

PARISH ADVENT PROGRAM WRAP YOUR GIFTS IN PRAYER

Unwrap the gift of God in Prayer. In the midst of Advent and Christmas busyness, we offer you a way to pray and to discover our God who is with us. Each season the preparation for gift giving can be a source of stress. This year can be different. Our Christmas practice of gift giving is intended to be a visible symbol of love and Christian service in action. Why not use our gift giving as a form of prayer? Wrapping your gift in prayer can add a spiritual dimension to an ordinary task.

Wrap Your Gift in Prayer

As you choose your gift, ask for God's guidance and bring a prayerful awareness to the exchange. When you actually wrap your gift, whether in wrapping paper or in a gift bag, pray for the recipient. Ask God to fill them with light, love and the peace of Christmas. Cards and electronic greetings may also be wrapped in prayer.

Prayer Method Choices

- **Imagine** - visualize the person for whom you pray. Picture the Lord blessing them.
- **Speak** - pray out loud, "Lord surround (name) with your light; fill him/her with your peace."
- **Sing** - a Christmas carol.
- **Gesture** - dedicate the use of your hand motions in wrapping as your prayer.
- **Hear** - simply repeat the person's name knowing that the Lord hears our every word.
- **Recite** - a pre-written prayer, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Rosary . . .
- **Act** - reach out to someone in need of the gift of your care.
- **Bless** - difficult relationships with prayer: *Lord bless (name) and transform me to set me free.*

Sharing your Prayer with a Gift Tag



After wrapping your gift in prayer attach a gift tag that will be provided for you.

Witnessing to your prayer by means of a **Gift Tag** is like giving an additional gift because it may lead the receiver to become more aware of God's presence in her or his own life.

This weekend **Gift Prayer Tags** will be available at the doors of the church. Attach the **Gift Prayer Tag** to a gift, group of gifts or gift bag. You may also wish to duplicate the gift tag sheets on your own computer by visiting our website www.stphilip.org.

Reflection On Prayer

God desires to be in a close and personal relationship with us. Prayer unwraps God who is always with us. Prayer directs our attention to God who can be found in all things. The Spirit of God dwells within us; prayer is the inner journey to discover the gift of God within. St. Paul challenges us to rejoice in God's presence in all circumstances, (1Thessalonians5:16). William S. Barry S. J. in his book *Praying the Truth* (2012) gives a simple definition of prayer:

"By prayer I mean what occurs when I am conscious in some way of God's presence. Ignatius of Loyola is known for wanting to find God in all things – that is, to be able to do all things while, at the same time, being conscious of God's presence. In other words, he wanted to be prayerful at all times. A tall order, you might say, but Ignatius believe that a person could come close to this with the help of God and by the regular practice of paying attention to what happens in daily life. He could hope for such a state because of his Christian belief that God, the Creator of the universe, is never absent from any part of this universe. Hence, whether we are aware of it or not, we are always in God's presence no matter what we are doing. All that is required (for prayer) is that I am conscious of God's presence and whatever activity I engage."

Our Advent Program, *Your Gift is Wrapped in Prayer* is an opportunity for us to encounter God in our daily lives.

Reflection Questions and Activity

- When have I felt closest to God?
- What does God's desire to be in a personal relationship with me mean. What does this invite me to do?
- What people, places or things awaken my awareness of God?

- The gifts in my life for which I am grateful are....Share your thoughts and feelings about these gifts with God.
- One way that I will share the gifts that God has given to me with another person this week is....

PRAYER & SERVICE - THE GIVING TREE

Our annual **Giving Tree** is the perfect way to *Wrap Your Gifts in Prayer* and to live our Mission of *Opus Christi, Christ's Work*.

The **Giving Tree** is located in the vestibule of the church. It holds gift tags that specify needed gifts for the people served by **Catholic Family & Community Services, Martin de Porres Village, and St. Joseph's Home for the Elderly and Mt. St. Joseph Children's Center.**

Giving is easy...

- Take a tag from the tree with the specified gift to be purchased
- Purchase the specified gift
- Wrap the gift in prayer
- Pray for the recipient of the gift
- Attach the same gift tag to the wrapped gift
- Place your wrapped gift with the specified gift tag back under the tree in the vestibule of the Church.

All gifts need to be returned by the 12 Noon Mass on December 20th.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION ADVENT OPPORTUNITIES

Saturday, December 12 11:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

Saturday, December 19: **10:00 AM** – 12:00 Noon

RCIA

Journey with Us!

The next session of the **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** or **RCIA** will be Monday, *January 4th* at 7:00 PM in the Russo Room. All are welcome! For more information please call Donna Scancarella at 973-779-6200.

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study sessions take place on Mondays at 11 AM in the Molloy Center. You are most welcome to join!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

This Sunday, immediately following the 8:00 a.m. Mass, please join us to celebrate the coming of Jesus while our high school students re-enact the Nativity in our school auditorium. Religious Education parents must accompany and stay with their child/children through the end of the program. Refreshments will be served.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES SCHEDULE

Grades 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6: December 13; January 24

Grade 2: December 13; January 10 & 24

Grades 7, 8: January 10

Confirmation Grade 9, 10: January 10

ST. PHILIP'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL

The students of St. Philip Preparatory School took part in our annual Christmas Show on December 3, 2015. The students of all grades from Pre-K 3 through Eighth Grade performed on stage with singing and dancing. The Middle School grades, six through eight, combined their talents performing a singing, acting, and dancing show that thrilled the audience. The focus was on the true meaning of Christmas with Jesus's birth at the center. The students are continuing with a challenging academic schedule while keeping Advent close at heart.

On Saturday, December 5th, our second grade students received the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. We congratulate them of their spiritual growth and ask for guidance as they prepare for their Communion in the spring.

The sixth graders explored the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in Religion class during this season of Advent. They worked in teams to create very large, hanging globes featuring 12 biblical passages and drawings depicting events leading up to the birth of Our Savior.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Please follow us on Twitter and Instagram: @stphilipyouthnj for the most up to date information regarding youth ministry activities.

MINISTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

WIDOW AND WIDOWERS

THE MONDAY NIGHT GROUP: December 14th at 6:30 PM, January 11th and 25th. There is no need to sign up in advance. If you have had a loss in your life please join us. **THE NEW & RECENTLY BEREAVED GROUP:** Wednesday, January 13th and 27th at 7:00 PM

COLUMBIETTES

The Columbiettes #11671 are having their annual Christmas Party on Friday, December 18th at 6:30 PM in Marian Hall. Please bring non-perishable food items to donate to School 12 Food Pantry. For more information, please contact Deb Sirvidio.

DIOCESAN NEWS

ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON TO BE HONORED

The Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth invite you to join them for the Feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and the Seton Associate Commitment Ceremony.

Mass will be celebrated on Saturday, Jan. 2, 2016 at the Holy Family Chapel, Convent Station at 11:00 AM followed by a light lunch. A display of memorabilia will be on display in the Heritage Room at the Motherhouse. For more information call 973-290-5470.

Pray for

THE SICK: Ann Marie Kwiatkowski, Derrick Medeiros, Tressa Bandel Domboski, Joan Hughes, Mildred Nerone, Silvia Berardo, Lara Buell, John Timochko, Margaret Schweighardt, Ryan G. Micale, Emma Wyman, Jane Hughes, Philomena DiStefano, Allison Llanos, Stanislaw Sudol, Frank Flanagan, Jayce Mazza, Patsy Sinisi, Barbara Sikora, Margaret Sikora

The Recently Deceased: Neil Rosa, Mary Tully, Patricia Doka, Madeline Morello-Paleski, Patricia Filliman, Ted Stefanizsyn

PRIESTS' SCHEDULE: DECEMBER 19/20, 2015

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| 5:30 PM | Fr. Joe | 10:00 AM | Fr. Julio |
| 8:00 AM | Fr. Miguel | 12:00 N: | Fr. Kevin |

HOLIDAY BULLETIN DEADLINE

Bulletin information for the weekend of December 20th:

Must be received by Tuesday, December 15th

Bulletin Information for December 27th and January 3rd:

Must be received no later than

Thursday, December 17th

PARISH GIVING

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| Total Sunday Collection December 7, 2014: | \$17,933.00 |
| December 6, 2015 Sunday Collection: | |
| Envelopes | \$12,372.00 |
| Cash | \$ 1,450.00 |
| Online Giving Donations | \$ 3,644.00 |
| Total | \$17,466.00 |
| 2 nd Collection: Retired Religious | \$ 5,342.00 |

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Zep 3:14-18a; Phil 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2015

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| 8:00 | All the People of the Parish |
| 10:00 | Warren N. Gaffney Chioma Ogu Robert Thomas McDonald Ricardo Sampei-Muroi Maria Yia Torres |
| 12:00 | Diane Cross |

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2015

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| 7:00 | Thomas LeProtto |
| 9:00 | Anna Holak Billek |

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015

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| 7:00 | Edward F. Sr. & Jr. and Ann Sheridan |
| 9:00 | Christopher J. Kelly, Sr. |

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015

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| 7:00 | Gloria Nicola & Deceased Family Members Theresa Gabler |
| 9:00 | Maureen Page |

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2015

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| 7:00 | James Loftus |
| 9:00 | Kris Thiruvathukal – 1 st Anniversary |

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2015

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| 7:00 | Margaret Hreha |
| 9:00 | Maureen Page |

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2015

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| 9:00 AM | Kovach & Schmidt Family |
| 5:30 PM | Deceased members Sieminsky & Farrelly Family Frank and Eleanor Kipakasha Michael Bimonte |

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2015

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|--------------|--|
| 8:00 | Daniel Sowa; Albert Levendusky |
| 10:00 | John Trommelen, Jr. Claudia Pugliese Charles Braunlich Justina Cruz Mary Katzianer |
| 12:00 | All the People of the Parish |

The Sanctuary Candle: In memory of
Henry F. Marrocco, Jr.

The Offertory Gifts: In memory of
Fred Anthony