

HOPE, NOT DESPAIR!

Jer. 33:14-16; Psalm 25:4-5,8-10,14; 1 Thess. 3: 12-4:2; Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

*The sight of our yellow bricks house,
The lowly mowed green, green grass of home,
The big, big strawberry tree I used to play under,
The smell of the slowly home brewed beer
In the over brimming tall glasses,
Tell me that I have arrived.*

*Across the river bridge, down—down the dusty road,
Under the twilight, water mirrors a shaky sky,
All has changed since I left home long time ago,
There runs my sweet Mary and children,
And to meet me is my pappa and mamma,
Slowly moving in walking canes,
And I am glad to be home again!*

This poem, **Nostalgia**, by Simon M. Maltou, reminds me of the nostalgia you and I often reminisce about. Recently, you may have heard someone say to you, "This country is not what it used to be! We are heading in a wrong direction! This present generation is a lost generation!" How interesting, we often wish we were still in those "good old days." Prophet Jeremiah, the author of today's first reading, lived during one of the most devastating times in the history of the Jewish people. He had witnessed how the Babylonians captured Israel, destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. He saw many of his fellow citizens enslaved and taken into exile in Babylon. He had to give hope to his people. Thus, his words today are that of hope, not despair. His hope is not based on human capabilities, but on God's faithfulness to His promises. He had the indispensable task of consoling the people and promising them that "The days are coming...the Lord will...fulfill the promise made to the house of Israel and Judah...In those days Judah shall be safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure..." He recalls the promise God made to His people during the reign of King David that He would bring a successor who would bring peace, justice and security to all the nations. The lesson to learn here is our hope should never be based on human capabilities but on God's - with Him nothing is impossible!

Like the Exiles, you and I often feel disappointed. Some have lost patience waiting for God's promise of deliverance to be fulfilled. They have waited too long for the country to be restored and to "move forward in the right direction. It is different from the time we were growing up." Sadly, this way of thinking might tempt us to deviate from God's law of peace, love and justice to behaving as though we were non-believers. Thus, St. Paul "exhort(s) you in the Lord Jesus that...you learned from us how to conduct yourselves in a way pleasing to God...so you must learn to make still greater progress." While you and I wait patiently for the Final Coming of our Lord, and while we prepare to celebrate His second Coming at Christmas, we must "Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life." Advent is a time of repentance, a change of attitude, if necessary.

Let this Advent season be for you and me a time to be filled with a renewed hope and assurance that "God will intervene to save His people." – a reminder for us to "Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man" at His Final Coming. It is a reminder that as Christians we must always live our lives in a permanent state of expectation and knowledge that "our permanent home is in Heaven, not here on earth."

Rev. Anthony Ita Bassey, MSP

PARISH NEWS



HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION: Next Saturday, December 8th, we will celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is a Holy Day of Obligation for all Catholics. The Masses are as follows:

- Friday, Dec. 7th Vigil Mass at 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Dec. 8th 9 a.m. & 12 noon

Next Saturday's 5 p.m. Mass will not fulfill the obligation for the Holy Day; it is Mass for the second Sunday of Advent.

ANNUAL RETREAT: Rosary Altar Society is organizing a one-day Retreat for women on **Saturday, December 8th**, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, **from 9 a.m.-3p.m.** The program, *Encountering Mary as a Model of Gospel Living*, includes attendance at the 12 noon Mass and concludes with the Exposition of the Eucharist and Benediction. Fee is \$20 - includes breakfast and lunch. All women within and outside the parish are welcome! Please call Alice Jacob at 845-363-1088 or Dolly DeRosa at 914-969-6575 to make reservations by this Wednesday, Dec. 5th.

ST. BART'S SHARING COMMUNITY MEAL:

This Thursday, December 6th, we will be preparing our Sharing Community Meal. Please bring your ziti or dessert to the Rectory. The door will open at 6:45 a.m. For information on participating in this important effort, please call the Rectory Office.



Sacrament.

HOLY HOUR: This Friday, December 7th, is First Friday. We will have our monthly Holy Hour at 1 p.m. Especially during this season of preparation, Advent, all are invited to spare an hour and come to adore Jesus Christ Who is truly present in the Blessed

CHILDREN'S MASS: Please make it a point to bring your child to our Children's Mass next Sunday and the rest of the Sundays in December. 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 together during the Mass.



**DR. SCOTT HAHN FILM
ST. JOSEPH'S SEMINARY
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14TH AT 7:30 PM**

Dr. Scott Hahn, Ph.D., the noted biblical theologian, author, lecturer, founder and president of the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology, will open the seminary's *Year of Faith* public lecture series. His topic will be "Vatican II, the Bible & the New Evangelization." A free will offering to St. Joseph's Seminary is deeply appreciated. Call Cheryl Duda (476-6676) for reservations.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



OUR PARISH GIVING TREE

In keeping with the true spirit of Christmas, we have the opportunity to share our resources with several charities who serve the disadvantaged (Immaculate Conception's Needy Families, Westchester Living Center, and Richmond Hill). Each of these charities has specifically requested that we focus on gifts that address the practical needs of their clients. Please take an ornament(s) from the tree in the back of the church. **It is important that this ornament, indicating gender and gift specific information, be securely attached to your wrapped package.** Please return all packages to the church by Sunday, December 16th. Thank you for your continued support in this very special season of giving.

OUR CHRISTMAS "WISH-LIST"



This is a season of giving and sharing! In the spirit of Thanksgiving and Christmas, some of our parishioners have requested that I provide an opportunity to the parishioners to donate certain appropriate liturgical items needed for our sacred worship and devotions. Such items can be donated in thanksgiving and/or in memory of the donors' deceased loved ones. Thus, I have put together a "Wish List" for this coming Christmas:

1. 9 Advent/Christmas Wreaths @ \$110 each
2. Chrismatory set for Holy Oils @ \$350
3. Chrismatory carrying case @ \$200
4. 2 Wall Holy Water Fonts @ \$535 each
5. 1 Holy Water Pot and Sprinkler @ \$660

Please, note that any of the above items, except the wreaths, when donated in thanksgiving or in memory of your loved ones shall be appropriately engraved without any extra cost to you. The intentions for the wreaths shall be published in the bulletin of the 4th Sunday of Advent.

Thank you for always responding when I call upon you to step forward and assist our parish in any way possible. Please call the Parish Office (914-965-0566) if you wish to donate any item.



FUNDRAISER: Our Youth Group invites you to bring your camera to capture a **visit with Santa**, stock up on goodies at their **Bake Sale**, or purchase some **small Christmas gift items** next Sunday, December 9th from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the McManus Parish Center. The proceeds of this fundraiser will go toward their World Youth Day trip to Brazil in 2013.



TITHING - GOD'S PLAN FOR GIVING

November 27, 2011

Adults' Contribution	\$4768.90
Children's Contribution	\$145.05
Last Year's Total	\$4913.95

November 25, 2012

Adults' Contribution	\$6410.85
Children's Contribution	\$130.80
This Year's Total	\$6541.65

- The Thanksgiving Day Collection totaled \$2028.25.

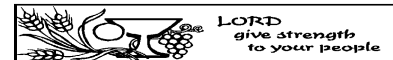
"The true purpose of tithing is to secure not the tithe, but the tither; not the gift, but the giver; not your money, but you... for God."

Thank you to all those who are participating in our *tithing program*! May God bless and reward your sacrifices! For those who are not yet tithing, I encourage you to please give it a prayerful thought. Thanks!

Next Sunday, December 9th, there will be a second collection to help support the retired religious of the New York Archdiocese.

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, Andy DeFabritis, Maria Marte, Barbara Rup, Jule Yaskovic, Rosalie Heit, Florence B. Swetz, Clare Yaskovic, Neil Caruso, Raymond Fitzpatrick, Sr., Deacon James Byrnes, Andrea Objay, Carmen Torres, John Esposito, Frank Marra, Deacon Patrick Troy, Josephine Apuzzo, Edith Dugan, Gary Roth, Joyann Allan, Anna Rita Morgante, Lois Burton, Mary DeStefano, Mark Cianfaglione, Shawn Colon, Margaret Maccia, Nicole Ryan Betancourt, Anthony Spinner, Audrey & Alfred Falcone, Kathleen Hayes, Marge Muraik, Stan Buoninfante, Donna Vasconez, Gene DelBene, Nicole Pisani-Frame, Louis Petrulo, Cynthia Swiatkiewicz, Jimmy Maimone, Robert Mirsky, Steve Oddo, Roseann Mercandetti, Louis Brusco, Josephine Daniele, Jennifer Dorsey, Valerie Riccardi, Fatima Panik, Joanne Moscarello, Marian Fletcher, Anna Bonacci, Minerva Hernandez, Paula Parente, Barbara Olivieri, Carol Swetz, Bridget O'Malley, Anna Brucculeri, Peggy Clevenberg, Gerald Mazzerese, Jr., Patricia Keane, Louis Milone, Joey Bastardi, Carol Stola, Amada Ortiz, and Karin Aprea.



The **ALTAR BREAD & WINE** for this week is donated in loving memory of Harold Smith, Jr. by Dolores DiPaolo.

DECEMBER 2, 2012

*Mass for the
Intentions  for the
Week*

First Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 1 (Anticipated Mass)

5:00 PM Albert & Eugenia Pragana +

Sunday, December 2

8:30 AM Adolf Steffens +

10:00 AM Ted Bajek + +

11:30 AM Deceased Members of Zucconi Family +

5:00 PM For All the People of Our Parish

Monday, December 3

Saint Francis Xavier, Priest

7:00 AM No Intention

9:00 AM Edythe Lutomski +

Tuesday, December 4

Advent Weekday

7:00 AM No Intention

9:00 AM John Verno +

Wednesday, December 5

Advent Weekday

7:00 AM No Intention

9:00 AM Harry Brewus +

Thursday, December 6

Advent Weekday

7:00 AM No Intention

9:00 AM Deceased Members of O'Leary & D'Aquila Families

Friday, December 7

Saint Ambrose, Bishop & Doctor of the Church

7:00 AM No Intention

9:00 AM Raymond, Jr., Sofia & Raymond Shannon, Sr. +

Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary (vigil Mass)

7:30 PM Angelina Brusco +

Saturday, December 8

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

9:00 AM Deceased Members of Lucchetti & Capuano Families

12:00 Noon Lena Castaldo +

Second Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 8 (Anticipated Mass)

5:00 PM Josephine Giuriceo +

Sunday, December 9

8:30 AM For All the People of Our Parish

10:00 AM Joseph Prior +

11:30 AM Anna & Anthony Faracco +

5:00 PM Giacomo Bilancia +

New Beginnings in this “YEAR OF FAITH”



We are mindful that the beginning of Advent calls us to a renewal of our understanding of The Paschal Mystery. Recently theologians from the Catholic Church met with their Orthodox counterparts to discuss in a concrete way the manner in which we celebrate it, especially on Sundays. In a joint statement they asked us to recognize “the theological significance of Sunday ... [in]...r rebalancing our lives.” They go on: “For Christians, Sunday, the Lord’s Day, is a special day consecrated to the service and the worship of God. It is a unique Christian festival.” Historically, this has always been true but “as we look at our fellow Christians and our society, we observe that everyone is short of time and stressed. One reason is that many of us have forgotten the meaning of Sunday and with it the practices that regularly renewed our relationships and lives ... Sunday has become less a day of worship and family and more like an ordinary work day. Shopping, sports and work squeeze out the chance for a day of worship or rest in the Christian sense ... Sunday is more than just the first day of the week. In our faith we see how it is the ultimate day of new beginnings ...”

In a society in which Black Friday begins early on Thanksgiving night disrupting the intimacy of family it would be unrealistic to believe that we will ever return to the day when only the small deli or pharmacy would be open for last minute emergencies. But it is possible that we can influence others by our witnessing to the importance of religious experience and family living by our changing focus where necessary. Unfortunately, we must attest to realities of our lives in which certain activities are required. But they should be the exception and not the rule. After Mass, let families enjoy a wonderful breakfast discussing perhaps the homily. Sunday dinner together should be a requirement in which no one is in a rush to become a zombie for the NFL. In our Archdiocese there are so many places to visit of significance: museums, parks, and theatres. Did your family ever visit Ellis Island? Have you ever been to the Marian Shrine in Haverstraw? What about going to the Walkway across the Hudson? How empty our lives are, if we only know where the malls are.

Particularly at this time of year, let us not forget the reason for the season: As we recall Christ’s incarnation let us remember we must be prepared for His Second Coming. Brighten the lives of others by inviting them to come to Mass with you. They will be eternally grateful.

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PREPARING FOR THE END!

Businesses large and small take a great deal of time preparing end-of-year reports. These analyze where progress has been made in certain areas and where further growth is necessary. They also examine where certain practices are outmoded and others are counterproductive in achieving corporate and personal goals. As a faith community and as individual believers, last Sunday we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ Our King which marked the final week of the liturgical year. It is appropriate, therefore, for us to take stock of our spiritual lives, especially in the context of the Year of Faith. Using as the most important criteria the Holy Father’s call for all of us to enter into and nourish an “intimate, personal, public, and communal relationship” with Christ we can begin our reflection with a question as to how many times do we turn to God in prayer.

Do we begin and end our day in praise of the Presence of the Divine in our lives? Do we say the Rosary often? Do we spend time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament? Do we participate in *Lectio Divina* reading and meditating upon the Scripture? Is the Sacrifice of the Mass a priority every Lord’s Day? Do we encourage our family and friends to join us in raising up our hearts and minds to God? The faith we love must reveal itself in acts which give flesh to our hopes and prayers. Do we leave our comfort zone and serve the Lord in practical ways? Do we welcome the opportunity to serve the unwed mother, the homebound senior, or the seriously ill? Of course, these sacramental events must be furthered by our participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

As Cardinal Dolan shared in the Synod of Bishops and at the recent meeting of the American Bishops stated: “We kneel in the Sacrament of Penance because we are all profoundly sorry for our faults and our sins, serious obstacles to the New Evangelization. But then we stand forgiven, resolute to return to the work entrusted to us --- as evangelizers of the Gospel of Mercy.” As Advent nears, let us acknowledge that is a great start to move away from our past weaknesses to a greater unity with God and man.

