



HOLY CROSS PARISH NEWS

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Advent: Continuing our Journey in Hope



“Hope is not a concept, it is not a sentiment... it is not a heap of riches! Our hope is a Person, it is the Lord Jesus whom we recognise living and present in us and in our brothers and sisters.”

“The Virgin Mary is the ‘Way’ that God Himself prepared in order to come into the world. Let us entrust to Her the salvation and peace awaited by all men and women of our time.”

~ Pope Francis

Pope Francis reminds us that Advent is a time of hope. As we enter into the season of Advent, it's easy to get caught in the whirlwind of Christmas preparations, whether shopping, baking, party planning or somewhere in between. We know that Advent is a season of conversion for the heart. Let's spend more time this season praying, reflecting, and preparing our hearts for Christ's coming.



Hope



I like Advent hymns because I feel like the melodies and tones bring me to warm places even though I live in the Alaskan frozen land. I guess the minor key in the hymns reminds me of the warmth and peace of Christmas. In addition, the plaintive sound of the Advent songs makes me humble and prepares me to receive the Incarnation of Jesus coming as the Light. As we await the Light over darkness in the Advent season, we are asked to reflect on a warm theme of Advent: Hope.

Advent hope is not something that we simply expect or desire. This kind of hope makes us passive, awaiting something good to happen without doing anything. We often say, “I hope you are doing well,” or “I hope you get well soon.” This kind of hope is a mere wish that requires no actions or works. I am reminded of a Bible verse in the book of James, “If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,’ but you do not give them the necessities of the body...what good does it do?” When I say Advent hope, I am not talking about hope that you distance yourselves and only wish the person well.



Advent hope is exactly opposite. It is more a proactive expression of faith that empowers us to live in Christ and to devote our whole being to God’s love despite trials and difficulties that keep us from HOPING in the Eternal Light. We don’t merely have Advent hope by excitement and anticipation of the season. We are asked to grow deeper in our relationship with God and be more aware of God’s presence in the breaking of the bread and the people around us. In order to be awake and aware, we need to take care of our spiritual life and do charitable works to give people the Advent Christian HOPE. And then we are ready to celebrate Christ’s coming as the Light in Christmas.

+ Peace in Christ, Fr. Andrew Lee



The Pope’s Monthly Intention for December 2018

Evangelization—In the Service of the Transmission of Faith

That people, who are involved in the service and transmission of faith, may find, in their dialogue with culture, a language suited to the conditions of the present time.



Baptisms

(February - November 2018)



February 18, 2018

Virtues Ozcar Galamgan Marquez
Son of Oswald and Lovelyn

April 21, 2018

Elizabeth Asteria Narvasa
Daughter of Gjay and Jennifer

May 6, 2018

Sofia Chanel Jonnaleia Kauffman
Daughter of Robert and Jonna

May 12, 2018

Penelope Elise Fritz Salgatar
Daughter of Gian and Karen

May 27, 2018

Elijah John Reyes
Son of John and Bianca

August 26, 2018

Juvy-Anne Jasmine Hermano Tamarra
Daughter of Jeffrey and Juvith

September 16, 2018

Julien Leonard Houk
Son of Joshua and Anastasia

September 22, 2018

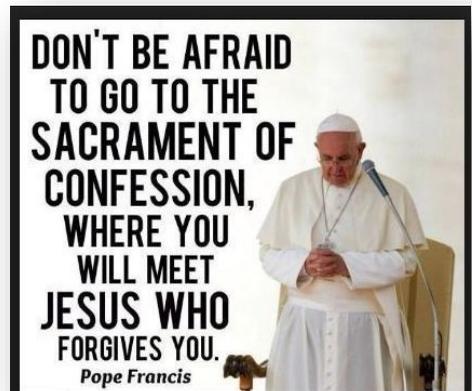
Bryan Joseph Cyr
Son of Bryan and Diana

October 12, 2018

Calliope Victoria Tunilla
Daughter of Jason and Mackenzie

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

On Thursday, December 20, 2018 our Parish Advent Reconciliation Service will begin at 7 p.m. Father Andrew, Father Ben and Father Luz will be available for Confessions.





A Time to Reflect



One of the things I like to watch is the year in review around New Years. Many shows show the top news stories from the past year. Some stories I remember and some I do not. It is always amazing to me to look back on all that happened and consider the lives of the notable people who passed away during the year.

As we begin the season of Advent and the start of a new church year I found myself reflecting on all that has happened in my life this past year and entered into an examination of conscience for the preparation for the coming of our Lord at Christmas.

As I sat down, I first gave thanks to God for the life he gave me. We forget at times God is the author of life and it is only by His will at all that we are here, alive and able to serve Him. At first this seemed a monumental task. There were so many rabbit holes that I could go down. In the end it came down to this. Did I love God with my whole heart, mind, body and soul? Did I love my neighbor as myself? How can I strive this year to put God and others first and be a servant of all like Christ?



As I went down the path it was hard to think about the times when I failed to love God and my neighbor but as my failures were revealed I gave thanks for being able to leave my sins at the feet of Jesus in the confessional and look forward to putting God and neighbor before myself in the new church year.

On Thursday, December 20, 2018 – I invite you to attend a Penitential service here at Holy Cross - 7:00PM and just as the Gospel tells us in Matthew 6:21, Jesus states, “For where your treasure is, there also will be your heart.” With prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit we all can be transformed into a servant like Christ.

~ Deacon Bill Tunilla

“Never let a day pass without looking for the good, feeling the good, praising, appreciating, blessing and being grateful. Make it your life commitment, and you’ll stand in awe of what happens in your life.”

- Rhonda Byrne



A Purpose-Driven Life



As Christians, we believe in eternity. We believe that there is more beyond life here on earth. But, as human beings, we are dealing with our daily circumstances, both wanted and unwanted. Along the horizon are challenges that are, sometimes, way too hard to outdo that give us frustrations, depressions, and indifferences. This sometimes results in our faith faltering and we question God for letting this happen. We start to question our abilities and if we cannot find answers, we tend to question our faith and God's loyalty. These are life scenarios. These are not new to us.

Everyone, however perfect life is, will always have that part of life when something unbecoming happens and this usually starts our faith to stumble down. Human as we are, we say this is pretty normal. We cannot be perfect, and no life is ever perfect. We may not like to experience these things, but these exactly define the essence of Christianity in every christian's life.

Advent is a glitter of hope telling us life is still amazing despite all odds. It reminds us how much living a purpose-driven life will actually drive us towards a glorious life ahead. Life is a journey that needs a distinct destination, and this defines the purpose of our existence. **WE DO NOT BELONG ON THIS TEMPORAL EARTH!** If we did, then this life would have been useless and will be in vain forever. But this is not what life really is for!

We know why we are here - and that is, to spread God's love through other people especially those who need it the most. It can be easier said than done, hence this is a challenge for us Christians to go out and be counted as one of those who make a difference in someone else's life. Every little way counts.

We cannot change the world but meaning to do **SOMETHING** in even one person's life, is **SOMETHING** that may seem of little value to you, but could be **ONE GREAT SOMETHING** in that person's life.

~ Marife Anino

Established by Pope Francis in 2017, the Second World Day of the Poor on Sunday, November 18, 2018 took its theme from Psalm 34: "This poor one cried out and the Lord heard." In Rome that day Pope Francis celebrated Mass with the poor in St. Peter's Basilica followed by lunch with around 3,000 poor men and women inside the Vatican's Paul VI Hall.

Let us pray: "Lord open our hearts that we may hear the cries of the poor as You do and respond as Your hands and feet on earth".



Christmas Packages



Diane and I spent a few days, just before Halloween, visiting our daughter Kara, her husband Kelly, and their two children, Maya and Hugh, in Rochester, NY. I got to watch Maya play field hockey on a cold blustery night and we saw Hugh perform in “Newsies”. Kara & Kelly were married here at Holy Cross Parish twenty years ago - it was the famous Finnegan-Finigan wedding. (They both changed their names and now go by “Finnigan”!)

We enjoyed the bonus of the Fall colors and picking out of pumpkins at the pumpkin farm for decorating. It was a wonderful family experience, in spite of the rain and the cold, spending time with two of our eight grandchildren. The “holidays” - Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas (actually a “Holy Day”) - are great family days. But they are also times when we should think beyond our immediate family. This is especially true at this time of year, as we begin the Advent Season and look forward to the coming of the Christ Child at Christmas.

Did you ever notice how some little, apparently insignificant thing, can trigger a bigger thing in your mind? That’s what happened to me on this visit, and is thus the subject of this article.

Our son-in-law has always worked with the homeless, beginning as a Jesuit volunteer at Bean’s Cafe prior to meeting our daughter. He now is the Director of Operations at the House of Mercy, a residential and day facility for the homeless in Rochester. What caught my attention was a Christmas poster from the House of Mercy. It



was a picture of a woman carrying a stack of Christmas presents. The stack is so

high that it starts at her waist and goes way over her head, almost twice as tall as she is, so much so that you can't even see the woman, except for her legs.

It is a striking poster, showing the fun of Christmas - gift giving. Who wouldn't like to see all those presents coming into their house, being carried by mom or dad? The caption of the poster, however, is "During the holidays, it can be hard to see the needs of the poor." It is a clever play on words. Clearly, the woman cannot "see" anything. It is a wonder that she can walk and carry all those packages/presents. Christmas is certainly a time for giving and receiving presents. But our gifts should not obscure our vision concerning the other aspects of this Holy Day.

Concern for the poor was/is a constant message of Jesus' teaching. Think of Jesus' humble beginnings here on earth. Although the Son of God, he humbled Himself to become the Son of Mary, and like us in all things except sin. He was born in a stable - the Nativity Scenes we put on display in our homes and churches commemorating this Blessed Event. As an infant he was visited by the "poor" shepherds and the "rich" Magi. In His public life he called all to follow Him, rich and poor alike. He continues to call us in the same way this Advent Season.

How do we answer this call of Christ? All of the recent popes have urged us to be aware of the poor in our midst. Saint John Paul II, the pope for most of our lives, spoke of the "Preferential Option for the Poor". Pope Benedict XVI, in "*Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love)", stated, picking up on the theme of "Love of Neighbor", "Our neighbor is anyone who needs our help and whom we can help." And Pope Francis has said, "To change the world we must be good to those who cannot repay us."

So during this Advent Season, consider doing your part to "change the world". Certainly buy presents for your loved one, but don't over do the spending. Instead, put down the big pile of packages and notice those in need around you. Give a gift to someone who cannot repay you.

~ Deacon Bill Finnegan



Pope Francis's Secrets to JOY



1. Live and let live.
2. Be giving of yourself to others.
3. Proceed calmly in life.
4. Have a healthy sense of Leisure.
5. Take Sunday off for family.
6. Create Dignified Jobs for Young People.
7. Respect and take care of nature.
8. Stop being negative.
9. Respect the beliefs of others.
10. The Call for Peace must be shouted.



The Mystery of the Mass *Must Be Revealed*



Recently, I spent 6 weeks teaching the Confirmation students about the Mass using a program from Ascension Press called Altaration. As part of their formation it has become clear to me this year, that all youth and adults need to dive deeper into the meaning of the Mass. Thankfully with Ascension Press and Word on Fire, we have acquired two solid programs that completely cover the importance of the Mass and why we celebrate with our community every week. In this Advent newsletter I will answer two commonly asked questions to hopefully get you deeper into the mystery and majesty that is The Mass.

Is it really a sin to miss Mass?

A catholic friend of mine once offered his opinion on why the Church requires us to attend Mass every Sunday: “Well, of course the Pope is going to say that missing Mass is a sin. He wants to be sure people keep going and putting money in the basket.” This was his explanation as to why the Church teaches that missing Mass intentionally and without good reason (e.g. sickness, family crisis, work) is a serious sin. Leaving my friend’s rather cynical and obviously false view aside, why is it a serious matter? The Mass is our source of eternal life; it is the fountain of grace for our dehydrated and self-absorbed souls. Like a grape that withers and dies when cut off from the lifeblood of the vine, so we slowly wither – dying a slow death from sin – when we are not in regular communion with the grace and life of God’s vine. So emphatic was Christ of our need for the Father that he used this analogy of the vine and the branches. John 15:1-6

God doesn’t have to love us as a Father; he freely chooses to do so. Nor did he have to give us His Only Son to die for our sins and grant us the possibility of eternal life. God’s creativity is outdone only by His generosity. So rather than asking if it’s a sin or why do we have to go to Mass, we should be asking: “Is taking an hour a week to worship the God who has blessed us with everything we have worth it?” “Is having an hour set aside to let God love us while we try to love him worth it?” “Do we think created things are more important than the one who created them?”

Everything we have is a gift from God – every blessing in our lives, every person, talent, ability and interest – every good gift. The Mass is the greatest gift God gives us. When we come to be more aware of our own sins and our own need for a Savior, the more clearly we see the Mass as not merely an obligation but an opportunity not to be missed.

Why should I stay until the end of Mass?

Communion is not the end of Mass. In fact the time of meditation and prayer following the Eucharist should be one of the most important moments for us. The Eucharistic meditation provides us with unrivaled intimacy and spiritual communion.

In addition, the final blessing after Communion confers grace upon us that we will need during the week to live out the challenges the Scripture readings and homily have just given us. The recessional song at the end of Mass is a wonderful , final opportunity to raise our voices and celebrate God’s greatness and love. Out of respect, we should wait to leave until the priest and ministers have left the sanctuary and processed out. There is also a rich symbolism here of “following Christ out into the world”.

In short, if we really understood what is transpiring at Mass, we would embrace every minute and every chance we have to stay in God’s Eucharistic presence, surrounded by our fellow Christians. Do those who regularly leave Mass early really understand and appreciate the great gift they have just been a part of? Our prayerful example of remaining until after the priest and ministers have left the sanctuary will hopefully be an example to others, inspiring them to take a second look at their own practice of leaving early and, instead, choose to join us in remaining.

~ Theresa Austin,
Dir. Of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

"We Christians need to take part in Sunday Mass because only with the grace of Jesus, with his presence alive in us and among us, can we put into practice his commandment and, in this way, be his credible witnesses. Just like a plant needs sun and nourishment to survive, every Christian needs the light of Sunday and the sustenance of the Eucharist to truly live."

~ Pope Francis



"I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" Lk. 1:38



January 22 to 27, 2019

Each World Youth Day has its own special prayer that is shared by pilgrims around the world before, during, and after the event itself. **Let us join with the pilgrims in prayer.**

WYD 2019 Panama Pilgrim Prayer:

Merciful Father,

You call us to live our lives as a way of salvation. Help us to recall the past with gratitude, to embrace the present with courage and to build the future with hope.

Lord Jesus, our friend and brother, thank you for looking upon us with love. Let us listen to your voice as it resonates in the hearts of each one with the strength and light of the Holy Spirit.

Grant us the grace of being a Church that goes forth with vibrant faith and a youthful face to communicate the joy of the Gospel. May we help to build up the kind of society we long for, one where there is fairness and fellowship.

We pray for the Pope and the bishops; for young people; for all those who will take part in World Youth Day in Panama and for those who are preparing to welcome them.

Our Lady of Antigua, Patroness of Panama, help us to pray and live with generosity like yours: "I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38).

Amen



The Music Of Our Lives



Have you ever noticed that young people are always listening to music? It was the same with us when we were young. It is the music we hear as teenagers that makes such an impact on our lives. Last May, there were ads on the radio to buy a CD of the music of the year of your high school graduation. So whatever our age, listening to the music of our youth brings back many memories and may even make us feel young again.

Patriotic music stirs our hearts. We just attended a band concert and it was so uplifting. We go to dances with 40's, 50's and 60's music. Deacon Bill is always listening to Doo Wop music when he is working around the house. A friend said, "Bill Finnegan never left the 50's!"

Liturgical music is very much a part of our lives as Catholics. It may be the tune or the words that speak to us. I will always think of Fr. Ernie when I hear the "Woman at the Well". Another Pastor's favorite was "How Great Thou Art". "Ave Maria" is my favorite. Church music soothes us. It helps us focus on the Mass and our faith and love of God.



It is the time of year for Christmas songs. Hymns like "Silent Night" or "O Holy Night", or even a popular song like "White Christmas", can put us in the Christmas spirit. This music can bring back fond memories of Christmases past, and can keep us focused on the "Reason for the Season". Let us keep the Baby Jesus in mind as we prepare for His coming while listening to the music of our lives.

~ Diane Finnegan

The Editor's Corner

Today another Advent Journey begins as we prepare to celebrate the Coming of Jesus at Christmas. Special thanks to the writers for their reflections and my assistant Ivy who patiently waits for my 'editing' and then skillfully puts it together. Again a theme emerged in this process and can be found in the World Youth Day prayer: "**recall** the past with gratitude...**embrace** the present with courage...**build** the future with hope" enabling us, with Jesus as our Hope, to continue our Life Journey as the Vibrant Stewards described on the final page. Blessings ~ Sister Joan



A Stewardship Parish

Author Unknown



My parish is composed of people like me.

I help make it what it is.

It will be friendly, if I am.

It will be holy, if I am.

Its pews will be filled, if I help fill them.

It will do great work, if I work.

It will be prayerful, if I pray.

It will make generous gifts to many causes if I am a generous giver.

It will bring others into its worship, if I invite and bring them.

It will be a parish of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, of compassion, charity, and mercy, if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these same things.

Therefore, with the help of God, I now dedicate myself to the task of being all the things that I want my parish to be. Amen.

Spend a few minutes each day of Advent with your children in the Holy Heroes Advent Adventure.

Go to: www.holyheroes.com



Fun, faithful
& FREE activities
for ages 5-12 for
every day in Advent.
Scroll down to learn
more and sign up.
Did I mention it's
FREE?!