

**November 19, 2023**

***From Father Kirby...***

Happy Sunday, Team Grace! As this portion of Ordinary Time begins to come to a close, I pray everyone has received abundant graces of renewal in their discipleship to the Lord!

As a reminder, November is our devotional month of the dead. Please be sure to pray, fast, and offer sacrifices for your beloved dead.

In the narthex this weekend is my new book, [\*A Year With the Popes\*](#). Although the book was written some time ago, its message of continuity is very timely. Every pope comes and every pope goes. The Church is the Lord's. It does not belong – nor depend – upon any one pope. We place our hope in Jesus Christ and rely on the workings of the Holy Spirit. Please take a look at the book and, if you think it can help you, consider getting a copy.

Some things happening at the parish that I'd like to highlight this week:

We are currently working on our website. Our first task is to find a new company to design and carry the website since we want professional service and quality design. As soon as this task is complete, we'll then begin to move things over and develop our current content. Please be patient, knowing that work is being done and we look forward to our website being more of a resource to everyone as soon as possible!

As announced the last two weekends, we are moving forward with our work on the Front Hill. In order to keep the original design, we needed an additional \$325,000. I'm happy to announce that \$300,000 was collected or pledged! The remaining \$25,000 can be taken from our Christmas collection. And so, we're good! We are able to move forward with the original design. *I'm immensely grateful to our many donors who have made this possible!*

Our Thanksgiving Day Mass is at 11:00 AM this Thursday, November 23. Confessions will precede the Mass and be heard from 10:00 – 10:40 AM.

Our next prayer outreach at the local abortion facility is this coming Saturday, November 25, at 8:30 AM. The facility is located at 3220 Latrobe Drive, Charlotte, NC. All parishioners are encouraged to come and join in our peaceful, prayerful

protest against abortion. This is the last month the parish will provide a bus. Please stop by or contact the Front Office to reserve your seat.

Next Sunday, November 26, after our 11:00 AM Mass, we'll have a Gingerbread Family Fellowship in the Parish Hall. Everyone is welcome! The event replaces our previous Gingerbread Day. This new event is more focused on the Fall and includes gingerbread snacks for everyone!

Next weekend, November 25-26, and the following weekend, December 2-3, we'll be singing the *Lourdes Ave, Maria*. The tune is very similar to the one we're familiar with, but there are some differences. We'll be singing the *Lourdes Ave* since we'll be using that hymn for our Immaculate Conception Procession on December 7. It's my great hope that everyone will come and participate in the evening Mass and Procession.

Please note our [calendar for the program year](#) 2023/2024 is posted on our parish website. The calendar describes all our events and programs for the year.

Some other future events I'd like to highlight:

Our 11:00 AM Sunday Mass on December 3 will include a children's homily and a blessing of the Baby Jesus. All children are asked to bring the Baby Jesus from their home creches for the blessing. The parish will also give out little Baby Jesus statues to every child.

Saint Nicholas will be visiting our parish on December 3! Children are asked to come to the 11:00 AM Mass and to leave their shoes along the hallway before Mass. Good Saint Nick will visit during the Mass and fill shoes with goodies! Parents are asked to put a note about allergies in the shoes of their children. After the Mass, the children are encouraged to grab their candy and come to the Parish Hall with their parents for fellowship.

I encourage everyone to continue in their thirty-three-day preparation for Consecration to Jesus through Mary. The Consecration can be made *before* all the Masses on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception (December 8). Please come to Mass about five minutes early if you plan on making (or renewing) the Consecration.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is on Friday, December 8. It is a Holy Day of Obligation. The Immaculate Conception is the patronal feast of the United

States, as well as the patronal feast of our parish. Our Mass times are: Thursday, December 7, at 4:00 PM, 5:30 PM, and 7:00 PM. Friday, December 8, at 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM. Confessions are available after all the Masses except the 7:00 PM Mass. The 7:00 PM Mass on December 7 is our parish's Anniversary Mass. The Mass will be followed by a beautiful candlelight procession and crowning of Our Lady. *All parishioners are highly encouraged to come to the evening Mass!*

Some general announcements for the good of the parish:

I'd like to encourage every household of the parish to register for [FORMED](#). This is a free digital platform with good Catholic, family-friendly content. I also want to strongly encourage every household to join [EWTN OnDemand](#), which is another free digital platform whose content is supportive of our faith.

As a reminder, our parish staff can be readily reached via email. [Here is the staff directory](#).

I was hoping to host a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Rome this coming June. With the situation in the Middle East, such a pilgrimage is not possible. In its place, however, I'll be hosting a pilgrimage to the [Great Shrines of France](#). The tour will include Lourdes, Lisieux (Saint Therese the Little Flower), the holy places of Paris, Nevers (Saint Bernadette), Paray-le-Monial (Sacred Heart Apparitions), Lyon, LaSalette, Ars (Saint John Vianney), and the Beaches of Normandy with a Mass at the US Foreign Cemetery. This is not a parish pilgrimage, but I wanted to make the parish family aware of the opportunity. The pilgrimage is a personal pilgrimage of mine and many people from different parts of the United States will be participating in it. All are welcome!

More updates next week! Oremus pro invicem (let's pray for one another)!

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Radio Show: *Of First Importance*, [RadioMariaUS](#)

Weekly spirituality column: <https://cruxnow.com/author/fr-jeff-kirby>

Daily Reflections available through [MorningOffering.com](http://MorningOffering.com).

As we approach December, here are some links to help with Advent customs and traditions:

Information on the “O, Antiphons” can be found [here](#). The Jesse Tree can be found [here](#). The Advent wreath can found [here](#). The Las Posadas and the Aguinaldos can be found [here](#).

Here are some Advent Songs that were put together by our Director of Sacred Liturgy: [People Look East](#); [On Jordan's Bank](#); [Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates](#); [O Come, O Come Emmanuel](#).

Before Advent, we'll post all of these resources (and some others) on our parish website.