

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 10, 2017

Mass Intentions

<i>Mon.</i>	6:30 A.M.	Charlie Pekar
<i>Tue.</i>	6:30 A.M.	Coleman Brewer
	10 A.M.	Living & Deceased Members of the Harvey Wick Family
<i>Wed.</i>	6:30 A.M.	Victor & Lillie Huehlefeld
	8:05 A.M.	Marie Luecke
<i>Thurs.</i>	6:30 A.M.	Joseph & Annie Bolech
<i>Fri.</i>	6:30 A.M.	Willie & Mary Pavelka, Paul Molnoskey
	10 A.M.	Cheryl Delvige
<i>Sat.</i>	5 P.M.	Charles & Helen Fikac
<i>Sun.</i>	7 A.M.	Louis, Anna & Val Kutac
	9 A.M.	Adolph A. Beran, Jr.
	11 A.M.	Santiago Arriaga

Sanctuary Candle Intention

The Sanctuary Candle will burn this week in memory of Lora Torres.

Prayer List

Contact Theresa Bordovsky at 293-3124 or
Ann Marie Bludau at 798-2959.

This Sunday's Holy Scriptures

Is 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Pt 3:8-14; Mk 1:1-8

Your Gift to God: December 3rd

St. Joseph Parish Support	\$4,511.61
Online Giving	\$1,885
Building Fund	\$585
Helping Hands	\$1,451.50
St. Ann Parish Support	\$477
Building Fund	\$70

May God reward your generosity!

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Wednesday: 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.

Saturday: 4:00 – 4:40 P.M.

Special Collection

A special collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious will be taken up at all Masses this weekend, December 9-10.

Liturgical Assignments

Lectors

<i>Sat.</i>	5 P.M.	Alicia Lanik
<i>Sun.</i>	7 A.M.	Rose Sumler
	9 A.M.	Anthony Harper
	11 A.M.	Salvador Garcia

Offertory Gifts

<i>Sat.</i>	5 P.M.	Charlie Fikac Family
<i>Sun.</i>	9 A.M.	Debra Zinke Family

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

<i>Sat.</i>	5 P.M.	Kim Fikac, Theresa Belicek, Dawne Wendel
<i>Sun.</i>	9 A.M.	Bobby & Bea Welfl, Dayna Tuttle
	11 A.M.	Graciela Rivas, Nina Arriaga, Pam Garza

Ushers/Hospitality

<i>Sat.</i>	5 P.M.	Bobby & Gladys Jiral, Ronnie Koenning, Charlie Proschko
<i>Sun.</i>	7 A.M.	Dennis Kocian, Al Janak
	9 A.M.	Robbie Hagan, E. J. Blaschke, Randy & Debbie Randazzo
	11 A.M.	Elsa Resendiz, Gerardo Rivas, Ernest Gomez, Alice Nunez

Altar Servers

<i>Sat.</i>	5 P.M.	Abigail Long, Ryan Gearson, Sutton Pavliska
<i>Sun.</i>	7 A.M.	Zachary Raz, Hunter Mischer
<i>Sun.</i>	9 A.M.	Grace Migl, Jacob Koenig, Carly Hull
	11 A.M.	Jorge & Gabriel Chavez, Cecilia Rivas

Clase de Preparacion Bautismal

La clase de preparaci3n bautismal ser3 el primer Sabado, 6 enero, del mes a las 9 am en el Salon Parroquial. Hable con Susanna Trujillo para mas informaci3n.

Baptismal Preparation Class

The next Baptismal Preparation Class will be held Saturday, January 13th at 9:00 A.M. in the Family Center Meeting Room.

*“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths.”*

Altar Society Extends Gratitude

The St. Joseph Altar Society sincerely thanks all parishioners for supporting their Bake Sale last weekend and making it a huge success. All proceeds will be used to purchase items needed for the altar. Again, thank you for your generosity!

KC Christmas Party

The Knights of Columbus will have their annual Christmas gathering on Wednesday, December 13th at the Family Center. Social begins at 6:00 P.M. followed by the meal and program. All Knights and their wives or guest, widows of Brother Knights, Catholic Daughters and their spouses or guest are invited.

Feast of Christmas Mass Schedule

December 24th – 5:00 P.M. *Children's Mass*
10:00 P.M. – St. Ann

December 25th – 12:01 A.M. *Midnight Mass*
9:00 A.M.

All Christmas Masses will be in English

Christmas Children's Mass

As a way of incorporating charity into our Christmas children's Mass at 5:00 P.M. on December 24th, the children are invited to bring gifts for boys and girls to place before the Holy Family. These gifts will be used in the Blue Santa Program.

FYI: Parish Office Schedule

The Parish Office will close at 12-noon on Friday, December 22nd and re-open at 8:00 A.M. Tuesday, January 2nd. **Deadline for the December 24th and December 31st bulletins is noon Wednesday, December 20th.**

"From Thy Bounty"

Copies of our parish cookbook are still available and make great Christmas gifts! They are available in the Pastoral Center for \$20.

Advent Penance Services

All services begin at 5:30 P.M.

Monday, December 11 – Shiner

Tuesday, December 12 - Moulton

Thursday, December 14 – Yoakum

Friday, December 15 - Hallettsville

Penance Service

Thursday, December 14th, at 5:30 P.M. we will have our Advent penance service. There will be extra confessors present to assist with the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Take advantage of this healing sacrament in preparation for the great Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior.

Confesiones para Adviento

Vamos a tener un grupo de sacerdotes bilingues para celebrar el Sacramento de Penitencia en preparacion para las Fiestas Navidenas este Jueves a las 5:30 P.M. Vengan temprano...no esperas al ultimo momento a venir. No es un "drive-thru," y en respeto a los sacerdotes no es justo a venir al final del tiempo cuando los sacerdotes estan preparando a salir.

The Importance of Reconciliation

Each year in preparation for the Feast of Christmas there are a week of Penance Services in our area. It's a good practice as we gear up for the holiday celebrations to pause and seek out peace and forgiveness—to be reconciled—with our loving Father and in doing so—with the Church. To experience the sure knowledge of being forgiven, of being so loved that the Father simply awaits our coming back to Him with our weaknesses, faults and sins—so he can readily forgive us. His Son, whose Second Coming we hope for, and whose birth we are preparing to remember and celebrate, provides us with this wonderful, grace filled Sacrament. Plan ahead...figure out which scheduled service "fits" with your family's plans...and be reconciled!

Christmas Flowers

Extra envelopes for the Christmas Flower donations may be found in the Church entrances. Donors and their listed memorials will be in the bulletin after Christmas. This applies to St. Joseph and St. Ann Parish.

Altar Server Training for New and Existing Servers

All servers are asked to attend a training on **December 30th at 1:00 p.m.** at St. Joseph Church. Boys and girls from 4th grade and older are also invited to attend if they would like to begin serving.

Formación de Monaguillos nuevos y existentes

A todos los servidores se les pide que asistir a una formación el **30 de diciembre a las 1:00 p.m.** en la iglesia de San José. Niños y niñas de 4^o grado y mayores también están invitados a asistir si les gustaría empezar a servir.

Religious Goods

The Pastoral Center has various types of religious goods available for sale in the lobby. There are religious cards, crucifixes, rosaries, Bibles, prayer books (English and Spanish), Advent wreaths, religious Christmas ornaments, statues, cemetery candleholders, etc....just the beginning of the list. All are available during office hours. Stop by for those last minute stocking stuffers or Christmas gifts!

Diocese of Victoria 30th Annual Catholic Conference

Saturday, January 27, 2018
Holy Family Church, Wharton

The seven principles of **Catholic Social Teaching** will be presented by 22 speakers in 32 workshops. The titles, descriptions and presenter vitae can be seen on the diocesan website.

Also see the newly revised flyer and registration form, mailed in mid-October, for titles and names of speakers. If you did not receive one, call us at (361) 573-0828 ext. 2224, 2225, or 2227.

On line registration is now open. Go to the Diocesan website www.victoriadiocese.org to register.

A Note from Principal Mooney

Monday, December 11th

Basketball – Our Lady of Victory – 5:00 P.M.
St. Joseph Gym

Wednesday, December 13th

Liturgy – 8:05 A.M.

Thursday, December 14th

Christmas Play – 7:00 P.M.
Yoakum High School Auditorium

Friday, December 15th

PTC “Holly Jolly Party” & Class Parties
Early Dismissal – 12:30 P.M.

Monday, December 18th – Tuesday, January 2nd

Christmas Break

Classes resume Wednesday, January 3rd

“Cub Care”

Available every day after school until 6:00 P.M. for SJS students. Contact the office for more details.

Please call or stop by the school office and speak to Mr. Mooney if you are interested in enrolling your child(ren) in St. Joseph’s.

Support Catholic Education

Catholic Life Insurance is sponsoring Catholic School Sweepstakes and all proceeds from the sale of tickets benefit St. Joseph School.

Grand Prize Choice of:

2018 Ford F-150 Truck **or**
2018 Ford Fusion Sedan **or**
\$20,000 Prepaid Visa Credit Card

Participating School Prize:

Each participating school will have a \$1,000 prepaid Visa credit card individual winner drawn from tickets sold by their school.

Tickets are \$5.00 and may be purchased at the school or parish office. For more information contact the school office at 293-9000.

Deadline for purchasing tickets is January 24th.



Why you need to pay attention to your Nativity scene

Cerith Gardiner

Do you know what your creche means?

Often neglected in the media, the Nativity scene holds far more importance than the popular Christmas tree. Yet do you know the rich meaning behind both of these cherished Christmas symbols? Here's a brief explanation with a few reasons why you need to pay extra attention to your creche this year:

The symbolism of the tree

Today's beautifully decorated Christmas trees are little like the first trees used by Christians to celebrate Christ's birth all those centuries ago. Back in the 8th century, during his missionary in Germany, St. Boniface chopped down a sturdy oak tree, much to the amazement of the Druids who used it as a symbol of worship. Turning to a small fir tree, St. Boniface referred to it as the "tree of the Christ-child," with its everlasting pine needles; a sign of eternal life. The triangular shape also helped to symbolize the Holy Trinity, and its green branches pointed upward to heaven. He instructed the Germans to "gather about it ... in your own homes; there it will shelter no deeds of blood, but loving gifts and rites of kindness."

As Christmas trees became popular, there was concern about the pagan character of its origin, but the symbolic meaning behind the tree demonstrated its deep roots in the Christian faith. In fact, the symbolism of the tree is very rich in our tradition: our forebearers were directed by God not to eat the fruits of one of the trees of Eden; Christ paid the highest price of our redemption crucified on a tree trunk; the green branches and the lights that decorate the Christmas tree evoke Christ as the Eternal Light that comes to a world enveloped in darkness.

Despite the strong commercial nuances over the last century, diminishing its Christian significance for many, the Christmas tree remains a valid symbol of the coming of Christ into the world. So while decorating the tree, why not use it as a time to explain to your children the story of one of the greatest missionaries, St. Boniface, and how the humble fir came to represent such an important event?

The history of the Nativity scene

However, even with this contextual validation, the Christmas tree is by no means the main visual symbol of the birth of Jesus. This is when we need to turn to another saint, the beloved St. Francis of Assisi, who while traveling in Grecio, Italy back in 1223, created the first crib in history when trying to solve the problem of over-crowding in a church at Midnight Mass.

Finding a little niche in a rock, St. Francis set about making an altar. He gained permission from the pontiff to create a *living* crib, with the village inhabitants representing the Child Jesus in the manger, Our Lady, St. Joseph, the Magi, the shepherds, and the angels. The animals were also real: the ox, the donkey, and the sheep. St. Bonaventure describes St. Francis at the scene: "The man of God [St. Francis] stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy." News of the crib soon spread, turning into the beautiful Christmas custom it has become today, with carved cribs becoming

popular in the churches around the 16th century, thanks to the evangelizing work of the Jesuit priests.

When building the creche, there are lots of meanings and traditions to stick to at various stages. Here are some for you to add to your own family tradition:

How to prepare the crib in meaningful stages

- First, organize the general scene, placing the animals, the shepherds, the manger – but hold off adding the main characters of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the angels, the star, and the three kings.
- Some families wait until the afternoon of December 24 to place the crib and the figurines of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, but still refrain from adding Infant Jesus – sometimes difficult with impatient kids!
- Disclosure: the manger remains empty until midnight, when, symbolizing the Birth of the Son of God, the image of the Child is finally placed there!
- Along with baby Jesus, the angels are also placed, who evoke the song "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will," mentioned in the Scriptures.
- Together with the angels, add the star that guided the three kings from the East to Bethlehem to worship the Savior, on top of the crib. The magi, popularly referred to as Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, represent all the peoples of the earth and often come with their trusty exotic rides: camels or even elephants.
- There are those who begin to position the three kings in the crib only from the 25th onward: initially they are placed far from the manger, still traveling, and are approached a little more each day until they arrive on the feast of the Epiphany, on January 6.

A true domestic catechism

However, the crib is not a simple adornment: it is a beautiful visual form of expressing our faith and our prayer, during the waiting and celebration for the arrival of the Savior. This tradition involves a process, a growth, and an exciting time for the family in preparation of the most beautiful story of all time. It is a true domestic catechism, especially for children!

Resistance to forced secularization

With the increase in forced secularization, which has completely distorted the meaning of the Christmas tree (and of Christmas itself), it is far more difficult to erase the explicit symbolism that is present in the Nativity scene, since the reference to the Savior is blatant and obvious. Perhaps this is why in modern times the crib has simply been ignored, to the extent of gradually being forgotten — in a few cases, it is treated as "tacky" or in "bad taste"... or worse: there are cases in today's Western world where local councils have even banned the crib in areas visible to the public, in order not to "offend" the followers of other religions. It would be a pity that Catholic families also find themselves "forgetting" the crib and its most wonderful symbolism of the beginning of Christ's life on Earth.

So get into the attic, dust off your manger, and make room in your house for the crib this year, with a thought to St. Francis of Assisi.