

DECEMBER 1, 2019

Scripture Reflection

As we enter a new liturgical year, we prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ. We learn again how God comes into our world and into our individual lives to set us free.

Our readings call us to embrace God's transforming presence in our lives. The First Reading from Isaiah comes from a popular song the Israelites sang in captivity. It lifted their spirits as they reflected on God's promises to lead them back to their homeland. This song tells of the new age when God will reveal himself so that not only the Israelites but "all nations shall stream toward" the house of the Lord, the Temple of Jerusalem where God will bring peace among all humanity: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares."

St. Paul continues this theme of transformation by reminding us that our salvation is closer now than when we first believed! Our minds and actions need to embrace the necessary changes. True transformation can occur only through the power of Christ's grace: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." Like a new set of clothes, Christ embraces us totally and transforms the essence of our being.

The Gospel reiterates the urgency to stay awake and prepare for the Lord's coming at the end of our lives or at the end of the world. We do not approach this encounter in fear and trepidation but, in the spirit of our first two readings, with a joyous expectation of God's fulfillment of the longings in our hearts for true happiness, peace, and rest, as St. Augustine addressed God, "For you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."

- **In what way does Isaiah's song proclaim that God's salvation is intended for all humanity?**

Stewardship Reflections

Stay awake for all opportunities to share your time, talent and treasures! Good stewards know they are accountable and use their gifts to do God's will. Safeguarding material and human resources and using them responsibly are answers to the question, "What identifies a steward?" But so is generous giving of time, talent and treasure.

As Christian stewards we receive God's gift gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with an increase to the Lord.

Prayer Partner

Parishioners are encouraged to sign-up to become a Prayer-Partner for someone in the Parish Family during Advent and Christmas. If you have not already filled in the form, these forms are available at the three doors of the Cathedral. Take time to fill in the needed information and place in the box. You will receive the name and address of the person(s) you will be praying for in the mail. Make sure to pray daily. And, perhaps, you could send a Christmas Card or give a telephone call.

Prayer Shawls

If anyone feels that they need some comfort in their troubled times, please feel free to contact Lorraine Beck at 814-942-7774 for one of our Prayer Shawls. These shawls have been Blessed and may bring you the comfort that you need.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

You are encouraged to participate in one of the following Advent opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation: Sunday, December 1, 4:00 P.M. St. John the Evangelist Parish, Altoona; Monday, December 9, 7:00 P.M. Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Altoona; Thursday, December 12, 5:30 P.M. Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Altoona; Saturday, December 14, 10:00 A.M. St. Therese of the Child Jesus Parish, Altoona; Sunday, December 15, 4:00 P.M. St. Mary Parish, Hollidaysburg; Monday, December 16, 7:00 P.M. St. Rose of Lima Parish, Altoona; Wednesday December 18, 6:30 P.M. Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament Parish, Altoona; and Thursday, December 19, 5:30 P.M. Sacred Heart Parish, Altoona.

Pray For Our Sick - Remember our sisters and brothers who are weakened by illness in your prayers. Prayers are sometimes the best prescribed medicine.

THE CHURCH OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN

THE CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

ONE CATHEDRAL SQUARE, ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA 16601-3315
CHURCH OFFICE: 814-944-4603

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:

The process of formation for those seeking God through membership in the Catholic Christian community.

INFANT BAPTISM:

Arrange in advance for pre-baptismal instructions.

CONFIRMATION:

Ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students are invited to participate in the Confirmation Preparation Process.

RECONCILIATION:

Wednesday: 7:00 PM, Saturday: 12:30 PM.

Communal Penance Services: Advent and Lent.

ANOIDING OF THE SICK:

Communal celebration Easter Season.

MARRIAGE:

Arrange nine months in advance. Couples expected to participate in pre-marriage preparation program.

DEVOTIONS:

Novena of the Miraculous Medal -

Charismatic Prayer - Monday 7:00 PM.

Eucharistic Adoration - First Wednesday - 12:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Evening Prayer within Eucharistic Exposition - Advent and

Christmas, Lent and Easter Seasons - Sunday 6:30 PM.

Eucharistic Day - Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

September through April: Pre-Kindergarten thru 12.

Sunday morning 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Pre-Kindergarten thru 8.

Sunday Evening 6:15 PM - 8:15 PM

Grades 9 thru 12.

WEB: WWW.ALTOONACATHEDRAL.ORG

FAX: 814-942-4337

E-MAIL: ALTCATHEDRAL@DIOCESEAJ.ORG

EUCHARIST:

Sunday: 5:00 PM (Vigil)
8:00 AM
10:00 AM
12:00 Noon
5:00 PM

Holyday: 5:30 PM (Vigil)
8:00 AM
12:00 Noon
5:30 PM

Weekday: 6:45 AM
12:00 Noon
Saturday: 8:00 AM
12:00 Noon

Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, J.C.D., Bishop

Reverend Monsignor Stanley Carson, Administrator

Reverend Father Dennis M. Kurdziel, Parochial Vicar

CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAM - 944-4603

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 944-4603

MAIL MINISTRY TO ELDERLY, HOMEBOUND,
SERIOUSLY SICK, AND GRIEVING - 944-4603

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Web: www.holytrinitycatholic.school

Altoona Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 381-7011

Hollidaysburg Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 695-6112

Middle School Campus (Grades 5 thru 8) - 942-7835

BISHOP GUILFOYLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org - 944-4014

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 8 - 312-7317

Jean Koury - 9 thru 12 - 949-2777

Religious Education Office: Sundays - 943-7424

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

Leslie C. Thayer, MM, CAGO

Music Ministry Office - 944-2044

E-mail: lthayer@dioceseaj.org

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE CITY OF ALTOONA SINCE 1851

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 1, 2019

Readings: Is 2:1-5; Rom 13:11-14; Mt 24:37-44

MASS INTENTIONS

December 2, Monday: Advent Weekday

Readings: Is 4:2-6; Mt 8:5-11

6:45 AM + Dorothy Conrad (Dan Bauer)

12:00 PM + Joe Wiedemer (Homer & Marilyn Krug)

December 3, Tuesday: St. Francis Xavier, Priest

Readings: Is 11:1-10; Lk 10:21-24

6:45 AM + Joe Maltet, Anniversary (Family)

12:00 PM + Sister Beverly Hmel IHM (Walt & Pat Beckel)

December 4, Wednesday: St. John Damascene

Readings: Is 25:6-10; Mt 15:29-37

6:45 AM + Lori Keirn (Koehle Family)

12:00 PM + Joseph Knott (Mother, Orvita)

December 5, Thursday: Advent Weekday

Readings: Is 26:1-6; Mt 7:21, 24-27

6:45 AM + Dorothy Stephens (Ron & Kim Palmer)

12:00 PM + Mary Costlow, Birthday (Family)

December 6, Friday: Saint Nicholas, Bishop

Readings: Is 29:17-24; M 9:27-31

6:45 AM + Jean Herbert (Cathedral Parish)

12:00 PM + Rose Stefanon (Dr. & Mrs. Richard Gonsman)

December 7 Saturday: St. Ambrose, Bp. & Dr. of Church

Readings: Is 30:19-21, 23-26; Mt 9:35-10:1, 5, 6-8

8:00 AM + Jim & Peggy Mullan (Nancy & Skip)

12:00 PM + Msgr. Roy Kline (Randy & Jean Koury)

Vigil: Second Sunday in Advent

Readings: Is 11:1-10; Rom 15:4-9; Mt 3:1-12

5:00 PM + Michael Dionis (Mom & Dad)

Please remember our sick in your prayers.

Catholic Ministry Drive

We are most grateful to those who have so generously responded to the 2019 Catholic Ministries Drive. As of the end of October we have pledges totaling **\$40,308.14**. Our goal for 2019 is **\$50,706.00**. Thank you for your generosity. It is most important that we receive your response as soon as possible. Monies received over our diocesan goal will help us to complete Charity Hall in The Cathedral Parish Center.

Confirmation Prep

December 7th Saturday 12:45-6:00 10th

Grade Gifts of the Holy Spirit & Parable Retreat

Religious Education

December 8th FIRE class 6:15-8:15 PM

December 15th FIRE class 6:15-8:15 PM

First Reconciliation Prep

Tuesday December 3rd there will be a 1st Reconciliation Prep class from 6:30-8:00 PM in the Cathedral Hall.

ADVENT CANDLES

Anyone interested in carrying the Advent Candles during the Opening Procession before all Mass, please call the Parish Office at 814-944-4603, between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

Christian Mothers Meeting

The next Christian Mothers and Women meeting will be on December 11.

Baptismal Prep Class

The next Baptismal Prep Class will be on December 10th at 7:00 PM in the Seton Suite.

Ministry to the Elderly, Seriously Ill and Grieving

We will be approaching the fifth year which began as a simple Thanksgiving Card to our parishioners who were on the First Friday visitation list and those residing in elder care homes. Our twenty person committee has been sending cards, making phone calls and visiting with some men and women who invited us into their homes. We are thankful for your support but want to tell you that committee members feel as they are receiving more than what they are giving. Paula Miller who began by praying a simple Hail Mary with a resident over four years ago shared, "I cannot begin to tell you how enriched my life has become since joining this ministry. After each visit, I would leave more blessed than when I arrived. Our homebound so appreciate that we, as a member of their parish family, remember them either with a card or a visit. Their smiles are priceless!"

If you can please call the office 814-944-4603, with the name and address of a family member or friend who you know would welcome a kind word and a prayer through the mail we would be able to reach out to many more. If you would like to join this ministry please call the office at 814-944-4603, or Jeanne Thompson at 814-317-2672. And we can always use stamps!

OFFERTORY COLLECTION Sunday, November 24, 2019 - \$5,847.00

Young Adult Ministry

The Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament will be starting a "Young Adult Ministry", Age 18 – 30. Our first gathering, for those not yet Confirmed or those young adults feeling the need to learn more about the Catholic Religion, will be on Sundays, after the 10:00 AM Mass in the St. John's Room. Any young adult interested in joining our Young Adult Ministry or being a part of this new endeavor (TEAM) please call Tammy Dattris at 934-2441. There will be younger individuals organizing this group on a monthly basis.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

RCIA is a process (a journey) through which people enter the Catholic Church. This includes people who have not been baptized (called catechumens) and people who have been baptized in another Christian Church now seeking full Communion with the Catholic Church (referred to as candidates). If you are interested in learning more about RCIA, join us Sunday from 11:00am - Noon in the Seton Suite. Please reach out to Tammy Dattris, Director of RCIA at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. We look forward to you joining us!

Charismatic Prayer Group Dates

On Sunday, November 17th at 6PM, join us at The Basilica of St. Michael the Archangel, Loretto, PA, for a Festival of Praise. Praise and Worship, prayer ministry and witness talks.

Religious Art Calendars

Our parish's Religious Art Calendar for 2020 will be available at our Cathedral's entrances next weekend. Gratitude is extended to Bob Jones and his generosity in providing our calendars.

Advent/ Christmas Mailing

All registered members of the Cathedral Parish Family were mailed the Advent/Christmas letter this past week. If you did not receive this important mailing, please call the Parish Office at 814-944-4603.

Thank you to Mary Ann Bell, Paula Clemens, Paulette Farabaugh, Paula Miller, Patty McCloskey, Bill & Grace Smith, and Cheryl Williams who helped prepare the mailing. Friends of the Cathedral may also request a copy of this seasonal mailing.

Calendar of Prizes 2020 Are Here!

Calendar of prizes 2020 are being sold at the Cathedral Square Door after all masses starting this weekend. Each calendar costs \$20.00. There is a \$20.00 daily prize; an additional \$1,000.00 in special monthly prizes awarded throughout the year; and a grand prize of \$1,500.00. Due to the state regulations for small games of chance, it is necessary that we all one thousand tickets are sold. Otherwise the parish will lose money on unsold tickets. If you have a favorite tree digit number, call the Parish Office at 814-944-4603 weekdays between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM to check for availability or stop by the Cathedral door after Mass on the weekends. These make great Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers.

Eucharistic Adoration

Wednesday, December 4th, Cathedral Parish will have Eucharistic Adoration from 12:30 P.M. until 8:00 P.M. A sign-up sheet is located on the cross aisle table to choose your time for visitation before the Blessed Sacrament. There are still times in late afternoon and early evening that need people present for adoration. The Church asks that at least two people be present at all times when there is Exposition of the Sacrament.

Christmas Concert

The Cathedral Choir, guest singers, and members of the Altoona Symphony will present What Sweeter Music, a concert of Advent and Christmas music in the "Lessons and Carols" format, composed and arranged by John Leavitt, on Sunday, December 15, at 3:00 PM in the Cathedral Nave. The audience will be invited to participate in singing familiar carols. Dr. Cathy Herrera, flute professor and friends from Juniata College will add to the festivities. Free-will offering. All are welcome!

Beautiful Cornucopia

Thank you to Gretchen Packard, Connie Novack, Kathleen Winter, and Mary Ann Bell for the beautiful cornucopia that decorated our altar from the Feast of Christ the King thru Thanksgiving Day. This is a symbol of the many gifts from God for which we are thankful. For the fruits of the earth, we give thanks.

