



**FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT
December 3, 2023**

First Sunday in Advent

Monday, December 4

12:00pm (SPJ) - Mary Brown & Husband by the Estate

Tuesday, December 5

12:00pm (SE) - Msgr. Stephen Wojciechowski
by the Estate

Followed by Holy Hour

Wednesday, December 6

No Scheduled Mass

Thursday, December 7—Holy Day Anticipated Mass

5:00pm (SPJ) - The William & Ellen Keenan Family
by the Estate

Friday, December 8—Holy Day of Obligation

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

12:00pm (SPN) - Msgr. Stephen Wojciechowski
by the Estate

Saturday, December 9

4:30pm (SE) - James Dawson by Nancy Dawson

Sunday, December 10

8:30am (SPN) - Pro Populo

9:45 am (SPJ) - *Holy Rosary*

10:30am (SPJ) - Special Intention for Rose Mary Rogers
by John O'Hara

(SE) = St. Elizabeth, Elizabethtown

(SPJ) = St. Philip of Jesus, Willsboro

(SJ) = St. Joseph, Essex

(SPN) = St. Philip Neri, Westport

Readings for the Week of December 4

Monday: Is 2:1-5/Ps 122:1-9/Mt 8:5-11

Tuesday: Is 11:1-10/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17/Lk 10:21-24

Wednesday: Is 25:6-10a/Ps 23:1-6/Mt 15:29-37

Thursday: Is 26:1-6/Ps 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27/Mt 7:21, 24-27

Friday: Gn 3:9-15, 20/Ps98:1-4, Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38

Saturday: Is 30:19-21, 23-26/Ps 147:1-6/Mt 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8

Next Sunday: Is 40:1-5, 9-11/Ps 85:9-14/2 Pt 3:8-14/Mk 1:1-8



CHRISTMAS GIVING TREES

Giving trees are up in all Churches. We are a little late this year, so there are a few things to note:

For Willsboro & Westport

1. Gifts need to be returned by 12/17/23.

2. Please DO NOT wrap the gifts, just attached tag.

Each tag represents a child's Christmas wish. We would like to fulfill every one of these wishes. If any one item seems to be too expensive, consider teaming up with a friend (or two if needed) so we can make these wishes realities! Please complete the sign-up sheet so we can track the tags if needed.

St. Elizabeth's Church is reaching out to support the local food shelf & Mission of Hope food program.

Last Weekend's Collection

Saint Elizabeth—Attendance: 33

Envelopes: \$585.25; Plate: \$25.00

Fuel: \$25.00; Christmas Flowers: \$90.00

Total: \$725.25

Campaign for Human Development: \$30.00

Saint Philip Neri—Attendance: 36

Envelopes: \$570.00; Plate: \$44.00

Fuel: \$50.00; Christmas Flowers: \$20.00

Total: \$684.00

Campaign for Human Development: \$2.00

St Philip of Jesus—Attendance: 40

Envelopes: \$605.00; Plate: \$115.00

Fuel: \$75.00; Christmas Flowers: \$40.00

Total: \$835.00

Campaign for Human Development: \$15.00

SECOND COLLECTION NEXT WEEKEND

There are two extra envelopes for next weekend—the monthly fuel collection and the collection for the Retirement Fund for the Religious. This will be taken as ONE collection. If you are putting in cash and want it designated to one or the other cause, please put it in an envelope and designate the cause. Thanking you in advance for your anticipated generosity.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Just a reminder that there is an envelope for Christmas Flowers too. If you don't get envelopes and want to donate toward the Christmas Flower expense, please place your donation in any collection in an envelope marked "Christmas Flowers".

7 STEPS TO BRING PEOPLE BACK TO CHURCH

3. Plant seeds. I love my Great Aunt tremendously – she is with the good Lord now. Every single time that my Great Auntie would send me something in the mail, always with whatever she was sending me, a letter, or a card, was always a seed. She would send me a prayer card or a tract or a pamphlet or a CD or a book or a medal. She was constantly dropping grace bombs all over the place and we need to do the same to people who have fallen away. Stop by their house and have a cup of coffee and then say "Hey, here's a book I was reading. I think you might enjoy it." At the end of an email say, "Hey, I was thinking of you the other day when I listened to this video, thought you might enjoy it." And then send them the YouTube link. It's through dropping these "grace bombs" that we have the ability to evangelize but also to begin to open their minds to truth **(To be Continued...)**

CONFIRMATION CLASS

TODAY—12/03 Class #10 Why tell my sins to a Priest?

(The Healing Power of Confession)

12/10 Class #11 How does God help when it hurts?

(Anointing of the Sick & Redemptive Suffering)

Things to Ponder....

Do not make complaining...

...a full time job!

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK...



The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word Adventus, which translates to "coming." As a scholar says "Advent is the season that asks us "to ponder all these things" in our heart. The season of Mary's 'yes,' Joseph's dreams; John's cries in the wilderness. The season we ponder what it means that Christ came into this world as an obscure child and will return to judge all things." Traditionally, the Advent wreath is a circle of evergreen branches. Both the evergreen branches and the circular shape symbolize the passing of time and eternal life. The shape of the wreath, with no beginning or end, reflects the complete and endless love that Jesus has for his people. During the Advent season, his coming and the promise of eternal life in heaven is eagerly anticipated. The **first purple** candle is sometimes interpreted as the Candle of Hope. Purple is the primary color associated with Advent. Within the Catholic Church it symbolizes penance, preparation, and sacrifice. The **second purple candle** is seen as the Candle of Peace. Everyone reflects on their lives and works to become better versions of themselves in preparation for Jesus' coming. The **third candle** is Pink/Rose, called the Candle of Joy. It symbolizes anticipation and rejoicing. During the third week of Advent, everyone is filled with joy for the near arrival of Jesus on Christmas Day. The **fourth candle** is purple and called the Candle of Love. During this final week of Advent, there is rejoicing in the endless love that God has for everyone, which is made apparent in the birth of his son. May this season of Advent be a great time for all of us to prepare our hearts and minds to embrace true "Love" taking the form of flesh. Wishing you all a Blessed Advent Season.

With Love and Prayers...  Fr. J.T.

2023 Christmas Join Us!

Pray



Just as the angels spread the good news of Our Savior's birth that fateful night, we can spread the glad tidings of His love and mercy to our community, and offer reparation to Him for the sins of our society.

We will pray the Rosary in the Parish Hall

After Mass ~ Monday, December 4

After Mass ~ Wednesday, December 13

Followed by coffee/snack

ADVENT WATCHFULNESS

Are you attentive to Christ? Though this is a profoundly important question, there are many who may not even fully understand what this means. Yes, on the surface it is clear: Being "attentive" is being aware of the presence of our Lord in your life and in the world around you. So, are you attentive? Are you watchful? Are you looking, seeking, waiting, anticipating, and preparing for Christ to come? Though Jesus came to Earth over 2,000 years ago in the form of a little child, He continues to come to us today. And if you are not daily aware of His profound presence, then you may already be somewhat asleep, spiritually speaking. As we begin our Advent season, our Lord is speaking to you in the deepest depths of your soul. He is gently saying, "Wake up." "Listen." "Watch." He will not shout; He will whisper so that you must give Him your full attention. Do you see Him? Hear Him? Listen to Him? Understand Him? Do you know His voice? Or do the many voices all around you take you away from the deep, profound, and transforming truths He wishes to communicate to you? Reflect, on this **First week of Advent** the fact that God is speaking within the depths of your soul each and every day. He speaks to you in various ways. And what He says is all that really matters in life. Advent is a time, more than any, to renew your commitment to listen, to be attentive and to respond. Do not fall asleep. Wake up and diligently be attentive to the profound voice of our Lord.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE (24TH)

4:00 pm - Westport

8:00 pm - Elizabethtown (NIGHT MASS)

CHRISTMAS DAY (25TH)

9:00 am – Willsboro

Please note that even though Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, you still have to fulfill your obligation of attending the Sunday Mass as per the weekend schedule and then fulfill your Christmas Obligation by attending one of the Masses scheduled above. For instance, those attending Mass in Westport on a regular weekend, participating just the Christmas Eve Mass on Sunday **WILL NOT** cover your weekend obligation. You will have to attend Morning Mass as well. If you have questions, please contact the Pastor. **Thank you.**

FIND PEACE IN GOD THIS ADVENT

Pray every day this advent using the **Advent Hallow program with C.S. Lewis.** Follow the link: <https://hallow.com/advent/>. You can also download the app on your iPhone. You will find daily prayers, family content and bible stories & sleep content. There is also an Advent Pray 25 Challenge. Literature on this program can be found at the entrance at each of our Churches.





**SECOND SUNDAY
OF ADVENT
December 10, 2023**

Monday, December 11

No Scheduled Mass

Tuesday, December 12—Our Lady of Guadalupe

11:00am (SE) *Holy Hour with Litany of the Holy Family*
12:00pm (SE) - The William & Ellen Keenan Family
by the Estate

Wednesday, December 13

12:00pm (SPJ) - Mary Brown & Husband by the Estate

Thursday, December 14

St. John of the Cross—Priest & Doctor of the Church
12:00pm (SPJ) - Richard Smith by Margaret Smith
1st Anniversary

Friday, December 15

12:00pm (SPN) - Msgr. Stephen Wojciechowski
by the Estate

Saturday, December 16

4:30pm (SE) - Joseph Huttig by Ronald & Ethel Barnaby

Sunday, December 17

8:30am (SPN) - Pro Populo
10:30am (SPJ) - Elizabeth "Betty" Varian by Peg Sheehan

(SE) = St. Elizabeth, Elizabethtown
(SPJ) = St. Philip of Jesus, Willsboro
(SJ) = St. Joseph, Essex
(SPN) = St. Philip Neri, Westport

Readings for the Week of December 11

Monday: Is 35:1-10/Ps 85:9-14/Lk 5:17-26
Tuesday: Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab
Jdt 13:18-19/Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47
Wednesday: Is 40:25-31/Ps 103:1-4, 8, 10/Mt 11:28-30
Thursday: Is 41:13-20/Ps 145:1, 9-13/Mt 11:11-15
Friday: Is 48:17-19/Ps 1:1-4, 6/Mt 11:16-19
Saturday: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19/Mt 17:9a, 10-13
Next Sunday: Is 61:1-2a, 10-11/Lk 1:46-50, 53-43
1Thes 6:16-24/Jn 1:6-8, 19-28



CHRISTMAS GIVING TREES

Giving trees are up in all Churches. We are a little late this year, so there are a few things to note:

For Willsboro & Westport

- 1. Gifts need to be returned by 12/17/23.
- 2. Please **DO NOT** wrap the gifts, just attach tag.

Each tag represents a child's Christmas wish. We would like to fulfill every one of these wishes. If any one item seems to be too expensive, consider teaming up with a friend (or two if needed) so we can make these wishes realities! Please complete the sign-up sheet so we can track the tags if needed.

St. Elizabeth's Church is reaching out to support the local food shelf & Mission of Hope food program.

Last Weekend's Collection

Saint Elizabeth—Attendance: 34
Envelopes: \$647.25; Plate: \$72.00
Christmas Flowers: \$130.00
Total: \$849.25

Campaign for Human Development: \$30.00

Saint Philip Neri—Attendance: 32
Envelopes: \$180.00; Plate: \$79.00
Fuel: \$10.00; Christmas Flowers: \$35.00
Total: \$304.00

Feast of the Immaculate Conception: \$10.00

St Philip of Jesus—Attendance: 41
Envelopes: \$967.00; Plate: \$104.00
Fuel: \$140.00; Christmas Flowers: \$100.00
Total: \$1,311.00

Campaign for Human Development: \$10.00

Feast of the Immaculate Conception: \$30.00

Retirement Fund for Religious: \$210.00

Propagation of the Faith: \$10.00

Holy Christmas: \$40.00

From Bishop Terry R. LaValley...

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

I am writing to tell you about the upcoming 2023 collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious. This annual appeal assists nearly 25,000 elderly sisters, brothers and religious order priests nationwide. I am grateful for the significant influence that women and men religious, both past and present, have had on my own spiritual journey. I deeply appreciate their invaluable contributions to our diocese and the wider community. Perhaps you too have been touched by the kindness and guidance of a religious who made a positive difference in your life.

Since the founding of our Diocese, many consecrated women and men have served the people of God in the North Country. Dominican Sisters of Hope, Ursuline Sisters, Sisters of St. Joseph, Atonement Sisters, Sisters of the Precious Blood Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Atonement Friars, to mention just a few.

We are called to recognize that many of our senior vowed religious have dedicated their lives to service, usually receiving little pay in return. Consequently, their religious communities face a shortage of retirement savings. Compounding this challenge are rising health-care costs and decreased income. Religious communities find it increasingly difficult to meet the day-to-day needs of aging members, including their medical expenses, nursing assistance and other necessities.

Your generous donations to the Retirement Fund for Religious provide vital financial support, enabling religious communities to care for their aging members. I know you are frequently asked to support many worthy causes. I invite you to contribute whatever you can toward this year's collection.

In addition to your financial contribution, please keep all our women and men religious in your prayers. May God's abundant blessings be upon you and your loved ones.

Gratefully yours in Christ,
Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK...



On December 9, 1531, Saint Juan Diego, an Indian convert to the faith, was walking to a nearby village so that he could attend Mass. On his way, a woman appeared to him amidst the sound of celestial music. She announced to him: "I am your merciful Mother, to you and to all mankind who love me and trust in me and invoke my help. Therefore, go to the dwelling of the Bishop in Mexico City and say that the Virgin Mary sent you to make known to him her great desire". Though Juan Diego did not accomplish this at first, he eventually followed the instruction of the Virgin of Guadalupe in subsequent apparitions and brought fresh roses from the mountain top to the bishop as a sign that the Virgin wanted a shrine built there. Roses did not usually grow that time of year, so this was clearly a miraculous sign. Upon arriving at the bishop's residence, Juan Diego opened his cloak (tilma) carrying the roses so as to pour them out onto the floor before the bishop. When he did so, the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared, miraculously, upon the threads of this cloak. The cloak is still visible to all who wish to see it at the shrine in Mexico City. And what is amazing, scientifically speaking, is that the image is not painted, rather, each and every thread has changed color so as to create this holy image. Furthermore, the cloak is made of a cactus plant that normally disintegrates within ten years. Today, the cloak is almost five hundred years old, and it is as fresh and vibrant as ever. The **Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12th)** is not simply seen as a cultural, historical, or miraculous phenomenon. Rather, it must be seen as a glorious invitation from the Queen of Heaven to accept her as our mother.

With Love and Prayers.... **Fr. J.T.**

2023 Christmas Join Us!



After Mass ~ Wednesday, December 13
Followed by coffee/snack

CONFIRMATION CLASS

TODAY—12/10 Class #11 How does God help when it hurts? (Anointing of the Sick & Redemptive Suffering)
12/17 Class #12 Who is the Holy Spirit?
(Meeting the Third Person of the Trinity)



ST. PHILIP OF JESUS CHURCH

Volunteers will be welcome to come at 1:30pm on Dec 24th to decorate the church for Christmas. If you have any questions please contact Nancy Belzile - 518-593-6024

THE GREATNESS OF HUMILITY

One of the greatest human struggles in life is pride. We tend to want to draw attention to ourselves. Most people struggle with a tendency to tell others how good they are and why they are right. We want attention, recognition, and praise. We often struggle with this tendency because self-elevation has a way of making us feel important. And such a "feeling" feels good, to an extent. But what our fallen human nature often fails to recognize is that humility is one of the greatest attributes we can have and is, by far, the greatest source of greatness in life. What could be greater than the act of pointing others to be the Savior of the World? What could be greater than helping others to discover their purpose in life by coming to know Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior? What could be greater than exhorting others to a life of selfless surrender to the one and only God of mercy? What could be greater than elevating the Truth over the selfish lies of our fallen human nature? Reflect, on this **Second week of Advent**, upon your calling in life to imitate the humility of John the Baptist. If you want your life to have true value and meaning, then use your life to elevate the Savior of the World to the greatest extent possible in the eyes of those around you. Point others to Jesus, make Jesus the central focus of your life and humble yourself before Him. In this act of humility, your true greatness will be discovered, and you will find the central purpose of life.

**CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE
CHRISTMAS EVE (24TH)**

4:00 pm - Westport
8:00 pm - Elizabethtown (NIGHT MASS)
CHRISTMAS DAY (25TH)

9:00 am – Willsboro
Please note that even though Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, you still have to fulfill your obligation of attending the Sunday Mass as per the weekend schedule and then fulfill your Christmas Obligation by attending one of the Masses scheduled above. For instance, those attending Mass in Westport on a regular weekend, participating just the Christmas Eve Mass on Sunday **WILL NOT** cover your weekend obligation. You will have to attend Morning Mass as well. If you have questions, please contact the Pastor. **Thank you.**

REMINDER:

It's strongly encouraged that you all receive the Sacrament of Penance prior to our celebration of Christmas. I would be available **Saturday Dec 23rd from 3:00-3:45 pm** for both E-Town and Westport Parishes and **Sunday Dec 24th in Willsboro after Mass until 12.30 pm in the Sacristy.** You could also make use of the Advent Penance Service scheduled in Port Henry on **Sunday Dec 17th at 2:00 pm.** Thank you for preparing a clean heart for the Child Jesus.



ST. PHILIP OF JESUS CHURCH

The book of Prayer Intentions has been returned by the Sacred Heart Statue. Once again, you can enter your prayer intentions and they will be prayed for.





Third Sunday of Advent

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT December 17, 2023

Monday, December 18

9:00am (SPJ) - Deceased Members of the Remancus & Perkett Families by Margaret Smith

Tuesday, December 19

11:00am (SE) Holy Hour with Litany of the Holy Family
12:00pm (SE) - The William & Ellen Keenan Family by the Estate

Wednesday, December 20

No Scheduled Mass

Thursday, December 21

12:00pm (SPJ) - Lucille Remancus - 24th Anniversary by Margaret Smith

Friday, December 22

12:00pm (SPN) - Msgr. Stephen Wojciechowski by the Estate

Saturday, December 23

4:30pm (SE) - Ken & Ellen Goodspeed by Linda M Flihan

Sunday, December 24

8:30am (SPN) - Msgr. Stephen Wojciechowski by the Estate

10:30am (SPJ) - Special Intentions for Sarah & Graham Waring by Susan Fahey

Anticipated Christmas Masses

4:00pm (SPN) - Intentions of the Celebrant

8:00pm (SE) - Intentions of the Celebrant

(SE) = St. Elizabeth, Elizabethtown

(SPJ) = St. Philip of Jesus, Willsboro

(SJ) = St. Joseph, Essex

(SPN) = St. Philip Neri, Westport

Readings for the Week of December 18

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 71:3-6, 16-17/Lk 1:5-25

Wednesday: Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-6/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, 4-8/Lk 1:46-56

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

Next Sunday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29 Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREES



Many thanks to all who participated in the Giving Tree project at our 3 Churches this year. Much joy will be brought to the children we have provided with gifts this Christmas. Sincerely, Bob & Carol Corbo and Susan Fahey.

Don't forget to patronize and thank our advertisers!

Last Weekend's Collection

Saint Elizabeth - Attendance: 26

Envelopes: \$427.25; Plate: \$60.00

Fuel: \$125.00; Christmas Flowers: \$20.00

Total: \$632.25

Feast of the Immaculate Conception: \$93.25

Retirement Fund for Religious: \$269.00

Saint Philip Neri - Attendance: 47

Envelopes: \$295.00; Plate: \$25.00

Fuel: \$120.00; Christmas Flowers: \$65.00

Total: \$505.00

Feast of the Immaculate Conception: \$65.00

Retirement Fund for Religious: \$144.00

St Philip of Jesus - Attendance: 50

Envelopes: \$1,400.00; Plate: \$80.00

Fuel: \$144.00; Christmas Flowers: \$40.00

Total: \$1,664.00

Feast of the Immaculate Conception: \$170.00

Retirement Fund for Religious: \$810.00

Holy Christmas: \$1,000.00

RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Our women and men religious offer gratitude. A sister shares, "I thank the Lord for all who give. I don't think we would make it without them." Thank you for giving to the Retirement Fund for Religious last week. Your donation makes a difference in the lives of elderly women and men religious. To learn more about how your gift helps: visit www.retiredreligious.org.

7 STEPS TO BRING PEOPLE BACK TO CHURCH

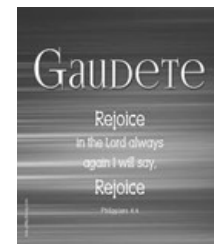
4. Engage in a conversation and listen. The first thing you want to do when you are looking at trying to bring someone back to the faith is to just ask a really great question like "Hey, can I ask you something. I wonder if you'd be willing to talk about something spiritual with me. I know you have mixed relationships with the Church, and I'd love to just hear why you're no longer with us. I just want to hear." And then listen. Do nothing but listen, attentively listen. Look at them in the eye, nod your head, and absorb like a sponge everything they say and don't respond with objections. Because the reason that they're giving is the valid reason of why they subjectively feel the Church has failed them. Fill up the greatest instrument of salvation and peace and joy and mercy in the world. This is their experience of why they believe that the Church that Jesus Christ founded has hurt them or has neglected them or hasn't met their needs or hasn't been with them. And so, you just have to listen and that might be the end of the conversation that day. "I really appreciate you sharing with me those feelings, those thoughts, I'll be praying for you or if you wish I could ask the Pastor (of the particular Church) to reach out to you and help you the ways you wish to be helped" One never knows. (To be Continued...)

Things to Ponder.....

Strive for excellence...

...not perfection!

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK...



For much of the Church's history, the Third Sunday of Advent is known as "Gaudete" Sunday. The traditions surrounding this Sunday go back as far as the fourth or fifth century, as does the season of Advent itself. Advent, our preparation for Christmas, was originally a forty-day penitential season like Lent. In fact, since it used to begin on 12 November (just after the Memorial of St. Martin of Tours), it was called "St Martin's Lent." "Gaudete Sunday" was the Advent counterpart to "Laetare Sunday," which marks the mid-point in Lent. On Gaudete Sunday, the season of Advent shifts its focus. For the first two weeks of Advent, the focus can be summed up in the phrase, "The Lord is coming." But beginning with Gaudete Sunday, the summary might be, "The Lord is near." This shift is marked by a lighter mood and a heightened sense of joyous anticipation. Liturgically, the colors lighten as well. The word "Gaudete" is Latin for "Rejoice." This celebration is a reminder that God who loves us is still in charge and that we await His coming not with fear but with tremendous joy. We read in the Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians, which reflects this joy: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

With Love and Prayers.... Fr. J.T.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

TODAY—12/17 Class #12 Who is the Holy Spirit?

(Meeting the Third Person of the Trinity)

12/24—NO CLASS

12/31—Class #13 What does the Holy Spirit do for me?

(Gifts for the Journey)



ST. PHILIP OF JESUS CHURCH

Helping Hands Are Needed

Volunteers will be welcome to come at 1:30pm on Dec 24th to decorate the church for Christmas. If you have any questions please contact Nancy Belzile 518-593-6024.



ALLIANCE TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Founded and Supported by U.S. Catholic Sisters

Join us to help strengthen initiatives which seek to educate the public about human trafficking and to identify and support victims of trafficking. See alliancetoendhumantrafficking.org for more information and how you can help.

RECOGNIZING THE ALMIGHTY

"I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." John 1:26-27 These are words of true humility and wisdom. John the Baptist had quite a following. Many were coming to him to be baptized, and he was gaining much notoriety. But his notoriety did not go to his head. Instead, he understood his role of preparing the way for "the one who is coming." He understood that he needed to decrease as Jesus began His public ministry. And, thus, he humbly points others to Jesus. It's also important to note that John said to the Pharisees that they "do not recognize" the one who is coming after him. In other words, those who are filled with pride and self-righteousness are blind to the truth. They cannot see beyond themselves, which is an incredible lack of wisdom. Reflect, this Third week of Advent, upon your calling to imitate these virtues of St. John the Baptist. Do you see your duty in life as one that is singularly focused upon putting your eyes on Christ and pointing others to Him? Do you humbly recognize that it is Jesus Who must increase and that you are nothing more than his unworthy servant? If you can seek to serve the will of God with complete humility, you also will be truly wise. And like through John, many will come to know Christ because of your holy service.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE (24TH)

4:00 pm - Westport

8:00 pm - Elizabethtown (NIGHT MASS)

CHRISTMAS DAY (25TH)

9:00 am - Willsboro

Please note that even though Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, you still have to fulfill your obligation of attending the Sunday Mass as per the weekend schedule and then fulfill your Christmas Obligation by attending one of the Masses scheduled above. For instance, those attending Mass in Westport on a regular weekend, participating just the Christmas Eve Mass on Sunday WILL NOT cover your weekend obligation. You will have to attend Morning Mass as well. If you have questions, please contact the Pastor. Thank you.

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**FOURTH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT
December 24, 2023**

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Monday, December 25 – Christmas Day
9:00am (SPJ) - Intentions of the Celebrant

Tuesday, December 26

No Scheduled Mass

Wednesday, December 27

No Scheduled Mass

Thursday, December 28

12:00pm (SPJ) - Jack & Betty Maloney
by the Maloney Family

Friday, December 29

12:00pm (SPN) - For all the Souls of the faithful
departed from the Westport parish

Saturday, December 30

3:30pm (SE) - Holy Hour with Litany of the Holy Family
4:30pm (SE) - Ken & Ellen Goodspeed by Linda M Flihan

Sunday, December 31

8:30am (SPN) - Pro Populo

10:30am (SPJ) - Deceased Members of the Carver Family
by John & Sue Carver

(SE) = St. Elizabeth, Elizabethtown

(SPJ) = St. Philip of Jesus, Willsboro

(SJ) = St. Joseph, Essex

(SPN) = St. Philip Neri, Westport

Readings for the Week of December 25

Monday: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96:1-3, 11-13/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14

Tuesday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3-4, 6, 8, 16-17/Mt 10/17-22

Wednesday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Thursday: 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-5, 7-8/Mt 2:13-18

Friday: 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-3, 5-6/Lk 2:22-35

Saturday: 1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-10/Lk 2:36-40

Next Sunday: Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3 **or** Sir 3:2-6, 12-14

Ps 105:1-6, 8-9 **or** Ps 128:1-5

Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19 **or** Col 3:12-21/Lk 2:22-40



Last Weekend's Collection

Saint Elizabeth – Attendance: 29
Envelopes: \$360.25; Plate: \$63.00
Fuel: \$115.00; Christmas Flowers: \$5.00
Total: \$543.25

Saint Philip Neri – Attendance: 35
Envelopes: \$1,520.00; Plate: \$97.00
Fuel: \$180.00; Christmas Flowers: \$10.00
Total: \$1,807.00
Retirement Fund for Religious: \$27.00
Holy Christmas: \$25.00

St Philip of Jesus – Attendance: 46
Envelopes: \$675.00; Plate: \$253.70
Fuel: \$95.00; Christmas Flowers: \$45.00
Total: \$1,068.70
Holy Christmas: \$50.00

7 STEPS TO BRING PEOPLE BACK TO CHURCH

5. Move the dialogue further. To move the dialogue down the road, to begin to ask and begin to offer answers to their longings so someone might say "I just didn't feel like I was spiritually fed." So, then share with them the gift and beauty of the Eucharist. To listen to what they said, when they said, "I felt like everybody was a hypocrite," and then to talk about the true compassion, mercy, and love that is present within the Church. They said that they were hurt by someone. We must address that hurt but then speak of the great heroes that are in the faith. So, this fifth step is the challenging step: it's to move the dialogue further by truly listening but then applying the truth to those areas of hurt in their heart. (To be continued... please refer to earlier bulletins for the previous steps)

REMINDER:

After our Christmas Masses, please help yourself with our Parish Calendar for next year along with Pens that has a Biblical Quote. Also at your disposal is the "**The Book of Mary**" This prayer book includes prayers to God, a prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe, a prayer from the Maronite liturgy, Marian antiphons, traditional prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary, a prayer for vocations, intercessions, the "Akathist Hymn," litanies, a novena, the mysteries of the Rosary, suggested biblical readings, and more! All these are available at the entry ways of all the Churches.

THOUGHTS ON EVANGELIZATION

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38

Mary said YES! She didn't have to. She could have said 'thanks but no.' She could have said 'when it is more convenient.' We can learn a lot from Mary's yes. How do we respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit? Are we even open to listen? How often do we say things like: someone should do something about that? Maybe that someone is you! Or perhaps we have an inspired idea for something, but out of fear or false modesty, we keep it to ourselves. Mary's yes was courageous. She trusted God's will for her. Perhaps today we can find a quiet place and ask Mary for help to know and say yes to God's will in our own lives. Have a joy-filled and blessed Christmas season!

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK...



Blessed Christmas everybody! Starting Sunday evening we rejoice in God's overwhelming love for us, expressed through his only Son Jesus. As John writes in his gospel, "And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth." The Advent Gospels have helped us to prepare for this day! We have been encouraged through the words of the prophets, John the Baptist, and the angel Gabriel, who said – "Do not be afraid." God knows that we yearn to be free, and thus sends Christ into our midst. Through Christ we are once again invited into the "fulness of life" – where hope and joy are realities, not dreams. Pope Francis tell us: "Christmas is joy." What is the joy of Christmas? It is the joy of our personal encounter with Jesus Christ! There is plenty of manufactured joy that is fleeting, especially during the Christmas season. The joy that we experience in the love of Christ, though, is eternal. It is not simply happiness in a thing or a moment. Our joy is the Good News of salvation in Christ, the Incarnate One, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Look at a scene of the Nativity of Jesus Christ. In that humble moment, God comes as an infant child for one reason and one reason only, for us to have the opportunity for salvation. As Saint John Paul II, wrote, "the mystery of the birth of Jesus that took place over 2000 years ago must be lived today and every day. The Word that found a dwelling place in and through Mary comes to knock on our hearts this Christmas and every Christmas, today and every day. This Christmas, while all the celebrations and festivities are taking place, let's stop, take some time, and ask ourselves, what am I remembering? What am I celebrating? Let the Light of Christ and Christ the Light bless our world and fill all our homes and families, this Christmas Day and always.

With Love and Prayers....  **Fr. J.T.**

**CONFIRMATION CLASS
TODAY—12/24—NO CLASS**

12/31—Class #13 What does the Holy Spirit do for me?
(Gifts for the Journey)



**ST. PHILIP OF JESUS CHURCH
Helping Hands Are Needed—
TODAY**

Volunteers will be welcome to come at 1:30pm on Dec 24th to decorate the church for Christmas. If you have any questions please contact Nancy Belzile 518-593-6024.

Don't forget to patronize and thank our advertisers!

From Bishop Terry R. LaValley...



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Peace Be with You! These words of greeting that we hear at every Mass are the first words that Jesus spoke to His disciples in Jerusalem when He appeared to them after His resurrection from the dead (Luke 24:36). Yes, our risen Lord, whose birth we now celebrate desires peace and unity among us.

Still another Christmas is upon us where we find our fractured world far from peace. Hopes for genuine reconciliation on the global scene seem so remote. Our national leaders become entrenched in their ideologies and our divided nation continues to limp badly. Many of us, particularly during the holidays, are painfully aware of fractures and division within our own families.

Enduring peace is a fruit of faith. Peace is communion with God. Through our own earnest efforts to grow in our relationship with Christ during this time of Eucharistic Renewal, we can become peacemakers who inspire others by our example. Such efforts might include: daily recitation of the Rosary; spending a Holy Hour of Adoration each week before the Blessed Sacrament for the innocent victims of violence; celebrating the Sacrament of Penance and seeking forgiveness for personal sins that work against peace and unity; making Fridays a day of Penance for Peace by abstaining from meat; taking the time to become more knowledgeable about those who suffer oppression; or including in your prayer intentions at Mass, a special petition for peace and healing in our families.

Our Church has a rich treasury from which we can draw to help us work toward a lasting peace. I pray that you and your family will avail yourselves of these treasures of our Church and make Christmas 2023 a time of renewed hope and grace.

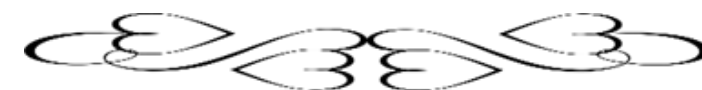
May the Prince of Peace lead you and your loved ones along the path of peace. With outstretched arms from the manger and then later from the Cross, God reaches out to us in peace and wants us to reach out to one another. Peace is God's gift to us; our gift to God is to make peace with one another. Let us join the angels in song: "Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth!"

A blessed Christmas and peace-filled New Year to you and your family!

Faithfully yours in Christ,
Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg

Things to Ponder.....

**Don't worry that you can't give your
kids the best of everything.
Give them your very best!**





**THE HOLY FAMILY
OF
JESUS,
MARY & JOSEPH
December 31, 2023**

Monday, January 1

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

12:00pm (SPJ) - Mary Brown & Husband by the Estate

4:00pm (SPN) - Holy Hour

with Litany of our Blessed Mother

5:00pm (SPN) - For the Souls of the Faithful Departed

from the Westport Parish

Tuesday, January 2 – Saints Basil the Great &

Gregory Nazianzen Bishops & Doctors

12:00pm (SE) - The William & Ellen Keenan Family

by the Estate

Wednesday, January 3

No Scheduled Mass

Thursday, January 4

St Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious

12:00pm (SPJ) - Special Intention for Rose Mary Rogers

by John O'Hara

Friday, January 5 – First Friday

St. John Neumann, Bishop

12:00pm (SPN) - Msgr. Stephen J Wojciechowski

by the Estate

Saturday, January 6 – First Saturday

12:00pm (SPJ) - *Communion Service*

Followed by First Saturday devotions (fourth month)

4:30pm (SE) - Pro Populo

Sunday, January 7

8:30am (SPN) - For the Souls of the Faithful Departed

from the Westport Parish

10:30am (SPJ) - Deceased Members of the Sayward

Family by Carolyn, Jane & Nick

(SE) = St. Elizabeth, Elizabethtown

(SPJ) = St. Philip of Jesus, Willsboro

(SJ) = St. Joseph, Essex

(SPN) = St. Philip Neri, Westport

Readings for the Week of January 1

Monday: Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67:2-3, 5-6, 8/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21

Tuesday: 1 Jn 2:22-28/Ps 98:1-4/Jn 1:19-28

Wednesday: 1 Jn 2:29—3:6/Ps 98:1, 3-6/Jn 1:29-34

Thursday: 1 Jn 3:7-10/Ps 98:1, 7-9/Jn 1:35-42

Friday: 1 Jn 3:11-21/Ps 100:1-5/Jn 1:43-51

Saturday: 1 Jn 5:5-13/Ps 147:12-15, 19-20

Mk 1:7-11 or Lk 3:23-38

Next Sunday: Is 60:1-6/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13/Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6

Mt 2:1-12

Things to Ponder.....

Give yourself an hour to cool off before responding to someone who has provoked you.

If it involves something really important, give yourself overnight.

Last Weekend's Collection

**Collection info not available.
It will be in the next bulletin.**

7 STEPS TO BRING PEOPLE BACK TO CHURCH

6. Invite them to an event. It might be a parish picnic, a parish workshop, it might be a social of some sort. It might be just a catechetical talk taking place in your parish. It might be saying "Hey, why don't you come to adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with me?" The reason why sometimes the best thing to not do is to invite them back to Mass is that sometimes Mass is the place where it can seem really uninviting. You don't know when to stand. You don't know when to sit. You don't know the words. You don't know the gestures. And then all of a sudden you feel like everyone is looking at you. So, sometimes it's great to invite them to a real introductory experience and in that introductory experience they realize there's a community, that there's hope, there's vitality. There's something great going on that they should be a part of. (To be continued...please refer to earlier bulletins for the previous steps)

THOUGHTS ON EVANGELIZATION

**Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/Col 3:12-21
or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19/Lk 2:22-40**

Family life is a journey of faith, and a connection between what has been and what is to come. In our Gospel today we see the Holy Family observing the tradition of faith to have Jesus presented in the Temple. On the day of his circumcision which was the sign of old covenant, Simeon declares to Mary that Jesus will be a sign that will be contradicted. Jesus will usher in the New Covenant of grace at the Resurrection. Together we pray our responsorial psalm: the Lord remembers his covenant forever. Through baptism each one of us enters into this New Covenant and we become children of God. We enter into the journey of faith and are called to build up the Kingdom of God by making Jesus known among the nations.

**THE FIFTH FATIMA REQUEST
MAKE THE FIVE FIRST SATURDAYS**

Next Saturday (Jan 5) will be the 4th of the series of 5 First Saturday devotions which will be held in Willsboro at St. Philip of Jesus Church.

"Look at my Heart, surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce me at every moment by their blasphemies and in gratitude. You at least try to console me and announce **that I promise to assist at the hour of death, with all the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, shall go to confession, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation to me.**"



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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK...



What was it like to live day in and day out in the household of St. Joseph? What was it like to have Jesus for a son, Mary as a wife and mother, and Joseph as a father and husband? Their home would have certainly been a sacred place and a dwelling of true peace and unity. But it would have also been so much more. The family home of Jesus, Mary and Joseph would have been, in numerous ways, just like any other home. They would have related together, talked, had fun, disagreed, worked, eaten, dealt with problems, and encountered everything else that makes up daily family life. Of course, the virtues of Jesus and Mary were perfect, and St. Joseph was a truly "just man." Therefore, the overriding characteristic of their home would have been love. But with that said, their family would not have been exempt from daily toil, hurt and challenges that face most families. For example, they would have encountered the death of loved ones, St. Joseph most likely passed away prior to Jesus' public ministry. They would have encountered misunderstanding and gossip from others. They would have had to fulfill all daily chores, earn a living, put food on the table, attend gatherings of family and friends and the like. They would have lived a normal family life in every way. This is significant because it reveals God's love for family life. The Father allowed His Divine Son to live this life and, as a result, elevated family life to a place within Trinity. The holiness of the **HOLY FAMILY** reveals to us that every family is invited to share in God's divine life and to encounter ordinary daily life with grace and virtue.

With Love and Prayers....  **Fr. J.T.**

CONFIRMATION CLASS

TODAY 12/31 Class #13 What does the Holy Spirit do for me? (Gifts for the Journey)

01/07 Class #14 Why have I been chosen? (Sealed and Sent in Confirmation)

AN ADVENTURE TO SPAIN & MOROCCO

April 6-19, 2024

Join Father Looby on a journey to Spain and Morocco April 6-19, 2024! This unforgettable trip will take you to the heart of Madrid, the historic cities of Córdoba and Seville, and the stunning Alhambra. Experience the passion and rhythm of Flamenco in Jerez de la Frontera and explore the vibrant blue streets of Chefchaouen. Journey through the spiritual centers of Fes and Rabat, and visit the Mausoleum of Mohammed V. In Marrakech, immerse yourself in the bustling markets and architecture, and enjoy a "Choice on Tour" experience. The trip will end with a visit to the iconic Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca. Pricing starts at \$4,949 per person for a double and \$5,849 per person for single occupancy. Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime adventure! For more information contact Mary McIntosh at Watertown AAA at 315-558-6372

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2024

New Year's Eve celebrations are staggered around the globe due to the different time zones, but we all have this in common, no matter where we live geographically - we welcome the end of one calendar year and the beginning of a new one. The manner of celebrating may differ, but we also share a common hope, that we can begin again. That hope can find its ultimate fulfillment by turning the One who can make all things new, Jesus Christ. **On the first day of the New Year Catholics celebrate the Feast of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.** They do so for a reason. This is no liturgical accident. She who beheld the face of the Savior invites us to hear the words of her Son and Savior Jesus Christ, "Behold I make all things new"! (Rev. 21:5) Jesus alone can fulfill the desire which is really at the heart of the New Year's celebrations, and help us, by His saving grace, to make them become reality. Mary is referred to as the Mother of the New Creation because the One whom she held in her womb is the only One who makes all things new! Mary was the first disciple, the prototype, the symbol of the whole Church. We who are members of the Church, the Body of her Son, are invited to emulate her Yes to the invitation of God and make it our own. We are called to make a place for Him within us and become bearers of Christ to the world. For He alone can make us new. Our choices make us become the people we become. In our choosing we not only have the potential to change the world around us, but we also change ourselves. In 2024, may we choose to live our lives in, with and for Jesus Christ. That is the way to turn those resolutions into reality and experience a real New Year. Wishing you and your loved ones a Blessed New Year 2024.

