

Fourth Sunday of Advent



News You Can Use...from Fr. Steve

MERRY CHRISTMAS

In the Christmas infancy narratives that begin the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, there is an unmistakable note of haste. Mary is in haste to give birth, certainly because it is her time and the baby is pressing, and as yet, they have found no suitable place. But more than any physical haste, there is a much more profound spiritual haste in Mary - she is hurrying to finally give birth to HOPE, to all that was promised her and to her people by the majestic heavenly messenger, Gabriel, who stands at attendance before God. Gabriel told her that her child "will be called son of the most high, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever and his reign will have no end." [LK 1:31-34]

The shepherds also are in haste; they run through the night darkness and the cold, to witness the birth of the new-born child, sensing that here is born their own hope for something new, something more that is not yet present in their world or their hearts. The magi are in haste to complete their long journey of seeking and to finally witness the fulfillment of their dream for something new and greater.

Next consider the world at the time of Jesus. Pagan antiquity had become bankrupt spiritually and intellectually by the time that God became Immanuel. The great kingdoms of Greece and Rome, which had produced the glories of a philosophical approach to truth and meaning, and the dynasties of the Roman Caesars that presided over the "Pax Romana" have given way to raving lunatics and madmen such as Nero and Caligula.

A cold wind of moral despair blew through the so-called civilization of classical antiquity. Those early Christians who inherited the hope and promise of Bethlehem were not embarrassed by the name "Christ" for they knew Jesus was the only true alternative to the sad and somber world that surrounded them. In this Christmas Season, our world still needs an infusion of light, love and hope which is why we are committed to "Merry Christmas." We know that the Christ of Christmas is our only real hope for abundant life and love.

Parish Christmas Greetings:

Dear Parishioners and Friends,
"The Word Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us." With these words the Church announces the completion and fulfillment of our Advent preparation. The Christmas season of grace and rejoicing begins Friday, December 25 and extends throughout the octave [eight days] until Friday, January 1, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, and continues to the following Sunday, the Feast of the Epiphany. As we enter into the solemn celebration of this holy season of birth of the Savior, the priests and staffs of St. Agatha-St. James and the Drexel and Penn Newman Centers extend to all of you and your loved ones, a happy and holy Christmas Season. Please know that your needs and intentions are remembered in our prayers and Masses during these Holy days.

Merry Christmas to your Parish, St. AJ

Please give thought and prayer to making your annual Christmas offering to St. AJ. There are Parish needs that call out for your generous support and the need in your own heart to express gratitude to Almighty God by being a generous giver to His Church, your spiritual family. Please remember your Parish in your desire to be caring and thoughtful at this time.

This Week at St. AJ

Saturday, December 19

2:00PM Wedding Erin Wade and Christian Ticehurst SJM
4:00PM Confessions
5:30PM Vigil Mass Nicholas Pipino - 17th Anniversary

Sunday, December 20

Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:00AM Mass Fr. Chuck Pfeffer
After 10:00AM Mass Catholic Forum Downstairs in Parish Hall
11:30AM Mass Thomas Holton
5:00PM Mass Intentions of Christine Jochem
10:00PM Mass Intentions of Parishioners & Benefactors of St. AJ

Monday, December 21

No 7:30AM Masses until Monday, January 11, 2010
No 1:00PM Masses at Drexel until Monday, January 11, 2010
12:05PM Mass Fr. Chuck Pfeffer

Wednesday, December 23

12:05PM Mass Holy Souls in Purgatory
12:30PM to 2:00PM Church will be open today.

Thursday, December 24

Christmas Eve

8:00 PM Vigil Mass The People of St. Agatha-St. James

Friday, December 25

Christmas Day

10:00 AM Mass The People of St. Agatha-St. James

Saturday, December 26

4:00PM Confessions
5:30PM Vigil Mass



HOLIDAY MASS SCHEDULE

December 24 - Thursday, Christmas Eve - Vigil Mass at 8 PM
December 25 - Friday, Christmas Day - Vigil Mass at 8 PM
December 27 - Feast of the Holy Family - Sat. Vigil 5:30 PM
Sunday - 10 AM, 11:30 AM & 5 PM - NO 10 PM Mass
January 1, 2010 - Friday, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God - One Mass at 10 AM - No Vigil Mass 12-31-09
January 3 - Feast of the Epiphany - Sat. Vigil Mass 5:30 PM
Sunday - 10 AM, 11:30 AM & 5 PM - NO 10 PM Mass
Jan. 10 - Baptism of the Lord. Regular Weekend Mass Schedule

Daily Masses

- The 7:30 am daily Mass is temporarily suspended during the Holiday break from Dec. 21 until Jan. 11, 2010, when it resumes.
- The 12:05 Noon Mass from Dec. 28 until Jan. 8 and the 9:00AM Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 Masses will take place in the Main Church.

2010 Calendars Available

Please take a 2010 calendar with you as you leave. They are available in the Jacobium Gathering Space, as long as supplies last. We are grateful to the ownership of the New Deck Tavern, at 3408 Sansom St., for again sponsoring this calendar. If you patronize them, please let them know you are grateful.

Christmas Season and Daily Mass

One of the best ways of celebrating the Christmas Season is to attend some of the weekday Masses. At Christmas we celebrate the Word made Flesh in the wonder of the Incarnation. At daily Eucharist, we celebrate the Word becoming an abiding presence with us in the wonder of the sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood. Weekday Mass in addition to Sunday is a fountain of grace for our lives. The weekday Scripture readings of Christmas are some of the most beautiful and poignant passages in the Old and New Testaments and rich material for mediation and prayer.

Christmas Season and Announced Daily Mass

The Christmas Season is a good time to obtain announced Masses for the new year - suggested offering \$10.00. Our 2010 Mass Book has many important dates available for you - birthdays, anniversaries or special intentions. Please call the Rectory and speak to Carole.