PASTOR'S ADVENT MESSAGE



"I lie awake and moan, like a lone sparrow on the roof."
(Psalm 102:8)

There is something hauntingly beautiful about those words from the Psalms. We can almost picture that solitary little bird, perched high above the world in the darkness, awake while everything around it sleeps. It is an image of loneliness, of longing, of a heart waiting for something it cannot yet see. And in many ways, it is an image of Advent.

For Advent is the season of those who wait. Those who wait for healing, for reconciliation, for answers to prayers long whispered. Those who carry a sorrow that Christmas lights cannot erase. Those who feel, at times, like that lone sparrow, watching and waiting in the darkness. Yet the promise of Advent is that we do not wait alone.

The God who created the stars and set the heavens in motion has heard the cry of that little sparrow. And He has heard ours. Indeed, the wonder of Christmas is that God does not simply call down words of comfort from Heaven. He comes down Himself. He enters our darkness, takes on our humanity, and makes His dwelling among us. Emmanuel. God with us.

Jesus Himself tells us that not even a sparrow is forgotten by God (Luke 12:6). How much more, then, does He cherish each of us! No prayer is too small for His attention. No sorrow is hidden from His heart. No life is so ordinary that He does not long to enter it with His grace.

I encourage you this Advent to make time for quiet prayer, to seek His mercy in Confession, and to welcome Him with renewed devotion in the Holy Eucharist. And remember those who may be waiting in loneliness. A visit, a phone call, a simple act of kindness can become a beautiful reminder that God has not forgotten them either.

May this holy season teach us to watch with faith, to wait with patience, and to trust that even in our darkest hours, the dawn of God's love is drawing near.
For the sparrow on the roof is not forgotten. And neither are we.

God bless you.

Rev. Mark J. Coiro



The Season of Advent marks the start of a New Year in the Church. It is a season of increased prayer, penance, and good works. It is a time to renew our love of Jesus and through Him our love of others. It is a time in which we ask God's mercy and rededicate ourselves to His joyful service. In this way, even as we mark the birth of Jesus, we ourselves are making a new beginning as children of God.

ADORATION WITH CONFESSION ~



Thursdays, December 3, 10, & 17, from 7:00 – 8:00 PM. Bring your day to a restful end by basking in the True Presence of our Eucharistic Lord. Clear and quiet your soul from all that has come between you and God by making a good Confession - especially if it has been a while. Confession is a healing encounter with Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. The Lord's mercy, healing and grace are given to us through this encounter. In it Jesus also strengthens us to resist future or ongoing temptation. The Sacrament of Confession is a moment of accountability for us before the Lord. The Lord's forgiveness and mercy is infinite. Nothing we have done or could do can ever separate us from experiencing God's forgiveness through this sacrament. Confession will also continue to be offered each Saturday in the church from Noon to 12:45 PM.



IS THERE ROOM AT THE INN? ~

Saturday, December 5, 10:30 - 11:30 AM. This one-hour Catholic Advent Retreat invites you to ask, "Is There Room at the Inn?" and consider ways to open your heart wider to receive the Christ Child. Through Eucharistic Adoration, music, and prayer, we will pause amid the season's busyness to nurture our interior life and welcome the Lord more deeply. A reflection on Brother Lawrence's "The Practice of the Presence of God" - a book that helped shape Pope Leo XIV's spiritual life - will help us explore simple ways to recognize God's presence in ordinary moments. Together, we will consider how to become a nurturing home for Christ, carrying the joy of His presence into Christmas and every day beyond.



GIVE A GIFT ~ **December 5 & 6, at all Masses.**

Once again, we ask the people of St. Mary's to help make Christmas truly a season of sharing. All items go to needy families in Boston and are distributed through two inner city Catholic parishes. Please bring an article of new clothing and a new toy, unwrapped together in a plain bag or gift bag with a tag stating "Boy" or "Girl" and size or age up to age 18. No adult gifts please. Kindly place your gift in front of St. Mary's altar at any Mass the weekend of December 5 & 6. **Gift bags only please**.



FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY, A HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION ~

Monday, December 7, Vigil Mass at 6:15 PM. Tuesday, December 8, Feast Day Masses at 9:00 AM & 7:00 PM. The Immaculate Conception is that sacred moment when Mary was conceived in her mother Anna's womb and specially protected by God from any touch of original sin. In this way, Mary became the new Eve, a new beginning for the human race and a pure vessel to receive the Son of God and bear Him into the world. This is the Patronal Feast of the United States of America, a nation consecrated to Mary under her title as the Immaculate Conception.



COOKIE WALK FOR HAITI ~

December 12 & 13, after all Weekend Masses. Long rows of tables will be set up in Fr. Haley Hall - tables loaded down with over 2,000 delicious homemade cookies baked by St. Mary's Middle School Youth Group Members. For $9, you may purchase an empty cookie bag, then "walk" down the rows of tables and select a dozen cookies which MSYG youths (wearing plastic gloves) will place in your bag. All proceeds will benefit the poor of Haiti, a deeply impoverished nation rocked by political collapse, horrific gang violence, and multiple natural disasters. *"Whatsoever you do for the least of my people, so you do unto me."* MT 25

LESSONS & CAROLS ~ **Sunday, December 13, 5 - 6 PM in the church.**

Join us for an evening of beautiful music and scripture, anticipating the wondrous birth of Our Lord Jesus. This year's Lessons and Carols will feature the combined choirs and ensembles of St. Mary's Church, under the direction of Abigail Kelley-Lanser. The program will include familiar carols as well as choral music by Willcocks, Fissinger, Burroughs, and more. Bring your whole family and fill your Christmas preparations with plenty of holiday cheer.









Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve

4:00 PM Masses in both the Church and Fr. Haley Hall

5:30 PM Mass in the Church

7:30 PM Mass in the Church

11:00 PM Midnight Mass in the Church



Friday, December 25, Christmas Day

9:30 AM Mass in the Church

11:30 AM Mass in the Church

Give yourself and your family the best gifts of all this Advent and every Sunday …

… the Word of God to encourage and guide,

… the Holy Eucharist to feed your soul and strengthen God's presence in your life,

… the grace and peace that come when we give thanks to God in worship for all the good things He has given us.

Welcome home!

Weekend of December 26 & 27

The Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Saturday Masses at 5:00 PM and 7:30 PM
Sunday Masses at 7:30 AM, 9:30 AM and 11:30 AM



At Christmas we rejoice that God came to live among us. On the Feast of the Holy Family, we remember that Jesus shared the everyday life of a home. In Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, we see how holiness grows through small acts of patience, forgiveness, and care.

As we worship at Mass this weekend, we bring the joys and needs of our families to Jesus, who gives Himself to us in the Eucharist.