

ST. FRANCIS POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

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Sunday, December 18, 2011

FOURTH 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, as we approach the yearly remembrance of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, may 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 fourth candle, may we be prepared more thoroughly in making the way for your son, especially in the depths of our joyful hearts. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH CANDLE: (Reader): O Lord, we beg you, incline your ear to our prayers and enlighten the darkness of our minds by the grace of Your visitation. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

CONTEMPORARY RITE - Mass Book pg. 63

(please note: No "Gloria" during Advent)

READING I-2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

When King David was settled in his palace, and the LORD had given him rest from his enemies on every side, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!" Nathan answered the king, "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you." But that night the LORD spoke to Nathan and said: "Go, tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Should you build me a house to dwell in?'

"It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth. I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel.

I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

The promises of the LORD I will sing forever; through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness.

For you have said, "My kindness is established forever"; in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

"I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant: Forever will I confirm your posterity and establish your throne for all generations."

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

"He shall say of me, 'You are my father, my God, the Rock, my savior.' Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him, and my covenant with him stands firm."

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

READING II - Romans 16:25-27

Brothers and sisters: To him who can strengthen you, according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen

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

GOSPEL - Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise be to you Lord Jesus Christ.

INTERCESSIONS - RESPONSE - GOD, HEAR US! or other.

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"

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The liturgy reminds us, during these four weeks, of the time during which the world was without Jesus. This Mediator we now await, and since we go to God through Him, we implore Him to hasten his coming.

ST. JOHN OF KANTI (1390-1473) December 23

St. John of Kanti, also known as St. John Cantius, was born at Kanti, Poland, on June 23, 1390. A learned, holy man, he studied at the University of Cracow and was ordained to the priesthood. He taught for many years at the University of Cracow, where his colleagues and students admired his scholarly integrity and simple faith.

His success as a preacher and teacher caused his associates to become jealous of him. As a result, he served for a time as a parish priest in the city of Olkusz. Because of problems in the parish, he would soon return to Cracow to teach Sacred Scripture at the university for the remainder of his life.

John endured envy and misunderstanding from some colleagues who resented his holy life and intellectual gifts, but he remained faithful to his teaching and pastoral work. Unconcerned for his own needs, he gave all he had to others, especially the poor. Desiring to become a martyr, John made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to preach amongst the Turks. During his lifetime, he made four pilgrimages to Rome on foot.

Pope Clement XIII praised his holy teacher after his death, "He gave a wonderful example to university professors, an inspiration of complete dedication to duty and to teaching... With his humility went a rare and childlike simplicity. Every day-after his teaching he would go straight from the lecture hall to the church and spend hours in prayer before Christ and the Eucharist. The God in his heart and the God on his lips were one and the same God." John died at Cracow on Christmas eve, 1473. His prayer: O God, may we grow in wisdom and love. Amen.

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

Centuries ago Christians brought plants and flowers into the celebration of Christmas, for did not Christ come to uphold the dignity of all God's creation? The natural world as well as humans, angels and animals, should have a part in welcoming him.

The evergreens, from ancient times symbols of life and eternity, have always had a prominent place in Christian celebrations. Holly, with its green leaves, its prickly points and red berries, suggested that the Child born in the manger would wear a crown of thorns and shed drops of blood. Mistletoe, long associated in the pre-Christian world with healing, became a symbol of the healing power of Christ. The poinsettia, from Central America, with its bright, starlike flowers, is a natural reminder of the Star of Bethlehem. Other plants that bloom during this season are images also of the Root of David that flowered with new life.

Many nations have contributed a rich mosaic of Christmas customs. Among the Latin peoples, the Christmas novena, nine days of prayer before Christmas, is a popular tradition. The Christmas meal after Midnight Mass, in which all the family participates, is traditional among the French. Among the Slavic peoples on Christmas Eve, the father of the family breaks the feast-day wafers of bread and gives them to the members of his household, while wishing all the peace of Christmas. From Ireland came the custom of placing lighted candles in the windows during Christmastime. It originated in penal times when the Catholic religion was suppressed in Ireland and priests were forced into hiding. Irish families put a burning candle in their window and left the door unlatched, hoping that a priest might come to their door and

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

celebrate the Christmas Mass with them. On the feast of the Epiphany, January 6th, the peoples of South America celebrate the coming of the Three Kings with colorful processions and give gifts on that day.

"HE SHALL BE CALLED WONDERFUL"

December 18 - Today, after Mass, we need a few volunteers to help us decorate the church for Christmas...trim the trees, set the windows, change the altar cloths, arrange the flowers, and most importantly adorn our Nativity! Thank you for your time and talents!

December 24 - Shepherds Mass at 9 p.m.

Our traditional Meal will follow after Mass in the Church Hall.

December 25 - Sunday Mass, Christmas Day at 9 a.m.

BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY - Henri Nouwen

A reflection of faith and wisdom...THE FULLNESS OF TIME

Jesus came in the fullness of time. He will come again in the fullness of time. Wherever Jesus, the Christ, is the time is brought to its fullness. We often experience our time as empty. We hope that tomorrow, next week, next month, or next year the real things will happen. But sometimes we experience the fullness of time. That is when it seems that time stands still; that past, present, and future become one; that everything is present where we are; and that God, we, and all that is have come together in total unity. This is the experience of God's time. "When the completion of the time came (that is, in the fullness of time), God sent his Son, born of a woman" (Galatians 4:4), and in the fullness of time God will "bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth" (Ephesians 1:10). It is in the fullness of time that we meet God.