

Christmas 2016 THEME
Your Gift is Wrapped and Prayer

OK GOD, WHAT'S THE GOOD NEWS?

Love is Good News

One Christmas Eve a mother has to tell her children some bad news. There would be no Christmas presents the next day because despite the mom's every effort they are penniless. The children understand and tell the mom that all will be OK. They go to Christmas Eve Mass and hear the Gospel read in which the Angels proclaim, "Good News and great joy." As the mom cries herself to sleep she wonders, "OK God, what is the Good News for us?"

Upon awakening she sees a Christmas stocking cut out of a brown paper bag taped to the wall over her bed. A candy cane is drawn in crayon and the word "Mom" is written on it. She also sees her children smiling at her with joy. Hugging her children to herself that Christmas morning the mom prays out loud, "OK God, you answered my prayer – our love is the Good News!"

Love is the Good News that makes even the most challenging situations OK. God's love was shown to the mom in the story through the love and action of her children.

Prayer is Good News

When our lives are not OK, when we are not aware of any Good News, prayer is the key that sets us free to be OK. We pray, "OK God, what's the Good News?" Prayer is the key that unlocks the treasure of the Good News.

Whether we feel OK or not, God is always giving to us and gifting us. God is always working in us, in others and in all ways. We call this God's Providence. Prayer is the key to discovering the hidden treasure of God in all things.

Christmas is Good News

The birth and Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Good News this Christmas. The word Gospel means Good News. The Good News is that all is profoundly OK because God is *Emmanuel* - which translates *God is with us*. This Christmas we celebrate the birth of Christ who is the Good News of transforming Love.

The birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ is the Good News of our salvation. Christmas celebrates God's power at work in our lives. Jesus shared in our humanity so that we might share in

God's Divinity. We grow in holiness and this is Good News.

Knowing that God is always at work is the Good News that makes things OK. We are OK through faith and hope in God.

Christ is Good News

Christ is the Good News of LOVE that gifts us with relationships with other people.

Christ is the Good News that empowers us to work for peace and justice as God's children for the flourishing of all people.

We Are Good News

As we gather for Christmas our deepest desire is to be Good News for one another, as were the children in our opening story.

This Christmas we wish to bring the Good News of Love to others through our words and deeds.



Good News: A Gift for You

During the season of Advent we have been - Wrapping Our Gifts in Prayer as a way to be Good News.

As a gift to you - you will be given a **Christmas Ornament** with a prayer inscribed on it.

This **Ornament** gift has been Wrapped in Prayer for you by the priests, deacons and pastoral staff.

One side of the **Ornament** reads in gold letters:
Your Gift is Wrapped in Prayer

On the other side is the prayer question:
"OK God, what's the Good News?"

A hand forms the **OK** sign which invites us to thank God in prayer for our Good News. When we thank God it is like a burst of light making us **OK** deep within.

Your **OK Ornament** can be hung on your Christmas tree.

Your **OK Ornament** is intended to be a reminder and a symbol of God's desire to enter into a relationship with you in prayer.

Praying your Good News

Spend a few moments before hanging your **OK Christmas Ornament** on your Christmas tree in prayer.

Think about what is Good News in your life. Thank God for the gift of family and friends. Use your imagination and wrap them in your prayer with love.

Praying Good News for Others

Give the gift of your prayer for those who are in need that you know. Pray for those who may not know God's love.

Thank God that you are already helping others and doing God's work; your offertory gift in the collection goes to enable Christ's Mission. Our gifts become tangible service in caring for the practical needs of others, through ministry, our church, in our community and in our diocese. We are Stewards of God's gifts.

Good News - Wrapping this up...

Wherever you are right now on the journey there is the Good News of God's presence and the Good News of God's gifts in your life.

Weary or excited, worried or relieved, sorrowing or rejoicing – Pray.

Open your heart to Christ who is always providing for us.

Discover through prayer God's Good News of **love** this Christmas and always.

As you place your **OK Ornament** on your Christmas tree be open and remember the Good News that.....

With God's love and from our hearts,

Your Gift is Wrapped in Prayer

Pastoral Care Survey

Our parish mission of *Opus Christi*, to do *Christ's work*, includes promoting and enabling the physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being of our community. In order to better serve you we hope to expand our Pastoral Care services in the areas of relationship and parenting workshops, caregiver and bereavement support, and spirituality programs. At the start of a New Year, we hope to address your pastoral care concerns with appropriate forums and programs. To incorporate your needs in our program development we ask that you kindly fill out the bulletin survey insert, or visit the StPhilip.org website and complete the survey online.

Completed paper surveys can be placed in the Pastoral Care Survey drop box in the church vestibule until **January 3**.

PRAYER OPPORTUNITY: MEDITATION HOUR



"Lead me, Lord!"

Begin your year on a path of prayer. Join us on **Thursday, January 5** at 7:00 PM in the Russo Room for prayer, guided meditation and reflection.

RCIA

Journey with Us

Open Your Heart to God

Discover the Keys to the Kingdom

RCIA

Are you interested in exploring your spiritual life?

Do you want to discover the abundance of God's love and peace?

Would you like to have greater motivation for service?

Do you want to know more about the Catholic Faith?

Did you ever think about becoming a Catholic?

Are you a Baptized Catholic and have never made your First Communion and/or Confirmation?

Are you baptized in another faith and have a desire to become Catholic?

Have you never been baptized in any faith but wonder?

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO JOIN US!

Our next session is Monday evening, January 9, 2017 from 7:00-8:30 PM in the Russo Room. We will discuss and reflect on the Gospel of John. Make-up sessions will be available.

All are welcome and invited to join us. For more information about RCIA please call Donna Scancarella at (973) 779-6200.

GRATEFULLY

Thank you to all parishioners who wrapped "we four priests" in your prayer and thoughtfully remembered us with gifts. Fr. Joe, Fr. Julio, Fr. Miguel, Fr. Kevin

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES SCHEDULE

Grades 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6: January 8

Grade 2: January 8, 22

Grades 7, 8: January 22

Confirmation Grade 9, 10: January 22

MINISTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

WIDOW/WIDOWERS

- The Monday Night Group: **January 9th & 23rd** at 6:30 PM in the *Left Conference of the Molloy Center*.
- The New & Recently Bereaved Group: **Wednesday, January 11th & 25th** at 7:00 PM.

COLUMBIETTE BLANKET MINISTRY

The next meeting will be on **Thursday, January 5, 2017** at 9:45 AM in the Molloy Center. All crafters are welcome. Blankets are donated to hospitalized children, chemotherapy patients, needy children, and the homebound of the community. For donations or further information, call Cathie Murtha at 973-471-1265.

ST. PHILIP PREPARATORY SCHOOL

SAINT PHILIP PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Open House

Catholic Schools Week

January 30th – February 3rd, 2017

Tours by Appointment

973-779-4700

The students prepared for the last days of school before Christmas break and looked forward to celebrating their annual 12 Days of Christmas song with Mrs. Zito. This event is one that the students truly love. The seventh grade students are studying weather and created weather reports and experiments to recreate weather. This was a real whirlwind of a lesson. In Digital Arts the students created digital photo Christmas cards from the school so don't be surprised if you see one in your email! The Christmas Show was a wonderful success and we thank all who attended. We at St. Philip Preparatory School want to wish everyone a blessed and merry Christmas.

YOUTH MINISTRY

1/12 Movie Night 7-9 PM in the Youth Room

Our Seven Retreat team meetings will begin on **Sunday, January 8**. If you are a high school student and you have been confirmed and are interested in helping lead the Retreat, please contact Andrew ASAP for more information!

DIOCESAN NEWS

CERTIFICATE IN CATHOLIC EVANGELIZATION

St. Paul Inside the Walls is accepting applications for the next three year program for a **Certificate in Catholic Evangelization**.

Any interested candidates should email Allan Wright at awright@patersondiocese.org for an application and information. Or you can visit insidethewalls.org/leading-others.

PRAY FOR

THE SICK: Joan Hughes, Silvia Berardo, Lara Buell, Ryan G. Micale, Jayce Mazza, Patsy Sinisi, Barbara Sikora, Margaret Sikora, Steve Kuchta, Sister Beverly Aiazzone, Linda Brady, Gus Perez, Joseph Villano, Marie Nattvo, Jennie Marto, Antoinette Van Setters, Mary Ellen Stanton, Alexander Bancey, Josephine Pipitone, Zigrig Roman, Derrick Medeiros, Maria Ligato, Philip Kutzenco, Susan Russell, Evelyn Wescott, William Steckowich, Ana Cabezas, Theresa Buhler, Annette Wanamaker, Daniel Marty

THE DECEASED: Alton Ferry, John Vatasin

PRIESTS' SCHEDULE: DECEMBER 31/JANUARY 1

5:30 PM	Fr. Julio	10:00 AM	Fr. Kevin
8:00 PM	Fr. Julio	12:00 Noon	Fr. Joe

PARISH GIVING

Total Sunday Collection: Dec. 20, 2015

\$16,105.00

December 18, 2016

Envelopes

\$15,797.00

Cash 1,376.00 \$

Online Giving donations 3,714.00 \$

Total

\$20,887.00

NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25

Day: Is 52:7-10; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2016: CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00 PM John Sonn

6:00 PM Charles Marvin

10:00 PM Emily & Andrew Sokerka

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2016: THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

8:00 All the People of the Parish

10:00 Deceased members: Angeles & Conocer Family

Deceased members: Moises & Santo Family

Nick Quintavella

Anna Chase – 20th Anniversary

12:00 Joseph Scafidi

Marylou Hauser

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2016

9:00 Schmidt & Kovach Family; James T. Lacava: 6th Annv.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2016

7:00 Fannie Gialorenzo

9:00 William & Lucy Del Vecchio

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2016

7:00 Alvira Condorso

9:00 Helaine Pohle

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2016

7:00 Mary Pinke

9:00 James Elbert

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2016

7:00 Gloria Kolodziej

9:00 Peter Wilk

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2016:

9:00 Vincent Borgese

5:30 Peter Wilk, Fred & Mary Mazzarino

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2017: SOLEMNITY OF MARY

8:00 All the People of the Parish

10:00 Diane Aloia, Claire Jaeger

Gazi Brahim-3rd Ann.

12:00 Emelyn & George Masbang – 34th Wedding Anniv.

The Sanctuary Candle:

In Memory of Fred Anthony

The Offertory Gifts:

In Memory of Angela Coffaro

THE PARISH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED DECEMBER 26, 2016

UNTIL JANUARY 3, 2017.