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**“THERE HAS BEEN NONE GREATER  
THAN JOHN THE BAPTIST.”**

MATTHEW 11:11



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*Mass Intentions*  
 for the Week  
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**THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
 DECEMBER 15, 2019**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14**

*Mass of Anticipation for 3rd Sunday of Advent*  
 4:00PM Lorraine Kane—Memorial

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15**

*The Third Sunday of Advent*

- 7:30 AM Peter & Gloria Monti—Memorial
- 9:00 AM Joyce Honour—4th Anniversary
- 10:30AM Kate Bedard—10th Anniversary
- 5:00PM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 16**

*Advent Weekday*

- 7:30AM Albert Edward Hyde—Birthday Remembrance

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17**

*Late Advent Weekday*

- 7:30AM Diane Bessette—Memorial

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18**

*Late Advent Weekday*

- 7:30AM George C. Jamieson—Birthday Remembrance

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19**

*Late Advent Weekday*

- 7:30AM Msgr. William I. Varsanyi—Memorial

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20**

*Late Advent Weekday*

- 7:30AM Thomas L. Ucci—Memorial

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21**

*Late Advent Weekday; St. Peter Canisius, Priest & Doctor of the Church*

- 8:30AM Jeannine Light—9th Anniversary

*Mass of Anticipation for 4th Sunday of Advent*

- 4:00PM Michael Alix—Memorial

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22**

*The Fourth Sunday of Advent*

- 7:30 AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church
- 9:00 AM Michael Monteleone—Birthday Remembrance
- 10:30AM Mariakutty Peter—Memorial
- 5:00PM Mary & Bernard Falchini—Memorial





Dear Parishioners:

On this Third Sunday of Advent, the Church gives us a very particular mandate: Rejoice! And, during these days before Christmas Day, it seems that there is joy all around us. There are Christmas parties, cookie exchanges, gatherings of friends, and sending Christmas cards.

And yet, one spiritual writer reflecting upon Advent makes an observation that should give us pause: *“For the greeting card sentiment and sermonic rhetoric, I do not think that much rejoicing happens around Christmastime, least of all about the coming of the Lord. There is, I notice, a lot of holiday frolicking, but that is not the same as rejoicing.”*

Without Advent, the only thing to do is to “rush” Christmas, with celebrations without much purpose and little meaning. That turns Christmas inside out and can even make it depressing. It is celebrating a kind of “Superficial” Christmas that G. K. Chesterton, the great Catholic apologist and writer, described as *“joy without a cause.”*

We are still in the midst of Advent and so we celebrate both the coming and the presence of Christ in the world. As Catholic disciples this demands a certain response on our part—conversion and living lives worthy of his Kingdom. However, as Catholic disciples we also rejoice because Christ is present among us, even in the midst of all the problems, trials, and tragedies that seem to overwhelm our world today.

What we prepare to commemorate and celebrate at

Christmas has actually happened: God is in our midst. This truth calls for more than some sort of vaguely defined “cheery” disposition or “holiday frolicking” for Catholics. Rather, the radical joy that this Gaudete Sunday calls for is grounded in the confidence that, although all hell might be breaking out all around us, the Lord has come—and will come—to set us free.

The name Advent itself means “the approach” “the coming” —of the Lord and of nothing less than our Lord. We wait in joyful anticipation for that coming. Yet we know we live in an age of instant gratification and guaranteed quick delivery. It is precisely because we do not expect great things that we want them to come so quickly. Advent reminds us that our want of those little and unimportant things to come immediately is no substitute for the patient anticipation of the great glory that is about to be revealed at Christmas.

Patience is a virtue precisely because it conditions the mind and the will to anticipate that for which the world was made. Advent calls for a joyful patience and to truly wait for Christmas. As Chesterton suggests: *“There is no more dangerous or disgusting habit than that of celebrating Christmas before it comes.”*

While Advent requires patience it does not require the strict kind of penance and mortification of Lent. It is rather a season of somber and sober, yet joyful, anticipation of Christ’s coming. The very last line of the Bible cries out, “Come Lord Jesus!” The Lord

wants us to anticipate nothing less than Himself with patience and joy. During this Advent Season one of the best ways to prepare for a joyful Christmas Day is to make a good Confession of our sins. Confessions at OLM are available every Saturday afternoon and each Monday night. On December 23rd, the Monday before Christmas, we will have two priests available for two hours of Confession from 6pm until 8pm. So rejoice in the Lord, rejoice in his mercy and forgiveness and rejoice that he comes to save us!

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI reminds us: *“True joy is not merely a passing state of mind or something that can be achieved with the person’s own effort; rather it is a gift, born from the encounter with the living Person of Jesus and, making room within ourselves, from welcoming the Holy Spirit who guides our lives. Those who have encountered Christ in their own lives feel a serenity and joy in their hearts that no one and no situation can take from them.”*

I thank the many parishioners who continue to be so generous in supporting the Our Faith, Our Future Capital Campaign. If you have not yet made a pledge, please make your pledge today! We need every parish family to support this vital effort for our future.

Rejoice in Advent! Be well. Do good. God Bless. Go Pats! *Oremus pro invicem!*

*Father Healey*



**Is our celebration of Christmas pagan?**

One of the charges against the celebration of Christmas alleges that its pagan origins compromise its celebration. Interestingly for much of American history Christmas was outlawed by our country because it was considered idolatry. Even today the allegation that Christmas is merely a pagan holiday is used to discredit Christianity. The Christian writer G.K. Chesterton once said: "to complain that Christmas feasts or processions or dances are of pagan origin is like saying that our legs are of pagan origin." For Chesterton and for the Catholic Theology, whatever is good, holy and just may not only be preserved but fulfilled. Indeed the Incarnation, which we celebrate at Christmas, is the greatest affirmation that God wants to redeem creation, not destroy it.

Unfortunately what many celebrate today as Christmas does not even have pagan roots. C.S. Lewis wrote an interesting article called "A Christmas Sermon for Pagans," in which he distinguishes between the true pagans or Heathens of old and modern people in Britain who have ceased to be Christians. To confuse these categories, Lewis says, is "like thinking... a street where the houses have been knocked down is the same as a field where no house has yet been built." Real pagans differ from post-Christians firstly in that they were actually religious. "To [the Pagan] the earth was holy, the woods and waters were alive." Secondly, they "believed in what we now call an 'Objective' Right or Wrong," that is, that "the distinction between pious and impious acts was something which existed independently of human opinions." Finally, pagans, unlike "post-Christian man," had "deep sadness" because of their knowledge that they did not obey the moral code perfectly. To compensate for this shortcoming, the pagan developed a wealth of ceremonies to "take away guilt."

The post-Christian world views nature as a "kind of machine for us to exploit." The world is no longer enchanted and so the old rituals and traditions lose their magic. Lewis provides an interesting solution: "... we shall have to set about becoming true Pagans if only as a preliminary to becoming Christians... For (in a sense) all that Christianity adds to Paganism is the cure. It confirms the old belief that in this universe we are up against Living Power: that there is a real Right and that we have failed to obey it: that existence is beautiful and terrifying. It adds a wonder of which Paganism had not distinctly heard—that the Mighty One has come down to help us, to remove our guilt, to reconcile us."

# Weekly Collection

**December 8, 2019**

Weekly.....\$11,840.00  
 EFT.....\$1,743.00  
**Total=\$13,583.00**

Outreach.....\$329.00  
 Retired Religious .....\$4,106.00

If you have been away on vacation or visiting another parish, we kindly ask you to please make up your missed budget envelopes. We depend solely upon your weekly support to meet our weekly parish expenses.

**Thank You for Your Support!  
 May God Bless Your Generosity!**

**Please remember Our Lady of Mercy Church in your will or estate.**



**Our Faith, Our Future Goal=\$2,000,000**  
**Pledged To Date=\$1,140,907**  
**Total Number of OLM Parishioners=2,120**  
**Total Number of Pledges=262**  
**Average Pledge=\$4,356**



We offer our prayerful condolences to the family of **Madeline S. Gagnon** whose Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at OLM last week.



Religious Education  
NEWS

• **Sunday, December 15th:** Only Grades 1 and 2 have morning class. Grades 3-5 do NOT have morning classes as they are to make their Advent Confession at 6:00pm that evening. Please report to the school for an Advent Meditation and then we will go to the church for Confession. Parents should plan on picking up their Grade 3-5 children after 6:30. Grades 6-8 will make their Confessions during the regular class time.

• **Sunday, December 22nd:** No RE Classes for Christmas Break

Christ will bring Hope Love Joy Peace  
O come, O come  
Emmanuel  
**Advent**

**PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD,  
MAKE STRAIGHT HIS PATHS**



Outreach  
Update

• **OLM Bereavement Group** meets **Thursday, December 19th** at 4:00PM in Mercy House. All those experiencing grief or loss are welcome to join us for prayer, discussion and support. • **This is the Christmas Support Group Meeting** please RSVP to Doug at 884-4410 if you are planning to attend. • **For more information about OLM Outreach**, please contact OLM Outreach Director, Doug Green at 884-4410 or by email at outreach@olmparish.org



• **Monday, December 16:** OLM School Confessions at 1:00pm

• **Tuesday, December 17:** School Mass at 8:15am;

• **Friday, December 20:** Middle-School Breakfast at 8:30am; Advent Prayer Service; Early Dismissal at 11:30am for Christmas Break

• **Volunteers needed:** Any parishioners interested in judging our OLM Middle School Science Fair on January 16, 2020 please contact Dr. Deb Husak at dhusak@olmschool.org We are in need of those with a background in the sciences.

[www.olmschool.org](http://www.olmschool.org)

*Striving to be Saints & Scholars!*

**Vocation Retreat for Young Men**

Our Lady of Providence is hosting its annual overnight retreat for men who are seniors in high school and older on January 10-11, 2020. The retreat director is Monsignor John Darcy, Pastor of St. Margaret's Church in Rumford. If you are discerning a vocation to the priesthood, or know of a man who you think would appreciate an invitation, please contact Fr. Brian Morris at the Office of Vocations by phone at (401) 331-1316, by email at rev.brian.morris@gmail.com, or visit CatholicPriest.com.



**OLM  
Rosary Makers  
Monthly Workshop**

Tuesday, December 17,  
2019

Tuesday, October 8th  
9:30 - 11:30 AM

**OLM Cryroom**

*Materials and instructions provided.  
Join us in making rosaries for the missions.*

## 3rd Sunday of Advent



**T**he traditional name for the Third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday. The name comes from *Gaudete in Domino semper*, Latin for “Rejoice in the Lord always,” opening words of today’s entrance antiphon (brief scriptural text that is usually replaced by an opening hymn).

Because one of Advent’s tasks is to prepare us for Christ’s return at the end of time, this season once had a penitential quality similar to that of Lent. Gaudete Sunday with its rose vestments and relaxation of austerities softened the period and gave a glimpse of its fulfillment just as its counterpart, Laetare Sunday, did at the midpoint of Lent.

Viewed now as a season of devout and joyful expectation, Advent retains very little of its old penitential focus, but we still have the option of using the liturgical color of rose today as we rejoice that Christmas is near, and Christ’s second coming is nearer than it was yesterday.



*This bulletin insert was written by Marion Eagen, a liturgist and musician in the diocese of Scranton, Pa. © 2002 Resource Publications, Inc., 160 E. Virginia St. #290, San Jose, CA 95112, (408) 286-8505. All rights reserved.*



### OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH EAST GREENWICH, RHODE ISLAND CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR’S SCHEDULE

#### CHRISTMAS CONFESSIONS

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 23**

6:00PM - 8:00PM • Two priests available

#### *Christmas Mass Schedule*

#### CHRISTMAS EVE

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24**

Vigil Mass of Christmas at 4:00PM

Concert of Christmas Music at 11:30PM

Mass of Christmas Night at 12:00AM Midnight

#### CHRISTMAS DAY

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25**

Masses of Christmas Day at 7:30AM, 9:00AM & 10:30AM

*No 5:00PM Mass on Christmas Day*

#### SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

*New Year’s Eve*

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31**

Vigil Mass at 4:00PM

*New Year’s Day*

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2020**

Masses at 8:30AM and Noon

