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St. Philip the Apostle Parish

797 Valley Road, Clifton, NJ 07013
www.stphilip.org ~ (973) 779-6200



Third Sunday of Advent December 17, 2023



CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Saturday Evening 5:30 PM
Sunday.....8:00 AM, 10:00 AM (Broadcast) & 12:00 PM
Monday thru Saturday..... 9:00 AM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Every Saturday4:30 PM

HOLY HOUR

Every Friday9:30 to 10:30 AM

For a Communion visit and/or
Anointing of the Sick,
please contact the Parish office.



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Parishioners,

John the Baptist is the major character of today's gospel, and we should not fail to notice the bizarre way he responds to the question that is posed to him. When the priests and Levites from Jerusalem ask him, "Who are you," John could have responded, "I am John, son of Zachariah," or, "I am a preacher." But that is not his answer. He says, "I am not the Christ." When people asked John who he is, he responds by saying who he is not. As strange as this is, it is consistent with the picture we have of John in the New Testament. John's constant purpose is not to point to himself but to prepare the way of the Lord. John is not interested in saying who he is but rather who Christ is, adding that he, John, is not the Christ. John says this even clearer a little later in the gospel when he tells his disciples, "He (Jesus) must increase, and I must decrease." John's purpose, then, is to become smaller, to take up less and less room so that there is more room for Jesus.

Now, it is important for us to realize that John does not want to become smaller because he has low self-esteem. John does not dismiss himself or his message. He considers his mission important. That is why he stands crying out in the wilderness. But, despite the importance of his calling, John chooses to be less so that Jesus can be more.

Now, this attitude on the part of John poses a question to us: Would our lives become richer, would we be happier if, at times, we chose to be smaller, if we chose to take up less room? You don't need to be married long before you figure out that in every relationship there are certain hot-button issues. When these arise, it takes a great deal of effort to avoid a stand-off. These issues can concern the use of money, the raising of children, or the way to deal with in-laws. John the Baptist suggests that when these hot buttons emerge, we may choose to become smaller, to step back from what we demand or what we expect. Doing this does not mean that our position is wrong, or the position of our spouse is correct. It simply means that by choosing to be less, there may be more room to live.

We might be pushing a son or daughter to use their talents, to work harder to study more. We do this because we love our children. We want them to be successful and to become all that they can be. But our efforts at times are ignored or lead to confrontation. John the Baptist wonders what would happen if we choose to become smaller, to ease up on some of our expectations. We might do this, not because what we are asking is misguided, but because if we took up less room, there might be more opportunity for some new thing to emerge in our child.

The customs of this Christmas season are important to all of us. We use gifts, food, and social gatherings to express who we are and who we love. John the Baptist suggests that perhaps we let our holiday traditions grow smaller, that we choose to have less gifts, fewer parties, and smaller traditions. We may choose to do this not because any of these things are wrong, but because if they took up less space, there might be more room for us to reach out to those who struggle, those who have less than we do, those who do not belong to our family and friends.

John the Baptist comes to us in today's gospel, and he does not ask us to let go of our goals or what we think is important. But he does remind us that sometimes we can take a step forward by taking a step back. There are times when we can become more by choosing to be less. There are opportunities where we can find happiness by becoming a bit smaller. Now, in a world that is constantly pushing for more and more, John remains a voice crying in the wilderness. But the promise of his message also remains. For when we choose to become smaller, we, like John, can be making room for Jesus.

Peace,
Fr. Monteleone

PLEASE NOTE

**There will be NO Holy Hour on Friday,
December 22nd.
Holy Hour will return on Friday, December 29th
following 9 AM Mass.
The Parish Office will be closed on Friday,
December 22nd and will open on
Tuesday, December 26th.**

CHRISTMAS IS ON A MONDAY?

Question: Since Christmas is on Monday this year, can I go to a Christmas Vigil Mass on Sunday and have it fulfill my Sunday and Christmas obligations?

Answer: As you note, Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday. And like all Sundays, Catholics are required to attend Mass in person, unless there is some legitimate reason (like illness or inclement weather) that makes attending Mass unduly difficult or impossible.

Of course, the following Monday, December 25, is Christmas Day, which is also a holy day of obligation. Because there are two days of obligation — Sunday and

Christmas — this means that there are two distinct obligations to speak of. Each separate obligation needs to be fulfilled by attending a separate Mass. That is, you cannot “double dip” by attending a Christmas Eve Mass that happens to be on Sunday and having this one Mass fulfill two obligations. (In years when Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, Christmas essentially replaces the Sunday liturgically, which means there is only one obligation.)

Now for the part that can get confusing: Even though you must attend two Masses to fulfill the two obligations, all this means is that you must go to Mass on that calendar day or attend a vigil Mass the evening before. The readings and prayers do not necessarily need to match the day whose obligation you are fulfilling. So, you could go to a Christmas Vigil Mass on Sunday,

December 24, and have it count as your Sunday obligation this year; but if you intend for this to fulfill your Sunday obligation, then you must also attend another Mass on Christmas Day to fulfill your obligation for the holy day.

Of course, if you were to attend a vigil Mass on Saturday for Sunday, and then the Christmas vigil Mass on Sunday (Christmas Eve) for Christmas day, then you’ve got it all covered.

Jenna Marie Cooper holds a licentiate in canon law and whose column appears weekly at OSV News.

PARISH ADVENT RECOLLECTION

Fr. Greg will offer reflections on Monday, December 18 at 10 AM (Church) or 7 PM (Marian Hall) on the joy Christ’s birth brings to the world. Join us!

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2023

Advent Recollection
by Fr. Greg Cappucino
Monday, December 18
10 AM and 7 PM

Filipino Simbang Gabi
Friday, December 22
7 PM

4th Sunday of Advent
Saturday, December 23
5:30 PM
Sunday, December 24
8 AM (No Music), 10 AM (Broadcast)
and 12 PM (No Music)

Christmas Eve Masses
Sunday, December 24
4 PM - Fr. Nico (*Youth Choir*)
7 PM - Fr. Nico (*Handbell Choir*)
10 PM - Fr. Monteleone (*Adult Choir*)

Please note the Youth and Adult Choirs will sing carols 30 Minutes before Mass

Christmas Day Masses
Monday, December 25
8 AM - Fr. Monteleone
10 AM - Fr. Nico (Broadcast)
12 PM - Fr. Cesar

**Solemnity of Mary,
Mother of God**
Monday, January 1
9 AM

OPLATKI

The tradition of the Oplatki originated in Poland. This Christmas custom began with a simple white wafer, baked from flour and water. The wafers are designed to display Christmas images, such as the Nativity. The Oplatki are enjoyed by families, typically right before the Christmas Eve meal. Packages of Polish Oplatki will be available in the vestibule of the Church next weekend, December 23rd and 24th.

GIVING TREE

Thank you for helping with our annual **Giving Tree**! If you have not already returned your gift, make sure to drop it off in the vestibule by the 12:00 PM Mass on Sunday, December 17. Don't forget to attach the tag to the gift! If you are making an online donation, please do so by this evening!



LESSONS AND CAROLS



Thank you to all those who came out to the Lessons and Carols, most especially our Adult Choir, Bell Choir and Youth Choir. Extra Special Thanks to Mr. Frank Hydash, our Music Director for coordinating an amazing performance by all.

ALMA REDEMPTORIS MATER

The great season of Advent is full of rich symbolism, especially about the contrast of light and darkness. For example, Jesus is known as the “light of the world” and his birth was made known to the Magi by a bright star, as they recounted to King Herod, “For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him (Matthew 2:2).”

Stars then play a vital role in the symbolism of Christmas, pointing the way to Jesus Christ. The Virgin Mary is similarly known under such titles as “Star of the Sea,” and is often referred to as a “star” that leads other people to her Son, the true “light” that shines in the darkness.

In Advent and throughout the Christmas season, the Church proposes an ancient hymn known by its Latin name, *Alma Redemptoris Mater*. It was written by St. Herman the Cripple in the 11th century and is recited after the conclusion of Night Prayer. It is a beautiful prayer, one that highlights this symbolism and points our hearts towards Bethlehem, in eager anticipation of the birth of the Savior. Below is the English and Latin translation of this beloved hymn, which can easily be turned into a prayer throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons.

English Translation

Sweet Mother of the Redeemer, that passage to heaven, gate of the morning, and star of the sea: Assist the fallen, lift up, you who cure, the people: you who bore to the wonderment of nature, your holy Creator. Virgin before and after, who received from Gabriel that joyful greeting, have mercy on us sinners.

Latin Lyrics

*Alma Redemptoris Mater, quae pervia caeli
Porta manes, et stella maris, succurre cadenti,
Surgere qui curat, populo: tu quae genuisti,
Natura mirante, tuum sanctum Genitorem
Virgo prius ac posterius, Gabrielis ab ore
Sumens illud Ave, peccatorum miserere.*

SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Simbang Gabi

A Filipino devotional of a nine-day series of Masses during Advent in preparation for the Nativity of Jesus Christ.

Join Us

**22 DEC
2023**

7:00 PM

St. Philip the Apostle Parish
797 Valley Road, Clifton, NJ

Father Nico Quintos
Celebrant

Fellowship immediately
following Mass
in the Auditorium

ST. PHILIP PREPARATORY SCHOOL

A great **BIG THANK YOU** to all those who came out to support our young student entrepreneurs at our TREP\$ Marketplace. The marketplace opened with an official blessing and ribbon-cutting by Fr. Monteleone. It was a beautiful sight to see our auditorium filled with eager business owners and supportive shoppers! Success meant different things to different kids. For some, it was the independence of earning their own money and for others it was the skills they learned along the way. Many of the students sold out of their products while others took future orders for customized items. The support of the community showed the children that their hard work has value and gave them a great feeling of accomplishment. Stay tuned for future TREP\$ marketplaces!

*Thank
you!*

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

COLUMBIETTES

Columbiettes Food Drive on the second Wednesday of every month. Drop off your non-perishable donations in the church parking lot after the 9 AM Mass. All food is donated to St. Michael's Church in Passaic.

LIFE MINISTRY



SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Cigar and Whiskey Night

On Thursday, January 18th, 21 and older are invited to join us for a Whiskey tasting and Cigar night at Franklin Steakhouse in Fairfield. Tickets are \$65 per person and includes Whiskey Tasting, Cigar and buffet dinner. Please contact Anton at (862) 247-3899.

Calendar Raffles

Calendar Raffles are now available for sale. Tickets are \$10 each for 90 chances to win \$10,000 in prizes. Contact the School or Parish office for more information.

PRIME-TIMERS

The next meeting of the St. Philip Prime Timers will be Friday, January 5th at 1:30 PM in Marian Hall. Coffee and cake will be served before the meeting. We will be playing Bingo. Cards are \$2 and the more that play, the more we pay. Everyone, 50 years and older is welcome. Come and join us for fun and socialization. If you have any questions, please call Jean R. (973) 253-1619.

GRIEF SHARE AT SAINT PHILIP'S

Need help dealing with grief?

A prayerful support group can help you move through the grief process.

A GriefShare support group is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief.

Through this 13-week group, you'll discover what to expect in the days ahead and what's "normal" in grief.

Since there are no neat, orderly stages of grief, you'll

learn helpful ways of coping with grief, in all its unpredictability—and gain solid support each step of the way.

The next GriefShare session at Saint Philip's is on

Monday, January 15, 2024 at

6:30 PM in the Youth Room of

Jubilee Wing Building of the

Molloy Center.

For questions, please call the

Parish Office at

(973) 779 6200.



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

What can we do to restore the quality and beauty of the pews, kneelers, and furnishings of our church? Our "Having a Place at the Banquet of the Lord" capital campaign has begun. Please see the parish website for information about the restoration project and to make an online pledge.

Thank You for Your Support

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same spirit distributes them. — 1 Corinthians 12:4

To all those who have pledged, contributed to, and continue to offer prayers for our "Having a Place at the Banquet of the Lord" capital campaign, a heartfelt thank you. Your kindness and generosity toward this project have gotten us off to a great start. This work could not be done without you!

To date we have raised \$137,962 in contributions collected and we are up to \$284,676 with all our pledges.

GOAL: \$300,000



PARISH GIVING

SUNDAY COLLECTION: DECEMBER 11, 2022 \$16,307.00

SUNDAY COLLECTION: DECEMBER 10, 2023

WEEKLY COLLECTION \$ 10,383.00

ONLINE GIVING DONATION \$ 6,767.00

TOTAL \$ 17,150.00

SECOND COLLECTION – PROJECT FAITH \$ 2,494.00

**Upcoming Second Collections:
December 25 – Project Faith**

WE PRAY FOR...

For the recently Deceased...

Valentin Aguinaldo, Emelinda Hilario,
Peter Weber, George Maceli, Anna Errico



A Time to be Healed...

Joanne Barrett, Peggy Nisivoccia, Manuel
Bacani,

Bishop Arthur Serratelli, Joseph Gore, Sikora Sisters

MASS INTENTIONS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023

8:00 Salvatore LoBalbo

Kristen Bruschi

10:00 Deceased members of the Kerner Family

Catherine "Kitty" Makowski

Giacomino and Rosina Lenti

Connie Pomposelli

12:00 Jim Loftus

Rita Latona

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2023

9:00 Josephine Pagano

Richard Porfido

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2023

9:00 Robert Fagan

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2023

9:00 Elena Parillo Bridi

Claudia Pugliese

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2023

9:00 Irene Marschalk

Pablo and Rosita Donaldo

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2023

9:00 Thomas Turner - 6th Anniversary

Martha Shadwell

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2023

9:00 Sal Monteleone

Salvatore LoBalbo

5:30 Frances Spazian

Ed Kovacs

Bob Martin

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023

8:00 For all the People of the Parish

10:00 Harry Carline

Guiseppa Esposito

All those who have served and
are serving in the Armed

Forces

12:00 David Kidd

For Our Nation

CANDLE FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 17th

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-From the Marschalk family



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