

ST. FRANCIS POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace! —St. Francis

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Sunday, December 11, 2011

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Niech Bedze pochwalony Jezus Chrystus. R/. Na wieki, wiekow.

Praised be the Lord, Jesus Christ. R/. Now and forever.

9:00 AM - "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord"

OPENING PRAYER: (please say with Celebrant) O Father, our hearts respond with joy as we approach the yearly remembrance of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. As we sense within ourselves His coming, may there be restored within us the image and likeness of our Creator, who gave us the Christ of Christmas. Amen

PRAYER: (celebrant) O God, as we look upon this wreath, the symbol of eternity, and as we light a third candle, may we be prepared more thoroughly in making the way for your son, especially in the depths of our hearts. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD CANDLE: (Reader): O Lord, stir up our hearts that we may indeed prepare for Your only begotten Son, that through his coming, we may be made worthy to observe you with pure minds. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

CONTEMPORARY RITE - Mass Book pg. 63
(please note: No "Gloria" during Advent)

READING I -Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vindication by our God.

I rejoice heartily in the LORD, in my God is the joy of my soul; for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of justice, like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, like a bride bedecked with her jewels. As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord GOD make justice and praise spring up before all the nations.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54

R. My soul rejoices in my God.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked upon his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

R. My soul rejoices in my God.

the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.

R. My soul rejoices in my God.

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

R. My soul rejoices in my God.

READING II - 1 Thes 5:16-24

Brothers and sisters: Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.

In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good.

Refrain from every kind of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.

Priest/Lector: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. R./ Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Verse. R/ Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL - John 1:6-8, 19-28

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.

And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who are you?" He admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Christ." So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?" He said: "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'make straight the way of the Lord,'" as Isaiah the prophet said." Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing. This is the Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise be to you Lord Jesus Christ.

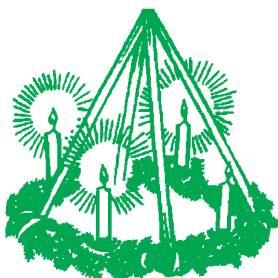
INTERCESSIONS - RESPONSE - GOD, HEAR US!

OFFERTORY HYMN - "Patience People"

OUR FATHER - page 95

COMMUNION & POST COMMUNION HYMNS -
"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

RECESSIONAL HYMN - "Every Valley"



St. Francis Weekly "Kompositions"

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

On this day the Church urges us to gladness in the middle of this time of expectation and penitence; the coming of Jesus approaches more and more. St. John, the holy precursor, announces to the Jews the coming of the Savior. "The Savior," he says to them, "lives already among us, though unknown. He will soon appear openly." Now is the time for fervent prayer and for imploring Jesus to remain with us by His mercy. Let us prepare the way for Him by repentance and penitence and by worthy reception of the sacraments.

THE CHRISTMAS WAFER

The birth of the Lord is celebrated around the world and each country lends its own spirit by its own traditions. Immigrants brought those customs to America, along with their possessions, and they melted into a unique American expression of this holiday. Our parish of St. Francis is today an mosaic ethnic mix, still we remember our Polish origins. Wishing to share with all one very special tradition, "OPLATEK" - the Christmas wafer or the Bread of Life! The oplatek is a thin unleavened wafer, much like the communion wafer. It is stamped with the figures of the Nativity or the Blessed Mother. It is shared at home or sent to family and friends by mail. Prior to setting down to Christmas dinner it is shared by all gathered, since it is an explicit sign of brotherhood and Catholic friendliness. A piece is broken off by each person, exchanging good wishes and embraces. Custom dictates that before the oplatek is eaten all quarrels and misunderstandings must be dissolved. In this tradition we approach the holidays with an open, love filled heart. Please note that the oplatek is available in our Parish to anyone interested. Please contact Father Andrew. We will share this tradition as a Parish community, at our Christmas meal, after Christmas Eve Mass. May it bring you, your family and friends closer to the mystery you celebrate! God's Blessings!

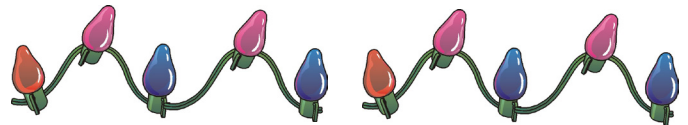
BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY - Henri Nouwen ANTICIPATING THE VISION

The marvelous vision of the peaceable Kingdom, in which all violence has been overcome and all men, women, and children live in loving unity with nature, calls for its realization in our day-to-day lives. Instead of being an escapist dream, it challenges us to anticipate what it promises. Every time we forgive our neighbor, every time we make a child smile, every time we arrange a bouquet of flowers, offer care to tame or wild animals, prevent pollution, create beauty in our homes and gardens, and work for peace and justice among peoples and nations we are making the vision come true. We must remind one another constantly

of the vision. Whenever it comes alive in us we will find new energy to live it out, right where we are. Instead of making us escape real life, this beautiful vision gets us involved.

ADVENT IS ABOUT GOOD DEEDS!

Advent is the time to meditate, pray, and help those less fortunate around us. In the Polish tradition, one strand of hay was set aside each time he or she did a good deed or made a sacrifice, helping or sharing with another. The more good deeds, the softer the bed Baby Jesus will have on Christmas Eve. This spiritual practice is called the "hay of good deeds." This practice continues today in another form, in many churches, known as the tree of good deeds or in our case "a wish list." Christmas trees are decorated in church with pieces of paper noting the special needs of people or families of the community or the church. As these deeds are taken and accomplished, they are replaced with an ornament. The more good deeds the more beautifully decorated the tree will be!



Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Francis Church,
Last Christmas season we had a St. Francis Wish-List, noting items needed for our sanctuary, which are now in use in our worship and Holy Mass. We remain ever thankful for your kindness and generosity shown us for those gifts.

This year, our Wish-List is directed to our 'St. Francis Parish Hall.' Our hall rentals remain a great support financially to our Parish. So our need is for improvements and renovation of this space.

Our hope is to replace drafty windows, replace lighting, raise the ceiling height and insulate and replace walls. Yes, this is a big project. But we are blessed with a skilled carpenter (Fr. Andrew) and other helpful hands. Work would begin during the summer months, as our hall rentals are at a minimum at that time. We will start small and with our continued prayers and God's will - we will move forward.

Please note your donation for a specific item or combine with others on one item or state for a general use. Note your donation for a requiem intention, a joyous occasion or for a health need.

We will note your gift and gift intentions in our St. Francis bulletin. A future date will be made to hold a 'Special Mass' of thanksgiving and note of your intentions. All are invited to join us in this celebration.

Again, 'thank you' for your continued faithfulness and support for St. Francis Parish. With such good efforts and direction we continue...

Always, remaining in thought and prayer.
Fr. Andrew and Parish Committee