremiah N. Murasso, Ph.D., Ed.D., Psy.D.



The Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

Gaudete Sunday

This weekend, December 16 & 17, the Church celebrates the *Third Sunday of Advent*, which traditionally has been referred to as *Gaudete Sunday*; coming from the Latin, the word *Gaudete* is translated as *Rejoice!* We read once again from the Prophet Isaiah (61:1-2a, 10-11); a very powerful message that best summarizes the spirit of this third week in Advent, i.e., joy in the expectation that when the long awaited-for Messiah comes, he will make all things new; thus, restoring hope to all of humankind.

*"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
Because the LORD has anointed me".*

Isaiah prophetically speaks for the Messiah, and the Messiah announces that He is *blessed* and empowered by the Spirit of the LORD GOD. In Luke 4:16-22, Jesus spoke in the synagogue of Nazareth, His hometown. He opened up the scroll to Isaiah 61, perhaps, an assigned reading, perhaps, chosen by him and read from the beginning of the chapter through the first line of verse.

When Jesus sat down, He simply said, *"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."* Jesus is the person described in Isaiah 61:1-3, and he is the one the Spirit of the LORD GOD is upon.

"Because the LORD has anointed me"

This line identifies the speaker as the Messiah. The word *Messiah* means *"Anointed One."* In the Old Testament, individuals were often literally anointed with oil. For example, priests were anointed for their special service to the LORD (*Exodus 28:41*). Oil would be applied, but as a sign of the Holy Spirit upon their lives and service.



The oil on the head is the outward depiction of the real, spiritual work going on inside them.

*"To bring glad tidings to the poor;
to heal the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the prisoners,
And release to prisoners;
to announce a year of favor from the LORD, and a day of
vindication by our God."*

The Messiah announces that He is here to heal the damage that sin brings; thus, there needs to be a great work of redemption. The poor here does not mean financially poor, rather, the author is speaking of those who are broken by man's inhumanity to man.

The Messiah will *"preach good tidings to the poor."* He will *heal the brokenhearted*. Because sin makes captives, He will *proclaim liberty to the captives*, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. Because sin oppresses, He will *announce the acceptable year of the LORD*.

"He has sent Me." Because sin is a crime it must be avenged; the Messiah will *proclaim... the day of vengeance of our God*.

*"I rejoice heartily in the LORD,
In my God is the joy of my soul;
For He has clothed me with a robe of salvation,
And wrapped me in a mantle of justice,
Like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem,
Like a bride bedecked with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its bud,
As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its
growth spring up,
So will the LORD GOD make justice and praise spring up be-
fore all the nations."*

"I rejoice heartily in the LORD"

The blessed one's joy is not in the blessing itself, but *in the LORD*.

*"For he has clothed me with a robe of salvation, and wrapped
me in a mantle of justice"*

The granting of salvation and righteousness to God's people is represented by the picture of clothing them. These are *glorious* garments.

*"As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and
as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For He has clothed
me... He has covered me. As the earth brings forth its bud"*

The blessing of God *grows*. It is not manufactured, but it *grows*. The LORD's blessings are automatic. Even so,

*"The Lord GOD will cause justice and praise to spring forth
before all the nations."*

There is a sense in which we can never *make* something grow. No one can get inside of a seed and turn on the genetic component that makes the seed *spring forth*, and *bud*. The blessing of life and growth is miraculously within the seed. We can, however, provide the right environment for the seed to bud, grow and to be fruitful. This is also how we receive and flourish in God's blessings. We can't make or manufacture them. But we can put our hearts and minds in the right environments for faith, fellowship, and obedience to grow and flourish.

Saint Paul

These same words are quoted by St. Paul in the second reading to the Thessalonians.

"Brothers and Sisters: Rejoice always! Pray without ceasing. In all circumstance, give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus" (5:16-18).

In addition to the theme of rejoicing about which the Prophet Zephaniah speaks, St. Paul instructs the disciples of Jesus to *pray continuously*. St. Paul means that true disciples must conduct all their affairs prayerfully, as an extension of their belief and reverence for God. Paul also indicates that it is *God's will* that we express *gratitude* relentlessly. In other words, the true disciple will be defined by his/her ability to be grateful and to express the spirit of *gratitude* even during those times when being grateful appears too difficult.

Gratitude

Gratitude is a real gift that needs to be unwrapped on a daily basis. The more grateful we are, the more present we are to what is happening around us on a daily basis. Becoming more present to others and in the manner in which we communicate with one another enables us to transform our negative energy in a more positive direction. When we express and demonstrate gratitude for what we already have, we illicit more positive energy from others.

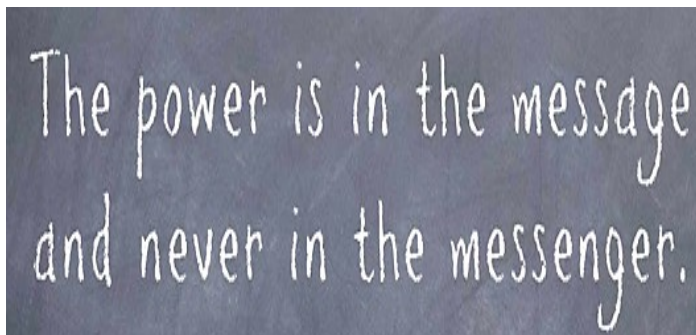


“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything [and] retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil. May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit soul and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will also accomplish it (5:19-24).”

Paul continues his exhortation by reminding disciples that they must emulate the person of Jesus. *“Do not quench the Spirit”* means that the faithful followers must always be vigilant and watchful for the ways in which the Spirit of Jesus speaks to us and directs our actions, EVEN when we may not want to adhere to the Spirit’s nudging. Prayer is the tool by which men and women of faith discern God’s plan.



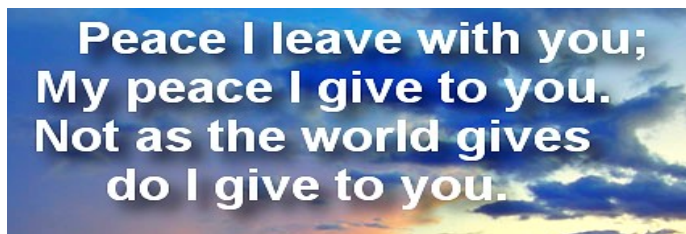
“Do not despise prophetic utterances” (5:20) encourages men and women of faith to be open and receptive to *how and through whom* God’s plan might be revealed. As was true with Jesus, we too, often dismiss the message because we dismiss the messenger. God’s Word is not always disseminated to us directly. Rather, it often comes in ways that we least expect; through people who we least expect. Ask yourself, *“Who might God be using in your life to disclose His plan to you?”* Be careful that you do not dismiss the message because of the messenger!



“Refrain from every kind of evil” (5:22) is pretty simple. However, what is not simple is our ability or our willingness to discern what is, in fact, evil. Sometimes, evil, immoral and self-serving behaviors and attitudes can be quite subtle, blinding man from spiritually debilitating consequences. Too often, deceptive behaviors and attitudes are confused for the *presumed* and *desired* good. At times, our choices take us father away from the Lord, rather than bringing us closer to Him. This happens because too often, we mistake the *desires* of the flesh; what we *think* we need, from the *needs* of the soul; that which we ought to do. When the Lord looks at you is He proud at what He sees, or is he embarrassed? Advent provides the season to discern whether or not what we do and who we have become are compatible with what God expects from us.

“May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ” (5:23).

For the Jews, *spirit, soul and body* constituted the entire person. St. Paul bestows a kind of blessing upon true disciples as he prays that *God’s peace* will find a receptive home in men and women of faith and that this peace will not only define the individual but in addition, constitute his/her worldview and frame of reference. This peace is a precondition for recognizing the Lord in the *here and now* as well as being received by Him in the future.



Authentic Discipleship

The true disciple of Jesus is one who recognizes the reasons for rejoicing despite the trials and tribulations of the moment. The true disciple is able to transcend the problems of the moment and focus on the larger picture: Jesus’ healing and loving presence. To recognize the presence and purpose of Jesus leads one rejoice and in addition, to share this experience of Jesus through acts of kindness and openness toward others. Real joy can never be contingent upon the temporal, changing things of this world; real joy and the reason for rejoicing can only bear fruit when our focus is on Jesus.

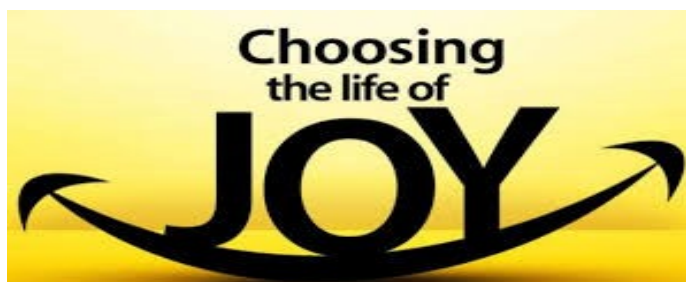
St. Paul’s message is actually three-fold:

1. *Be Joyful and rejoice!*

2. *Pray!*

3. *Give God thanks* for all His goodness and for the many blessings that He continuously bestows to receptive men and women of faith in their demonstration of acts of sincere kindness in all their relationships.

It is only with a joyful heart that the human spirit can allow itself the luxury of receiving God’s grace. In being a recipient of God grace, men and women of faith cannot help but to respond in a *spirit of gratitude*.



The celebration of *Gaudete Sunday, Rejoice Sunday* comes midway in the celebration of the Season of Advent as a way of calling attention to the fact that the *Season of Advent*, and the period of *waiting* is coming to an end. The third candle, the pink candle on the advent wreath is lit. The vestments too, go from purple on this special Sunday, to rose. The rose color is a happy color, as opposed to the purple, which while more regal, suggests penitential prayer. The rose is a softening of the purple as we make our way for pure white at the celebration of Christmas. The white symbolizes light. The celebration of Christmas is *Light* shining through darkness.

Gaudete Sunday & Mary

On this *Gaudete Sunday*, the Church is ever more mindful of Mary's role in fulfilling God's plan for the salvation of humankind. Having been chosen by God to birth the long-awaited-for-Messiah, *Advent* focuses attention on Mary as being the model of Discipleship as well as the model of obedient faith.



The *Hallmark* of Mary's Discipleship and her obedient faith is characterized by her witness to Elizabeth. Mary greets her cousin Elizabeth with a beautiful message referred to as "*The Magnificat*" (Luke 1:46-55). Mary possessed joy and conviction in the midst of:

***Confusion**, as she was told by the Archangel Gabriel that she would be the Mother of the Messiah.

***Wonderment**, as she was told that a sword would pierce her heart because of her Son.

***Sorrow**, as she stood at the foot of the cross, gazing at the broken and blood-soaked body of her Son.

Man says, Show me,
and I'll trust you
God says, Trust Me,
and I'll show you

The *Season of Advent* is actually about *trusting* that God *has not* and *will not* abandon His faithful. In Luke's account of the *Visitation* (Luke 1:26), which is read on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Mary responds to the Archangel Gabriel by saying, "*I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.*" Herein lies Mary's greatness; not so much that she was the Mother of God but that she *trusted* in God's *Word*. Despite Mary's confusion, despite the fact that she did not, nor could not see the whole picture, she said, "Yes" to God.

Advent is that time of the year when we recognize those aspects of our lives that are preventing us from renewing our "Yes" to God on a daily basis. JNM



From the Pen of the Parish Nurse
Kimberly Petrillo, R.N.

Winter Health: Marking Smart Decisions

Winter can be beautiful, especially as we all await the first snowfall. However, winter can also be a treacherous. The cold temperatures, ice-riddled terrain, and snow-packed sidewalks can negatively impact the complexities of life; having the potential to impact health.



Preparation is Key

Be prepared for the onset of the inevitable cold temperatures. There are many things that can happen during the winter season that can result in visits to the Emergency Room. Some helpful tips for staying well and safe during the winter months include the following:

1. Avoid lengthy exposure to cold weather.
2. Dress in layers of clothing.
3. Pay special attention to protecting the feet, hands, head, ears and nose from extreme cold temperatures.
4. Stay well-hydrated if spending any length of time outdoors.
5. Skip very tight clothing. Wear loose-fitting clothing

Frostbite

Frostbite is a type of injury caused by the freezing of a body part. This can result in the loss of feeling and color in the area it affects; usually the extremities such as the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers and toes. Frostbite can permanently damage the body, and in severe cases, it can lead to amputation (removing the affected body part).



Signs of Frostbite

It is important to watch for the signs of frostbite because it is a serious condition. The first steps to prevent frostbite are to know who is most at risk.

The risk is higher for people who smoke, have a blood vessel disease such as diabetes, and/or have poor circulation. In addition, not wearing proper clothing can be a major contributor for frostbite as well as inadequate dehydration and fatigued.

Redness or pain in any skin area may be an indicator of frostbite; thus, quickly getting out of the cold and seeking the warmth of indoors is necessary. Any of the following signs may point to frostbite:

1. A white or grayish-yellow skin area.
2. Skin that feels unusually firm or waxy.
3. Numbness.



A person who has frostbite may not know they have it until someone else points it out because the frozen parts of the body are numb.

Preventative Measures

It is important to take the following measures to decrease the risk of frostbite:

1. Limit time outdoors in cold, wet or windy weather.
2. In cold, windy weather, exposed skin can develop frostbite in minutes.
3. Dress in several layers of loose, warm clothing. Air trapped between the layers of clothing acts as insulation against the cold.
4. Wear a hat or headband that fully covers the ears. Heavy woolen or windproof materials make the best headwear for cold protection.
5. Wear gloves rather than mittens. Gloves provide better protection.
6. Make a realistic plan to protect the body. For example, when traveling in cold weather, carry emergency supplies and warm clothing in case you become stranded. If going to a remote or unfamiliar area, tell others the route and your expected return date.

Hypothermia

What is hypothermia? Hypothermia is caused by prolonged exposures to very cold temperatures. When the body is exposed to cold temperatures, the body begins to lose heat faster than it is produced. Lengthy exposures will eventually use up the body's stored energy. This condition results in a lower body temperature. A body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the person unable to think clearly or move well. Consequently, this makes hypothermia especially dangerous because a person may not know what is happening; thus, will not be able to take the necessary safety measures.

While hypothermia is most likely to occur at very cold temperatures, it can occur even at cooler temperatures (above 40 degrees F) if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat, or submersion in cold water.

WARNING SIGNS	
Hypothermia	Frostbite
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uncontrollable Shivering ● Memory Loss ● Disorientation ● Incoherence ● Slurred Speech ● Apparent Exhaustion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loss of Feeling ● White/Pale Appearance ● Fingers, Toes, Ear Lobes, or Tip of Nose

Victims of hypothermia are often:

- Older adults with inadequate food, clothing or heating.
- Babies sleeping in cold bedrooms.
- Individuals who remain out of doors for long periods of time such as hikers, construction workers, hunters or the homeless.
- People who drink alcohol or use illicit drugs.

Signs & Symptoms

The following are warning signs of hypothermia:

Adults:

- Shivering
- Memory Loss
- Fumbling/shaky hands
- Exhaustion or feeling very tired
- Slurred speech
- Confusion
- Drowsiness

Babies:

- Bright red, cold skin
- Very low energy

Hypothermia is a medical emergency. If a person has any of the above symptoms, take the person's temperature. If the temperature is below 95 degrees F, get medical attention immediately. In such situations, the individual with the above symptoms should be taken to a warmer room or shelter. In addition, wet clothing should be removed. It would be important to warm the center of the person's body such as the chest, neck, head and groin areas. This can be undertaken by the use of an electric blanket, if available.



The use of skin-to-skin contact under loose, dry layers of blankets, towels or sheets is important. Also, warm drinks can help to increase the body temperature; however, this does not include alcoholic drinks. Do not try to give beverages to an unconscious person.

After the body temperature has increased, keep the person dry, wrapping their body, including the head and neck, in a warm blanket. Such an individual should receive medical attention as soon as possible.

Preparing Your Home

Staying inside is no guarantee of safety. Take these steps to keep the home safe and warm during the winter months:

- Winterize the home. Install weather stripping, insulation and storm windows.
- Insulate water lines that run along exterior walls.
- Clean out gutters and repair roof leaks.
- Check the heating systems. Have the heating system serviced professionally to make sure it is clean, working properly and ventilated to the outside.
- Inspect and clean fireplaces and chimneys. Check the fireplace and flue every year.
- Have a **safe** alternate heating source and alternate fuels available.
- Prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning emergencies.
- Install a battery-operated or battery backup CO detector to alert the homeowner of the presence of the deadly, odorless, colorless gas.
- Check or change the battery when the clocks are changed in the fall and spring.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning symptoms include: headache, dizziness, weakness, GI upset, vomiting, chest pain and confusion. Protect the family from carbon monoxide (CO) by:

- Never use a gas range or oven to heat the home.
- Keep grills, camp stoves and generators out of the house, basement and garage.
- Locate generators at least 20 feet from the home.
- Leave the home immediately if the CO detector sounds. Call 911.

During the winter months, the air in the home tends to be drier because the heat is on, pumping the home full of hot dry air. Sniffing dry winter air can dry out the sinuses. Cold winter air is dry because it holds less moisture than warm air. In winter the humidity is low, so what little moisture that is around is quickly sucked up into the air. So, moisture evaporates more quickly from the body, which dries out the skin, making a desert on the inside of the nose, leaving the throat parched.



One way to combat the dryness is to add a humidifier, either for the whole house or within certain rooms. Another effective way to add moisture to the air is to place large bowls of water around the home. The water evaporates and adds moisture to the air. Air purifiers can also help to add moisture to the air.

Staying healthy is important all times of the year and winter is no exception. Keep these tips in mind and enjoy the winter (CDC.gov.; mayoclinic.org.). **KP**

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Hosted by
REV. JEREMIAH N. MURASSO, PH.D.

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St. Pio of Pietrelcina Parish
355 Foxon Road
East Haven, CT 06513
Tel: (860) 977-7675
Email: jeremiah.murasso@aol.com

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This bundle of fresh cut flowers provides 10+ meals to a hunger organization near you.

STOP & SHOP

The St Bernadette Food Pantry has been selected as a beneficiary of the Stop & Shop Bloomin' 4 Good Program for the month of December. Every \$10.99 bouquet in the sleeve marked "Bloomin' 4 Good at the North Haven store, the pantry will receive a \$1.00 donation. If you're going to purchase flowers this month, please consider purchasing this bouquet and support our pantry.

Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 17th, at 2:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Pompeii Church



Get yourselves into the TRUE meaning of Christmas by joining us for this truly uplifting and spiritual experience. This ancient tradition is comprised of nine readings from scripture along with inspiring music.

From the Pen of Fr. M.
Reverend Jeremiah N. Murasso, PhD, EdD, PsyD.



SIGNS OF THE SEASON *Part 2*

CHRISTMAS ROSE



The Christmas Rose is native to Europe and is said to bloom throughout the winter months in the cooler climates of Great Britain, Spain, Portugal and the Scandinavian countries. Unlike the roses that we see in our New England climate, which lose their petals as part of the life cycle, the Christmas Rose, a bushy shrub consists of five white or whitish/pinkish petals that remain intact through out the duration of the plant's life cycle.

Tradition places this legend in the fifteenth century in Scandinavia. Like the legend of the poinsettia, this story, also involves a young girl whose name was Madelon who like Pepita desired to be part of the Christmas procession to the Infant Jesus' crib with the other children in her village. Madelon was saddened by the fact that while her peers brought exotic and extravagant gifts, she had nothing of value to present to the Christ Child.

Although driven to find a flower to present to the Baby Jesus, Madelon found nothing, due to the fact that it was a cold and snowy winter and nothing was in bloom. Crying by the roadside and feeling quite ashamed, an angel appeared to Madelon. Moved by the young girl's innocent and pure love for Jesus, the angel began to beat the ground at the spot where the tears of the young Madelon fell. From the ground burst forth a magnificent bush of white roses.

The angel told Madelon that nothing that anyone could bring to the Christ Child was more fitting than the Christmas Rose.

CHARLIE BROWN



This time of the year would not be complete without Charlie Brown and *The Charlie Brown Christmas Special*. It is a heartwarming story about the *search* for the *true meaning* of Christmas. However, the only person who is actually searching for the real meaning behind the holiday season is Charlie Brown. His friends seem to be going through the motions of decorating, shopping and celebrating. All of Charlie's friends *appear* to lack a purpose and a reason for what they are doing.



As Charlie Brown observes his friends decorating and merry-making, he takes note of the fact that they *appear* to be overly consumed with the *secular* demands of the *Christmas Season*. In other words, although they decorate their houses and trees with lights, tinsel and glitter, they *appear* to lack an understanding as to how these decorations contribute to the meaning of the *Christmas Season*. Charlie reacts to their lack of *apparent* focus on Jesus who is the *reason for the season*.

Charlie Brown cannot quite put his finger on it. However, he *does* know that something is missing from his friends' preparation for Christmas. There is something about the Christmas preparations that fail to provoke meaning in the hearts of the participants. Whatever it is, Charlie Brown knows that it *has* to be something that is *extremely necessary* and something that definitely speaks to the *real meaning of what Christmas* is all about.

Who Do You Identify With?

Who is it that you most identify with? Is it Charlie Brown who wants to *feel* the real meaning behind the tinsel and glitter of the season? Or do you identify with Lucy and the others who just go through the motions simply because it seems like the right thing to do this time of year?

Some adults, like children, love everything about Christmas. They love the food, the decorating and the shopping. However, they are so invested in these things that they forget the *real meaning* of the Christmas celebration. They forget the *reason for the season*.



There is always Linus! He is the one who never forgets that the *true meaning* of Christmas is about Jesus. Do you remember the exchange between Lucy and Charlie as they prepare for their Christmas pageant? Lucy as always takes charge. As she distributes the script to the cast, she assigns the part of the shepherd to Schermie who becomes visibly upset. "*Shepherd?*" he asks, "*I always have to be a shepherd!*"

The truth? Nobody wants to be a shepherd. Shepherds seem so unimportant. Yet, if we listen to the Gospel of Saint Luke with our eyes, we should all want to be shepherds. The shepherds are in fact, the superstars in Luke's account. The Gospel of Saint Luke is so beautiful in its simplicity. It is about Mary, Joseph and Jesus, along with the angels and shepherds. Luke makes no mention of Magi because his focus is *Jesus*. Jesus humbled himself to become one of us. In addition, Luke tells us much more. He is telling us why Jesus was born into the world and for whom he was born. Jesus came into the world for the shepherds and for the salvation of humankind.



The shepherds are real people living in the midst of their own world, sleeping with and protecting their flock. Sheep were very important to the economy of everyday life in Israel two thousand years ago. Yet, the shepherds were not considered to be very important, nor did they enjoy any prestige among their peers.

Luke portrays the true meaning of Christmas when he describes the shepherds who were the *first* to receive the announcement regarding the birth of the Son of God, the long awaited-for Messiah. The shepherds were also the first to offer praise and adoration. Although they were the first, the shepherds were terrified and perhaps, even confused upon seeing the *Glory of God* in their midst.



This is the real meaning of Christmas: *The Incarnate God who has broken through human history*. God has come not to the rich and the powerful but to the lowly, those of us who *recognize* the need for His Son. The message that was proclaimed by the shepherds is clear: "*We do not have to fear God, for today we have been given Joy*;" joy that both Isaiah and Paul speak about in the readings for the third week of Advent, which is referred to as *Gaudete Sunday*.

An anemic, lackluster little Christmas tree was made beautiful by Charlie Brown's friends; thus, as a result of the transformation, Charlie Brown discovers the real meaning of Christmas: *Light! A Light* that expels darkness in the birth of God's Son.

The *Christmas Season* is a reminder to those of *us who believe* that in spite of a world gone mad on so many different levels, there is reason for joy; reason for hope; reason for faith. Luke reminds us of the great joy that was present among the shepherds, the lowliest of all who tell us not to fear because joy is ours.

good
TIDINGS of great
JOY

The *Advent Season* ushers in the *Christmas Season*. It is about *reading the signs of the times*! We are called to bask in the joy of the season as all the signs that usher in the birth of Christ prepare us for this great event: "*Light shining through darkness!*" In the readings for the *First Sunday of Advent*, St. Paul instructs the followers of Jesus to "*Throw off the works of darkness and to put on the armor of light*" (Romans 13:11-14). Let this holiday season mark a new beginning for *your* life. Walk in the *Light* of Christ and transmit his *Light* throughout the NEW YEAR!



ABC'S OF CHRISTMAS



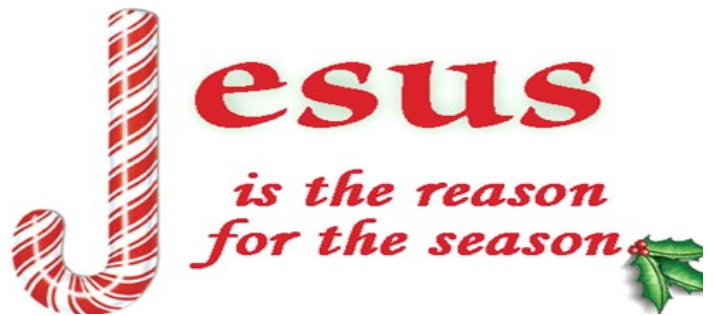
A...is for Animals who share the stable.
B... for the Babe with their manger for His cradle.
C... for the Carols so blithe and so gay.
D... for December, the twenty-fifth day.
E... for the Eve when we are all so excited.

**F... for the Fun when the tree is at last
lighted.**
**G... for the Gifts Santa leaves on that
special day.**
**H... for the Holly with pointed leaves on
that special day.**
I... for Ivy that clings on the wall.
J...is for Jesus, the reason for it all.
K... for the Kindness begot by this feast.
L... for the Lights of the season.
**M... for the Manger bed for Jesus at his
birth.**
**N... for the Nowells we sing Christmas
night.**
O... for the Oxen, the first to adore Him.
**P... for the Presents the Wise Men laid
before Him.**
**Q...is for Quiet night, with hardly a
sound.**
R... for the Reindeer leaping the roofs.
**S...is for the Stockings that Santa Claus
stuffs.**
T... for the Toys, the Tinsel, the Tree.
U...is for Us...the family of God.
V...is for Visitors bringing us cheer.
W...is Welcome to the Happy New Year.
**X...is for X-tra special feelings of
Christmas surrounding us all.**
**Y...is for Your Christmas Joys- may they
be bright.**
**Z...is for the animal Zoo at his crib that
First.**

Let us all use the *Joyful Signs of the Season* as a means of drawing closer to the Christ who lives within each of us, not only at Advent and Christmas but throughout the year.



CANDY CANE



The origin of the candy cane dates back to Germany to the year 1670. A choirmaster at the Cathedral in Cologne, year after year on Christmas Eve would become annoyed at the noisy behavior on the part of the children during his annual production of the *Living Crèche*. Consequently, the wise choirmaster approached the local candy maker and requested that he make *sweet sticks* for the children to suck on throughout the long production.

The choirmaster decided to justify this rather radical idea in the chance that the cathedral rector should question the rationale of eating candy during a church service; thus, he asked the candy maker to put a hook on one end of the candy stick as a reminder to the children of the shepherds who visited the Christ Child. The candy maker agreed, making the candy stick white as a way of teaching the youngsters about Jesus' sinless and pure nature. In addition, the candy maker added red stripes to symbolize the blood of Jesus that he shed on the cross.



The candy cane spread quickly throughout Europe and became associated with the *Christmas Season*. Candy Canes continued to be distributed throughout time to the young and the *young-at-heart* at Christmas Eve services throughout Europe. **JNM**

The Catholic community of
ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINA

Our Lady of Pompeii, St. Vincent de Paul & St Bernadette
Church

St. Pio of Pietrelcina Parish is proud to partner with
Ferraro's Market for our Ferraro's Gift Card Fundraiser
Program

Ferraro Gift Cards may be purchased or ordered in
the following denominations:

\$25.00
\$50.00
\$100.00

Other denominations may be purchased by order only.
Our parish will receive 10% commission on all sales.
What better gift than the gift of food for that special
occasion or for someone in need!

Ordering and purchasing of Gift Cards is available
after Masses at all three churches



Inclement Weather

As we approach the winter months
ahead, we know how quickly our New
England weather can change. The
cancellation of morning Mass will be on
Channel 8 news. Look to the bottom of your
screen under "closings" and look for *St. Pio
of Pietrelcina*.

THANK
YOU!

Thank you to Clancy-Palumbo Funeral Home for their
generosity in providing the beautiful calendars for 2024 at
St. Vincent de Paul.

MASS SCHEDULE

December 16 & 17, 2023

3rd Sunday of Advent

4:00pm OLOP: Fr. Patrick
4:30pm SVDP: Fr. Borino
8:00am OLOP: Fr. Borino
9:00am SB: Fr. Murasso
10:00am OLOP: Fr. Patrick
11:15am SVDP: Fr. Murasso

DEACONS PREACHING SCHEDULE

4:00 & 11:15: Deacon Larry
8:00 & 10:00: Deacon George
4:30 & 9:00: Deacon Wayne

December 23 & 24, 2023

4th Sunday of Advent

4:00pm OLOP: Fr. Murasso
4:30pm SVDP: Fr. Patrick
8:00am OLOP: Fr. Borino
9:00am SB: Fr. Patrick
10:00am OLOP: Fr. Murasso
11:15am SVDP: Fr. Patrick



Parish
Christmas
Masses

Christmas Eve

Sunday, Dec. 24

OLOP: 4:00pm: Fr. Borino
SB: 4:00pm: Fr. Charman
SVDP: 4:30pm: Fr. Patrick

Midnight Mass

SVDP: 11:00pm: Fr. Patrick

Christmas Day

Monday, Dec. 25

OLOP: 8:00am: Fr. Krugel
OLOP: 10:00am: Fr. Krugel
SB: 9:00am: Fr. Borino
SVDP: 9:30am: Fr. Murasso
SVDP: 11:15am: Fr. Murasso

Sunday, December 31, 2023

NO VIGIL MASSES

Monday, January 1, 2024

Solemnity of Mary

OLOP: 8:00 & 10:00
SB: 9:00
SVDP: 9:30 & 11:15