

**December 10, 2023**

*From Father Kirby...*

Happy Sunday, Team Grace! We continue our journey through Advent, trying and working to be prepared for the coming of the Lord Jesus!

As we observe the sacred season, I want to once again recommend and highlight the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours. It's a blessing and a consolation to be united with the entire Church as we seek the arrival of the Lord Jesus.

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

As a reminder, if you missed the Holy Day of Obligation on December 8, you must go to sacramental Confession as soon as possible.

This Monday, December 11, I'll be making pastoral visits to the various care facilities in our territorial parish. It's a joy to be with the residents and to pray and celebrate the sacraments with them. Please remember them in your prayers.

This Monday evening, December 11, at 7:00 PM, we have our monthly Stations of the Cross for those who have left the Faith. All are welcome to come and walk the stations for the return of our loved ones.

My mother's surgical date has been changed. The surgeon now wants to wait to do the surgery in January. And so, I'll now be here on Tuesday, December 12, and we will have Confessions and daily Mass.

During our daily Mass this Wednesday, December 13, we'll have a Blessing of Eyes in honor of Saint Lucy. All are encouraged to come to Mass and receive this saintly blessing.

Our landscape architect was hoping to start the work on our Front Hill and columbarium in November. There is a slight delay, compliments of Lancaster County, but things are moving forward now. It's our hope to see the work begin this month.

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:

As is our custom here at Our Lady of Grace, our Meditation Hymn at the 11:00 AM Mass on the Third Sunday of Advent, December 17, will be the German rendition of the hymn, "Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming." We are very grateful for the German culture within the Church!

On Wednesday evening, December 20, at 7:00 PM, the children of the parish are hosting our annual Live Nativity. All are invited to come for the Live Nativity and stay afterwards for hot chocolate and cookies.

The campus and church will be closed on Thursday, December 21, so staff can celebrate Christmas with their families. Many of our staff work on the holy day and this time is very important for them and their families. There is no public Mass on this day and all parish events are suspended.

This year Christmas is on a Monday. Christmas is a Holy Day of Obligation. This means we get to participate in two Masses! One for Sunday and one for Christmas! Here is our Christmas Mass schedule: Sunday, December 24, at 4:00 PM, 6:00 PM, 8:00 PM, and 10:00 PM, and Monday, December 25, at 10:00 AM.

As is our custom, the parish campus and church will be closed for the few days after Christmas Day. There is no public Mass and all events are suspended from December 26-28.

The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, January 1, falls on a Monday this year and the Church has suspended it as a Holy Day of Obligation. There is no obligation for Mass on January 1.

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.

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

Daily Reflections available through [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 be 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](#); [Lo How a Rose](#); [The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns](#); [People Look East](#); [O Come, O Come Emmanuel](#); [Hark a Herald Voice is Calling](#); [Wake Awake for Night is Flying](#); [Emmanuel](#); [Watchman, Tell Us Of The Night](#); [Awake, Awake and Greet the New Dawn](#); [Behold! Behold He Cometh](#); [O Come, Divine Messiah](#).