

AUTHENTIC JOY IS FOUND IN JESUS!

Is. 61:1-2, 10-11; Ps. Lk. 1:46-50, 53-54; Thess. 5: 16-24; John 1: 6-8,19-28

Joy is more than merry-making, a fleeting laugh or a bit of euphoria. True joy retains composure, a peaceful smile in fortune or misfortune. It looks at mountains and oceans and sees God's imprint. It looks at teeming metropolises and sees an immense amount of good. Joy looks at Christ and knows He is there.

Roland Faley

The joy of a true believer is much more than merry-making or elation. It is a joy that is born out of one's total dependency on God's love. Such a joy is authentic, and can only be cultivated. It is not instantaneous. In other words, authentic joy is a learned response to God's will – it requires time, patience, faith and a great deal of effort. Mary, in her *Magnificat*, expressed this authentic joy when she said, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior..." Like a pregnant mother who quickly forgets the pain of childbirth after delivering her baby, a true believer shows authentic joy at all times. This joy wells up from the depths of our being to assure us that even in the midst of loss, pain, struggle or fear, God is near. Rejoice! No matter what your situation in life may be – no matter how difficult and problematic things may be for you during this holiday season; let your spirit find joy in God your Savior.

Today is *Gaudete* or *Rejoice* Sunday, when we pause to celebrate the central point of our Advent journey and the progress we have made so far. As a symbolic expression of authentic joy and happiness, today we light the pink (rose) Advent candle. Like the rest of the Advent candles, it represents the long time when people lived in spiritual darkness, waiting for the coming of the Messiah, the Light of the world. Each year in Advent people wait once again in darkness for the coming of the Lord: His historical coming in the mystery of Bethlehem – His final coming at the end of time – His special coming in every moment of grace. We do not often take time to rejoice and celebrate with joy the many good things God has bestowed on us. Today's readings exhort you and me to *Rejoice*. We should rejoice because the waiting and the long reign of darkness are almost over and Christmas is around the corner. Christ is here! He is here to bring joy to the world. He is here to bring joy to you and me.

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, "Rejoice heartily in the Lord! Rejoice always!" This is not an instant joy. It is a joy that cannot be obtained overnight. It is a joy that is found in service, thus, St. Paul further exhorts us to "pray without ceasing...and not to stifle the spirit." Christianity does not have the answer for all questions but because we are a people of faith, we should give thanks to God in all circumstances, and accept each experience as a will of God for us. Again, I say to you: Rejoice always and pray without ceasing. God is closer to you than you can ever imagine.

Like Isaiah, Christ has been anointed and commissioned to bring glad tidings and joy to the lowly and humble of heart. He is coming to heal the broken hearted – proclaim liberty to the captives – to set prisoners of conscience free. Christ is coming to set us free from sin and self-indulgence – to heal our sicknesses – to console those who have lost their loved ones – to give jobs to the jobless – to wipe away tears from every eye. Christ is coming so that our world may have lasting peace. It is only in Christ that you and I can find true and authentic joy.

Rev. Anthony Ita Bassey, MSP

The **CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE** for the
SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

is as follows:

- Sat., Dec 17 4:00 – 4:45 p.m.
- Mon., Dec 19 3:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Throughout the Archdiocese of New York, Advent Reconciliation Monday (Dec 19th) gives Catholics the opportunity to go to any parish for confession between the hours of 3 and 8 p.m.



CHRISTMAS MASSES

- Sat., Dec. 24 5 p.m. Christmas Vigil Mass
- Sat., Dec. 24 11:30 p.m. Christmas carols, followed by Midnight Mass.
- Sun., Dec. 25 8:30, 10, and 11:30 a.m.
- There will not be a 5 p.m. Mass on Christmas Day

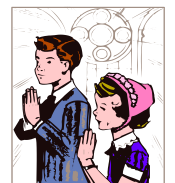


If you haven't already done so, please return your gifts for our **GIVING TREE** by **next Sunday, December 18th**. The gifts will be sorted and distributed Christmas week. We will be unable to accept additional gifts once the distribution takes place. God bless you and your families for your generous responses to all the charitable requests made of you at this busy time of the year!

Our **SOCIAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE** is having a special Food Drive to provide Christmas Baskets to some less fortunate brothers and sisters. Thank you for the many non-perishables you have donated to date. What we need to complete this year's baskets is candy, cookies, frozen pies, fresh (apples & oranges) or canned fruit, juices and coffee. Due to a lack of refrigerator / freezer storage space, we can only accept the frozen pies inside the Church vestibule before each Sunday Mass, December 17th & 18th.

Our Social Ministry Committee serves families throughout Yonkers. If any of our parishioners need to be included in their efforts, please call the Rectory Office this week.

CHILDREN'S MASS: Please make it a point to bring your child to our Children's Mass next Sunday. The 10 a.m. Mass will focus on our children. The Parish Children's Choir will sing the Mass. The children are encouraged to sit with their friends and classmates during the Mass.



If you or someone you know needs information on the Catholic Faith or have not been confirmed, please call the Religious Education Office for information on the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (R.C.I.A.) in our parish.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE (December 12)



When we reflect on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe we learn two important lessons: one of faith and one of understanding.

Missionaries who first came to Mexico with the conquistadors had little success in the beginning. After nearly a generation, only a few hundred native Mexicans had converted to the Christian faith. Whether they simply did not understand what the missionaries had to offer or whether they resented

these people who made them slaves, Christianity was not popular among the native people.

Then in 1531, miracles began to happen. Jesus' own mother appeared to humble Juan Diego. The signs - the roses, the uncle miraculously cured of a deadly illness, and especially, her beautiful image on Juan's mantle - convinced the people there was something to be considered in Christianity. Within a short time, six million native Mexicans had themselves baptized as Christians.

The first lesson is that God has chosen Mary to lead us to Jesus. No matter what critics may say of the devotion of Mexicans (and Mexican descendants) to Our Lady of Guadalupe, they owe their Christianity to her influence. If it were not for her, they would not know her Son, and so they are eternally grateful. The second lesson we take from Mary herself. Mary appeared to Juan Diego not as a European Madonna but as a beautiful Aztec princess speaking to him in his own Aztec language. If we want to help someone appreciate the gospel we bring, we must appreciate the culture and the mentality in which they live their lives. By understanding them, we can help them to understand and know Christ. Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Patroness of the Americas.

We are going to have prayers and hymns in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the church at 6:15 a.m. this Monday, December 12th. The 7 a.m. Mass will follow.



We will have *Lessons and Carols* - an **Advent Reflection** - this **Thursday, December 15th, at 7 p.m.** in the Church.



MEETING: This Monday, December 12th, the Holy Name Society will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the McManus Parish Center. All men of the Parish are welcome.

The first Sunday evening of each month immediately following the 5 p.m. Mass, our **YOUTH GROUP** meets in the McManus Parish Center. All youths age 13 and up are invited.

MIRACULOUS MEDAL NOVENA: Held after the 9 a.m. Mass on Mondays.

EUCCHARISTIC DEVOTION: Held the First Friday of every month at 1 p.m. Please join us when you are able.

DIVINE MERCY DEVOTION: Held the First Saturday of every month at 3 p.m. All are encouraged to participate.

RECITATION OF THE ROSARY: Join your fellow parishioners in praying the Rosary after the 9 a.m. Mass on weekdays and Saturdays.



LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

- The **budgeted** Collection for last Sunday was \$6700.00.
- The **actual** Collection for last Sunday was \$6580.80.
- Collection in support of our buildings & grounds totaled **\$1864.05.**

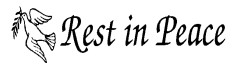
May God bless and reward all your sacrifices for the Parish!

REMEMBER YOUR BELOVED PARISH

Remember, "We make a living by what we earn. We make a life by what we share." Please remember our Parish in your Will as a lasting and loving gift to your parish family. Thank you!



Please pray for all the sick & the homebound members of our Parish, especially Ethel Thomas, Aldina Pereira, Rebecca Conroy, Alejandra Santander, Grace Raguso, Andy DeFabritis, Maryann Tolli, Maria Marte, Ed Carpenter, Barbara Rup, Jule Yaskovic, Rosalie Heit, Dolores Santamarena, Florence B. Swetz, Clare Yaskovic, Neil Caruso, Raymond Fitzpatrick, Sr., Deacon James Byrnes, Andrea Objay, Carmen Torres, John Esposito, Francis Farrell, Mark Baum, Frank Marra, Christine Bellino, Deacon Patrick Troy, Josephine Apuzzo, Edith Dugan, Gary Roth, Joyann Allan, Anna Rita Morgante, Lois Burton, Mary DeStefano, Dan Seratto, Mark Cianfaglione, Shawn Colon, Margaret Maccia, Nicole Ryan Betancourt, Anthony Spinner, Audrey & Alfred Falcone, Kathleen Hayes, Marge Muraik, Stan Buoninfante, Donna Vasconez, Mary Ann Berengur, Gene DelBene, Angelina Brusco, Mary Romanchik, Nicole Pisani-Frame, Louis Petrulo, Cynthia Swiatowicz, Rose Botcheller, and Silvia Georgi.



Please pray for the repose of the souls of all the faithful departed, especially Rose T. Eichel, Amadeu Amorim and Donald Swetz.

REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONES, LIVING AND DEAD

Consider giving a loved one or someone who has a special place in your life the graces associated with having a Mass offered on their behalf. You may have a thanksgiving Mass offered for your loved ones or for yourself on such occasions as birthdays, wedding anniversaries, etc.

Also, you may consider offering the Altar flowers, Altar bread and wine, Altar candles, or lighting the Sanctuary lamp for a week for your intention. Come to the Rectory Office, **Mon. - Fri., 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.** to make arrangements or to inquire about the availability of a particular date.

DONATE YOUR OLD CAR - HELP THOSE IN NEED RECEIVE TAX DEDUCTION OF \$500+

Cars for Help, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, is working to strengthen individual churches and various Catholic charities through vehicle donations. The process is fast, easy, and requires just a phone call (630 595-9272) or visit to their website at www.carsforhelp.com. You can donate a vehicle in any condition, even severely broken or crashed. **With mention of this bulletin, 25% of your vehicle donation proceeds will go directly to St. Bartholomew's Church.**

DECEMBER 11, 2011

Mass Intentions for the Week

Third Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 10 (Vigil Mass)

5:00 PM Albert Pragana +

Sunday, December 11

8:30 AM Oscar Starkenberg +

10:00 AM Joseph Prior +

11:30 AM Carl Dietze, Robert & Chester Rodesky +

5:00 PM Robert Josephson +

Monday, December 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe

7:00 AM Gloria Bassey +

9:00 AM Helen & Pete Pietrowski +

Tuesday, December 13

Saint Lucy, virgin & martyr

7:00 AM Frank Lutomski, Jr. +

9:00 AM A Special Intention

Wednesday, December 14

Saint John of the Cross, priest & doctor of the Church

7:00 AM Deceased Members of Bulduc & Savard Families

9:00 AM Patrick & Thomas Keane +

Thursday, December 15

Advent Weekday

7:00 AM Reuben Curnow +

9:00 AM Anthony Romano +

Friday, December 16

Advent Weekday

7:00 AM Carmela Vecchiarelli +

9:00 AM Nilda Navarro +

Saturday, December 17

Late Advent Weekday

9:00 AM Robert Giordano +

Saturday, December 17 (Vigil Mass)

5:00 PM Robert Tolli +

Sunday, December 18

Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:30 AM Ethel Castagnozzi +

10:00 AM Michael E. Albanese, Sr. +

11:30 AM For All the People of Our Parish

5:00 PM Henry Bergmann +

YEAR-END GIVING REMINDER

Did You Know ?



A few weeks ago we celebrated Thanksgiving, which is a holiday set aside for reflecting on our many blessings and celebrating our gratitude by sharing with family and friends. During Advent and Christmas many share the joy of Jesus' birth by sharing their blessings through gift giving to family, friends and loved ones. These final weeks of the year are also traditionally when people make special charitable contributions.

Thinking carefully about what to give – and when to give – can help magnify the impact of your gifts. With careful planning, you may discover that your gifts have more charitable impact than you thought possible, and can reduce your overall tax bill.

What to Give:

Cash – While all gifts mailed or otherwise completed by December 31st, qualify as tax deductible for 2011, gifts of cash, by check or through electronic transfer, are the most popular ways to give. When itemizing your tax deductions, it is possible to eliminate or reduce income tax on up to one-half of your adjusted gross income. Depending upon where you live, you may also enjoy state income tax savings.

Securities – A gift of stocks, bonds or mutual fund shares may yield additional tax savings if they are worth more at the time of transfer than their original cost. Gifts of securities are usually deductible from income tax at their full present-day value as long as you have owned them longer than one year.

Devalued Investments – If you purchased investments that are now worth less than what you paid, you can sell them and make a charitable gift with the proceeds. This creates a loss that you may be able to deduct from other taxable income and then again as a charitable gift. These combined deductions could total more than the current value of your investment.

Gifts From Retirement Plans – Gifting assets accumulated through retirement plans can be a practical way to support a charity. If you are over age 70 ½ you are required to make withdrawals from your IRA or other qualified plan. You can consider a charitable gift using all or a portion of your mandatory withdrawal amount.

Life Insurance Gifts – If you own a life insurance policy that is no longer needed, you may be able to donate the cash value and claim a deduction as well, such gifts may also provide future estate tax savings.

In the light of this information, I hope that you would seriously consider making a generous donation to your beloved Church of St. Bartholomew this Christmas.