



Mass Intentions

Sat., December 10

Sir 48:1-4, 9-11; Ps 80:2ac, 3b, 15-16, 18-19; Mt 17:9a, 10-13

4 pm ... Fr. Bob Couto (2nd Anniv.) by Kerri Stanley

Sun., December 11

Third Sunday of Advent

Is 35:1-6a, 10; Ps 146:6-10; Jas 5:7-10; Mt 11:2-11

7:30 am ... Our Parish Family

9:30 am ... Lucille M. Kelley by the Kelley family

5 pm ... Barbara L. Parkhurst by Virginia Kelly

Mon., December 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe

2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; Jdt 13:18bcde, 19; Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47

12 pm ... Vicki Wolf by Lillian LaRoche

Tue., December 13

Saint Lucy

Zep 3:1-2, 9-13; Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-19, 23; Mt 21:28-32

12 pm ... CMC & NH Spine Institute and Staff by Lionel & Lillian Coulon

Wed., December 14

Saint John of the Cross

Is 45: 6b-8, 18, 21b-25; Ps 85:9ab, 10-14; Lk 7:18b-23

12 pm ... Charles R. Clark, Jr. by Anne Clark

Thur., December 15

Is 54:1-10; Ps 30:2, 4-6, 11-12a, 13b; Lk 7:24-30

8:30 am ... Deceased members of the Comenski family by Teresa Greene

Fri., December 16

Is 56:1-3a, 6-8; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 7-8; Jn 5:33-36

6 pm ... Pope Francis by Mikki Margaritis

Sat., December 17

Gn 49:2, 8-10; Ps 72:1-4ab, 7-8, 17; Mt 1:1-17

4 pm ... Charles Richard by Simone Richard

Sun., December 18

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-6; Rom 1:1-7; Mt 1:18-24

7:30 am ... Mary Marszal by Richard Bienvenue

9:30 am ... Our Parish Family

5 pm ... Louise Marcoux (18th Anniv.) by Diane Gallant

Weekly Collection

Weekend of December 4, 2016

Regular Offertory \$2,995.75
Make-Up Offertory 377.00
Loose Offertory 608.50
Online Parish Giving 320.00
Total

\$4,301.25
Online Giving Stewardship \$ 15.00
Holy Day \$ 10.00

Food Pantry \$ 277.93



The Angels are here! Our Christmas Angel Tree appeal has begun. You will find angels hung on the tree

located at the back of the church. We appreciate your assistance in helping to make Christmas brighter for those in need. Please return items as soon as you can and leave them under the tree. Thank you for your support!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sun., December 11

9:15 am ... Religious Education—Parish Hall

2 pm ... Advent Lessons & Carols

Mon., December 12

6:30—8 pm ... Youth Ministry

7—8 pm ... Food Pantry

Tue., December 13

12:30 pm ... Parish Nurse

Wed., December 14

7 pm ... Advent Reconciliation Service

9:30 am ... Bible Discussion—Church Conf. Room

7 pm ... Book Group Discussion—Church Conf. Room

Sun., December 18

9:15 am ... Religious Education—Parish Hall

2 pm ... Advent Lessons & Carols



The Knights of Columbus of the Arthur J. O'Neil Council #25112

will host coffee and doughnuts following Sunday's 9:30 am Mass Dec. 11. Members will be on hand to provide information about the K of C and answer any questions. Please join us!



Our thanks, once again, to Kevin Marchand of Durning,

Bykowski & Young Funeral Home, Manchester, for providing our 2017 calendars. Please help yourself to a calendar from the box in the



Christmas Concert! Please join us for Saint Benedict Academy's annual Christmas concert on Tuesday, December 13 at 6pm. All are welcome!



Sanctuary candle The sanctuary candle burns this week for Fr. Dot, Fr. Ray & Fr. Roger LaRoche by Lillian LaRoche.

In Sympathy

Please pray for the repose of the souls of Fr. Hugh Muir and Fr. Bob Proulx,, who recently died and whose funeral Masses were celebrated last week by P.

We have an App!

Download our free app for info and updates. Enter "Saint Raphael Parish" to find us in the app store.



Nursing Home and Homebound greetings

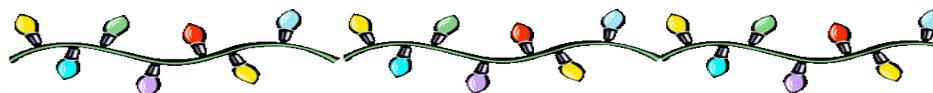
Please remember our SRP



parishioners and friends in nursing homes or homebound by sending them a holiday greeting card. Green pamphlets with names and addresses are in the Information Nook at the main entrance. Thank



Advent Penance Service—Please join us on Wednesday, Dec. 14 at 7 pm for our annual penance service. Monks from Saint Anselm Abbey will be available to hear confessions. This is a wonderful opportunity to prepare for the feast of Christmas!



Please give to those who have given a lifetime. Envelopes are located at the back of the church. Your gift to Retirement Fund for Religious helps provide nursing care, medications, and other necessities. Thank you for your generosity.

The poor, little and humble open themselves to the power of hope



Today we begin a new series of catecheses, on the theme of *Christian hope*. It is very important, because hope does not disappoint. **Optimism disappoints, but not hope!**

We are in such need of it, in these times that seem dark, in which sometimes we feel lost in face of the evil and violence that surround us, in face of the pain of so many of our brothers. We need hope! We feel lost and also somewhat discouraged, because we feel impotent and it seems that this darkness will never end.

However, **we must not let hope abandon us**, because God walks with us with His love.

“I hope because God is by my side: all of us can say this. Each one of us can say: “I hope, I have hope, because **God walks with me.**” He walks and leads me by the hand. God does not leave us alone. The Lord Jesus has overcome evil and opened to us the way of life.

And then, particularly in this Season of Advent, which is the time of expectation, in which we prepare ourselves to receive once again the consoling mystery of the Incarnation and the light of Christmas, it is important to **reflect on hope**. Let us allow ourselves to be taught by the Lord what it means to hope. Therefore, we listen to the words of Sacred Scripture, beginning with *the Prophet Isaiah*, the great prophet of Advent, the great messenger of hope.

In the second part of his Book, Isaiah addresses the people with a *proclamation of consolation*: “Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God. Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service has ended, that her guilt is expiated, that she has received from the hand of the LORD double for all her sins. A voice proclaims: In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! Every valley shall be lifted up, every mountain and hill made low; The rugged land shall be a plain, the rough country, a broad valley.

Then the **glory of the LORD shall be revealed**, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken. God the Father consoles by arousing consolers, to whom He asks to **hearten the people**, His children, proclaiming that the warfare is ended, sorrow is ended, and sin is pardoned. This is what heals the afflicted and fearful heart. Therefore, the prophet asks *to prepare the way of the Lord*, opening oneself to **His gifts of salvation**.

For the people, consolation begins with the possibility to walk on the way of God, a new way, straightened and passable, a way to prepare *in the desert*, so that one can go across it and return to the homeland. Because the



people the prophet was addressing was living the tragedy of the exile in Babylon, and now, instead, it hears it said that it will be able to return to its land, through a way made easy and wide, without valleys and mountains that make the way exhausting, a way leveled in the desert. Therefore, to prepare that way means to prepare *a way of salvation and of liberation* from every obstacle and hindrance.

The exile was a dramatic moment in the history of Israel, when the people had lost everything. The people had lost their homeland, freedom, dignity and even their trust in God. They felt abandoned and without hope. Instead, see the prophet’s appeal, which **reopens their heart to faith**. *The desert* is a place in which it is difficult to live, but precisely there is where they will be able to walk to *return, not only to their homeland but also to God, and to hope and to smile again*.

When we are in darkness, in difficulties, we cannot smile and it is, in fact, **hope that teaches us to smile**, to find that way that leads to God. One of the first things that happen to persons who are tired of God is that they are persons without a smile. Perhaps they are able to have a great laugh, they do so one after another, a beat, a laugh ... but a smile is lacking! **Hope alone gives a smile**: it is the smile of the hope of finding God.

Life is often a desert, it is difficult to walk in it, but if we entrust ourselves to God it can become beautiful and wide as a highway. Suffice it never to lose hope, suffice it to continue to believe, always, despite all. When we find ourselves before a child, perhaps we might have many problems and many difficulties, but a smile comes to us from within, because we find ourselves before hope: a child is a hope! And so we must be able to see in life the **way of hope**, which leads us to find God, God who became a Child for us — and it will make us smile, it will give us all!

In fact, these words of Isaiah are later used by John the Baptist in his preaching, which invites to conversion.

He said thus: “The voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare the way of the

Lord” (*Matthew 3:3*). It is a voice that cries where it seems that no one is able to hear — but who can hear in the desert? — that cries in the loss due to the crisis of faith. We cannot deny that **today’s world is in a crisis of faith**.

One says “I believe in God, I am Christian” — “I am of that religion ...” But your life is very far from being Christian; it is very far from God! Religion, faith has fallen in an expression: “Do I believe?” — “Yes!” However, here it is about turning to God, converting the heart to God and of going on this way to find Him. He awaits us. This is John the Baptist’s preaching: to prepare. To prepare the encounter with this Child who will give us back a smile. When the Baptist proclaims the coming of Jesus, for the Israelites it was as if they were still in exile, because they were under Roman domination, making them strangers in their own homeland, governed by powerful occupants who decided their life.

However, the true history is not that made up of the powerful but rather that *made by God together with His little ones*. The true history — that which will remain in eternity — is that which God writes *with His little ones*: God with Mary, God with Jesus, God with Joseph, *God with the little ones*. Those little and simple ones that we find around Jesus about to be born: Zechariah and Elizabeth, elderly marked by sterility; Mary, young virgin girl betrothed bride of Joseph, the shepherds held in contempt, accounted as nothing. It is the little ones, made great by their faith, *the little ones who are able to continue to hope*. And **hope is the virtue of little ones**. The great, the satisfied do not know hope they do not know what it is.

It is the little ones with God, with Jesus that transform the desert of exile, of desperate loneliness, of suffering into a level way on which to walk to go to **encounter the glory of the Lord**. And we come, therefore, to allowing ourselves to be **taught hope**. Let us wait confidently for the coming of the Lord and no matter what the desert is of our lives — each one knows in what desert he walks — it will become a flowering garden. Hope does not disappoint!

(*Original: Italian; translation by Zenit*)

Christmas
and
New Year Mass Schedule



Christmas: Nativity of the Lord

Saturday, Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Vigil Mass at 4 pm

Sunday, Dec. 25 Christmas Day Masses at 8 and 10 am

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Saturday, Dec. 31 Mary Mother of God Vigil Mass at 4 pm

Sunday, Jan. 1, 2017 Mary Mother of God Masses at 8 and 10 am

SAINT *R*APHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PARISH

UT IN OMNIBUS GLORIFICETUR DEUS – THAT IN ALL THINGS GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED

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