

December 1, 2024

From Father Kirby...

Happy Sunday, Team Grace! Today, we begin the sacred and penitential season of Advent. This is the time in which we prepare for the coming of the Lord Jesus! Our preparation is threefold: we prepare for this glorious Second Coming, we prepare as he comes to us in the sacraments, and we prepare to celebrate his First Coming among us at Bethlehem on Christmas Day. Our preparation is marked by prayer and penance. It's important that we don't anticipate the festivity of Christmas. We are in a time of preparation.

This weekend in the narthex, we have sign-ups for our Nocturnal Adoration this Friday-Saturday, December 6-7. Please be generous with your time and give an hour of prayer to the Lord and your parish family.

In contrast to Advent, we see the rise of Secular Christmas. *Please be cautious and do not fall into its snares.* Secular Christmas has nothing to do with our Faith or with Advent or with the holy Nativity of our Savior. [Here's a link](#) to last year's homily on this subject.

For our 11:00 AM Mass this Sunday, December 1, the children of the parish are encouraged to leave their shoes in the hallways. Rumor has it that Saint Nicholas will be visiting during the Mass and filling shoes with candies and sweets! *Parents, please put a note in the shoe of any child that has an allergy.*

Also, for our 11:00 AM Mass this Sunday, December 1, families are asked to bring the Christ Child of their home Nativity sets. During the Mass, we'll have a children's homily, and the Christ Child will be blessed. Children will also receive a little Christ Child for their own devotion.

Some things happening at the parish this week:

As the month of November ends, I'll be taking the All Souls envelopes to the chapel in the rectory. I'm humbled to receive the names of your beloved dead, and I assure you of my prayers and private Masses for them throughout this liturgical year.

As we enter the Advent season, the Church covers herself in penitential violet (purples), she suspends the *Gloria* at the beginning of Mass, subdues the music, suspends any use of flowers, and observes a greater silence.

In addition, here at the parish as a local custom, we reduce our altar candles from six to two.

The First Sunday of Advent is the beginning of a new liturgical year, which means we now move from Saint Mark's Gospel to Saint Luke's Gospel. We will be with Saint Luke, the beloved physician, for the next year. I encourage you to read and study Saint Luke's Gospel in your own devotional reading of the Bible.

For our Advent homily series, I'm going to preach on the Universal Call to Holiness. I'll mainly use Vatican II's [*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium*](#), #39-42.

Our parish Advent Wreath is in the narthex. The devotional wreath is used as a reminder to us of the movement of time toward the coming of the Lord.

While there are many other Advent customs and traditions, the best way to observe the Advent season is by participating in daily Mass (as you're able) and regularly praying the Liturgy of the Hours (which is the orange book that is mailed to you every month). Please note that we have Morning Prayer (Lauds) prayed publicly Tuesdays – Thursdays at 10:00 AM and Solemn Vespers on Saturday evenings at 4:00 PM. All are welcome!

This Tuesday, December 3, we have our next Saint Paula Luncheon for widows. Please note that the time of the meal has changed. The meal is now at 1:15 PM in the Parish Hall. For this meal, Kathy Schmugge, our diocesan Senior Director of Discipleship, will be visiting the parish and giving the group a talk on following the Lord Jesus. All widows of the parish are invited!

Starting this Wednesday, December 4, the parish will start having devotional prayers to Saint Joseph at 9:30 AM. The prayers will be offered at the statue of Saint Joseph inside our parish church. After the devotional prayers, we'll have Morning Prayer (Lauds) at 10:00 AM. All are welcome!

This Friday, December 6, we have our monthly First Friday Mass at 7:00 PM. Confessions are heard after Mass until Midnight. Nocturnal Adoration follows Mass.

This Saturday, December 7, is our monthly First Saturday observance: Confessions from 9:00 AM–10:30 AM; Rosary at 10:30 AM; the Healing Mass with the

Anointing of the Sick at 11:00 AM; and, our intercessory prayer teams and our parish brunch after the Mass. All are welcome!

I'm very happy to announce again that we've launched our new website! Please visit www.gracewepray.org and check it out! Thank you to Ryan Kubic and the staff who worked so diligently to facilitate the design and structure of the new website!

M.J. Wallace, the Pastor's Coordinator, will now serve as the new editor of our electronic bulletin. I'm grateful to Suzanna Allen for editing the bulletin the past year. If you have any items you want considered for our website or bulletin, please email them to M.J.: mjwallace@charlestandiocese.org.

The parish is happy to host a pilgrimage to the holy places of Saint Augustine, Florida, from January 14-16. [Here's a flyer](#) with more information.

This year, the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception falls on a Sunday of Advent. When this happens, the solemnity is moved to Monday, December 9. For the last several decades, when this transfer has occurred, the obligation is dispensed. The Church has clarified this practice, however, and has now explained that the obligation is still binding. *And so, the Immaculate Conception on Monday, December 9, is a Holy Day of Obligation.* Our Mass schedule here will be 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM, and 7:00 PM.

I'd like to encourage everyone who is preparing to make (or renew) their Consecration to Jesus through Mary to continue to fight the good fight and persevere in your preparation!

Personal Consecrations to Jesus through Mary will be made before each Holy Day Mass on December 9. Please be early to Mass if you plan to make (or renew) your Consecration.

Confessions will be heard after the 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM, and 11:00 AM Mass on the Holy Day.

The 7:00 PM Mass on Monday, December 9, is also our Anniversary Mass as a parish. We'll be eight years old as a parish! After the Mass, we'll have a candlelight procession and crowning of Our Lady's statue at the entrance of our campus. After the crowning, we'll have a fellowship at the statue. *All are invited!*

The [calendar for the program year 2024/2025](#) is posted on our parish website. The calendar describes all our events and programs for the year. This is posted for your reference and information.

Some other future events I'd like to highlight:

I'm happy to announce that our Bishop will be visiting the parish on March 1, 2025. The Bishop will be visiting to confer Confirmation on the young people of our parish. Any young adult, who is in the 7th grade and above, can petition for Confirmation. The petition is made to me as your pastor. As a help in this process, I ask that anyone who wishes to petition for Confirmation, please reach out to Carrie Scibelli, our Liturgy Coordinator. Carrie will walk you through the paperwork and process. She can be reached at: cscibelli@charlestandiocese.org. Please note: *If a young person is not regularly attending Sunday Mass, and if they are not living the Christian way of life, then they are not yet ready for Confirmation.*

I'm happy to announce that the parish has its own YouTube channel. [Here's the link](#) to the channel. I encourage all parishioners to subscribe to the channel and keep up to date on parish Bible studies, homilies, and other spiritual resources.

Some general announcements for the good of the parish:

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has called for a Jubilee of Hope in the year 2025. The Ordinary Jubilees are held every twenty-five years. The last Jubilee was in the year 2000. The next one after 2025 will be in 2050. Many of us may not be around here for that one! For the Jubilee of 2025, I'll be hosting a pilgrimage to Rome and the holy places of Italy in March. [Here's some information on the pilgrimage](#). If you're able, and you think it can help your discipleship, please consider coming on this pilgrimage!

I'm also happy to host a [pilgrimage in the footsteps of Saint Paul](#) (Greece and Turkey) in June. I'll post more information on this pilgrimage in the months to come.

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

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

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