

St Paul Catholic Church

P A R I S H N E W S L E T T E R

November 2016



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We WAIT in hopeful expectation
and REJOICE in the birth
of our Savior, Jesus Christ.



A vivid memory of my early childhood is the time my mother read an article in a Catholic magazine about a German tradition that was beginning to become popular here in the United States as well. It was called the "Advent Wreath." I remember Mom reading this article out loud to us and becoming quite enthusiastic about it, saying we ought to do this at our house. (You have to remember, kids, this was in the days shortly after the dinosaurs and long before computers and Google and cell phones, the post-World War II years, to be precise.) She read carefully what was required, went shopping for the requisite three purple and one pink candle (the former were quite difficult to find in those primitive times, and for a while she thought she might have to try to make her own somehow; purple ribbon was a challenge too; stores stocked that at Easter time, not Advent.) Dad got the job of finding the evergreen boughs that would be wired together into the shape of the wreath, and I remember that the actual holders for the candles took some work too, but when it was all done, it was magnificent. I can still smell the evergreens and feel the sticky sap where the wires cut into the bark; it cleared the sinuses, I think....

And we were all excited that first Sunday of Advent when we lit the first candle on the wreath in the center of the dining room table at supper time and prayed the prayers from the magazine article. It was a bit like following a recipe that first time; mom wanted to make sure we did it right. And indeed it was magical. And the pink candle was especially fascinating, just because it was different from the rest, and it did feel like it embodied that hope for what was shortly in store. I also kind of vaguely remember my mother starting to get a little worried about how dry the wreath was by the time we got to that candle and how careful we had to be in lighting the candles and blowing them out then. As a kid, that little whiff of danger of burning down the house was far from my concern – the wreath was just so much more beautiful with all the candles lit than with just one. I could already sort of subconsciously sense that that first candle

expressed as much what was lacking in the present as it offered a promise of what the future held. I just remember being simultaneously happy to see it lit and wishing all the more that the time would hurry up so we could light the others too.

In those primitive times we lay people had nothing to do with the liturgy, of course. We just prayed our rosaries and private prayers in church while the priest did whatever he did with his back to us far away up at the high altar, silently (which didn't matter because it was in Latin anyway). The Advent wreath was a way that we lay people could do something. And of course it caught on very, very quickly. Many people adopted the custom. Stores started selling them (which I always looked down my nose at, sniff – we made ours!)

Soon we began to have them even in church itself, and late to the party, the official church finally came up with a blessing for them in the Book of Blessings.

Today, the Advent wreath is universal. At my first parish, St. Joe's in Tiffin, we didn't even put the Advent wreath away after Advent – we just put white candles and gold bows on it and voilá! It became a Christmas wreath! I was already ordained by then, but that too has become a favorite custom of mine – that visible symbol of transformation, "life changed, not ended," still speaks on a deeply subliminal level to me. Looking back, I think maybe Mom's advent wreath may be the root of why I've always loved this season, so full of hope, buoyed up by those heart-expanding passages of Isaiah, the prophet of Advent, day after day after day.

This year, to help "Light Up Norwalk" for the bicentennial, we are exploring the possibility of even putting an Advent wreath outdoors at the entrance of the church to greet people as they arrive. That would be so neat! I hope this Advent will be a full four-candle experience of hope and delight for you and your kids, and that maybe it could even have as life-long deep effects on their psyches as my early ones did on mine. We need Advent so badly – because if there's no hope, then all we have is reality. How depressing to be confined to what is! We are made for what could be and Advent encourages and, even more, nourishes that anticipation. So have a truly beautiful, deeply moving, heart-expanding season of Advent Hope!

Marg. Ken

PARISH HAPPENINGS



Rite of Calling
for 1st Communion & Confirmation

Meet & Eat
with World Youth
Day Pilgrims



AfterMass Fun

Mass of Remembrance





WAITING & WELCOMING

The Advent season is a time of waiting, watching, and preparing for the birth of our Lord. What a wonderful opportunity not only to prepare our homes, but also to prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus. When we come to Mass this Christmas, we also need to prepare to welcome others and to share the joy that comes from being a disciple of Christ.

For those of us who celebrate the Eucharist each week, we are keenly aware of those who aren't with us. This is a sad situation, one that has no easy solution. However at Christmas time, we find many family members or friends who do join us for Mass. At some of our Masses, we actually have an abundance of guests! What a happy situation!

Whenever you have guests in your home you do everything possible to make them feel welcome and comfortable. When our parish home has guests we need everyone who is always here to welcome them and make them feel at home. Here are a few tips to help our brothers and sisters feel welcomed and to keep them coming back!

Make room in the pew. Sounds simple, but we rarely do so. Like our favorite chair at home, we tend to covet our "end" of the pew. At Christmas Mass, slide into the middle so our guests will easily fit in. If you truly need to sit on the outside of the pew, consider coming a bit later. Our Hosts will be happy to help you find a seat.

Check at the door your discomfort at having so many guests. All are welcome, and God rejoices when His children come home, even for the occasional visit. So should we.

Be on the alert for our visitors. Help them find their way whether it's to the restrooms or finding the mass settings in our hymnal. We are all Hosts for this celebration. Take an extra moment for someone in need; hold a door open, or share another act of kindness.

Pray for our guests, during Mass and after! We want them home with us and prayer is essential!

Smile and warmly greet every face you see! Welcome our guests as warmly as you would welcome someone you love into your own home. You are the physical sign of Christ's love in our world. Let that love shine!

By the way, if you need a break from the hustle and bustle of this season, join me on Saturday, December 3rd for an Advent mini-retreat. We will begin with Mass at 8:00 am and "retreat" to the Gathering Space for coffee, a sweet treat and reflection on *Advent: The Gracious Gift of Never-Ending Presence*. Please call the parish office (419-668-6044) to register.

~ by Pat Krause

FAITH & FAMILY

WITH FR. PAUL

Advent is the season that begins the liturgical year of the Church, and which also prepares us for the coming of Christ into the world. It is a season of hope and longing – of joyful expectation and of peaceful preparation.

Many symbols and traditions are associated with Advent, including the Advent wreath. The gradual increasing light of each candle symbolizes the approach of Christmas – the birth of Jesus – who is the light of the world. Advent calendars are another way of counting down the days to Christmas in hopeful expectation of the Christ child. Advent hymns also are played in the Church during this time of year, which helps us to reflect upon the world – before and after the promised arrival of Jesus, where “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.”

The official liturgical color for most of the season of Advent is violet which represent a more somber, penitential time. It is a time when Catholics and Christians around the world prepare their hearts for the coming of Christ. This is done by fasting, giving alms to the poor, and increasing one's time in prayer or other personal devotions. Only on the Third Sunday of Advent is the color rose (not pink!) observed, which symbolizes joy!

A few other feast days during the season of Advent include:

November 30th – The Feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle

December 6th – Saint Nicholas – This popular saint gave rise to the gift-giving tradition now associated with “Santa Claus.” In certain countries, it is still a day when parents give simple gifts to their children.

December 8th – The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – A Holy Day of Obligation for all Catholics in the United States.

December 12th – The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe – An important feast in the United States and in many Latino countries. Our parish will celebrate this feast on Sunday, December 4th.

December 13th – Saint Lucy's Day (Not observed this year, since on a Sunday) – A third century martyr, she brought “food and aid to Christians hiding in the catacombs” using a candle-lit wreath to “light her way and leave her hands free to carry as much food as possible.”

~ Fr. Paul

Gingerbread St. Nicholas Cookies

1 stick margarine
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup molasses
1/4 cup water
3 cups of all purpose flour
pinch of salt
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
3/4 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon allspice

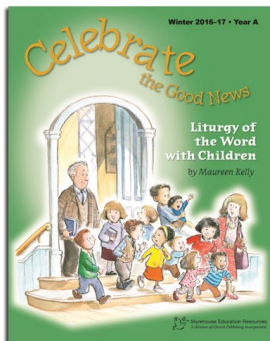
Cream the margarine with the sugar. Blend in the remaining ingredients and mix well. Cover the dough and chill for three hours. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface to ¼ inch thickness, using a floured rolling pin. Cut with cookie cutters and place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes in 375° degree oven. Frost and decorate once cooled.



Visit www.stnicholascenter.org to find St. Nick coloring pages and activities or to purchase St. Nick cookie cutters.

Liturgy of the Word with Children – Excitement is Building!

Parish Family BLESSINGS



In our October Parish Newsletter, we introduced the "vision" for Liturgy of the Word with Children (LWC) as found in our Catholic Church documents. In the November 6th Sunday Bulletin, there was an LWC Information Sheet which introduced the Who?

What? When? and Where? of LWC. (There's a link on the parish website.)

LWC is led by adult and teen PARISHIONERS JUST LIKE YOU! Please consider sharing your time and talent with our parish children by joining the LWC Ministry Team.

An initial 2-hour training session for LWC team members will be held in the St. Paul Gathering Space on Tuesday, December 6th. Team members can choose either the 9:15 am OR the 6:30 pm session. At the training, we will discuss the Church's vision for LWC, the 5 Leader Roles in more detail, and the resources we will be using. We will also go over the "nuts and bolts" of planning and executing a LWC. Please RSVP if you are coming so I have enough materials ready.

Our first LWC will be celebrated on Sunday, January 8, 2017 at the 9:00 am Mass – the Feast of the Epiphany! Children ages 4 and up will be invited to participate!

Questions? RSVP? Contact Marian Bermudez at mbermudez@neo.rr.com or 419-663-5036.



Weddings:

Mr. & Mrs. Tyler & Celeste (Wiedemann) Camp
Mr. & Mrs. Justin & Elizabeth (Riley) Rospert
Mr. & Mrs. José & Elvira (Cruz) Perez

Deaths:

Marilyn A. Hohler
Thomas J. Mockler
Patricia A. Rospert
Marjorie E. Roth
Marjorie H. Zika

Baptisms:

Lydia Rose
Daughter of Adam & Sara Bodell
Briggs Ford
Son of Kevin & Anastacia Komlosi
Reese Marie
Daughter of Chad & Teresa Lucal
Diego Juan
Son of Juan & Rocio Martinez
Charlee Anne
Daughter of Brian & Megan Riley
Kendall Eberly
Daughter of Tavis & Emily Riley
Deklan James
Son of Allen & Kristin Rospert
Levi Howard
Son of Brad & Samantha Rospert
Ryan Gregory
Son of Philip & Amy Rospert
Jack William
Son of Matthew & Liane Roth
Barbara Seevers
Karris Allyn
Daughter of Dan & Stacy Stoll

Recently baptized parishioner, Barbara Seevers, with Msgr. Ken. Welcome!

Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP)

Norwalk St. Paul Conference

Semi-Annual Fiscal Report Oct 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016 (12 month)

Adults assisted- 926
Children assisted- 756
Total Applications - 695

Rent	\$ 64,485
Electric	\$ 27,858
Gas	\$ 2,977
Propane	\$ 747
Water	\$ 8,633
Food (1)	\$ 9,015
Lodging	\$ 607
Gasoline	\$ 342
Comm. /SVDP (2)	\$ 13,428
Office Exp. (3)	\$ 1,236
Total	\$129,328

(1) Large portions of this line item are regular and seasonal assistance to the Norwalk Area Food Bank (NAFB). While we do some direct aid in the form of food vouchers, most food needs are referred to NAFB.

(2) This line item is comprised of assistance to SVDP International and Community Donations (Salvation Army, Non Food Bank, Abigail and Senior Citizens programs). We feel these programs address community and national SVDP type needs that we do not, which are very worthwhile.

(3) It should be noted that over 99% of your donations go directly to people in need.

Vincentians can provide immediate help with food, rent, the threat of a utility disconnection and other related needs. We offer hope to individuals, giving them a chance to recover from their financial problems. In addition, we refer them to other agencies for additional temporary and longer term assistance, which is also a very important part of our mission.

We call ourselves Vincentians in tribute to St. Vincent de Paul. What Vincentians have in common is a desire to serve those who are in need and suffering. In other words, Vincentians embrace the lonely, forgotten and alienated by providing services to anyone in need. Our motto is: **"There is no work of charity that is foreign to the society."**

To respect the wishes of those who donate to us and support our work, we do our best to verify the legitimacy of our clients' claims of need before providing any assistance. We also keep in mind the spirit of Christ, who leads our ministry, which means **we help our neighbors based on need without judging them.** The St. Vincent de Paul committee would like to thank our generous parishioners for the financial support you have given us.

Many blessings to you,

Vincenitian Members
Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Norwalk St. Paul Conference

John Borgia was honored for 15 years of volunteering with the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Thank you, John!



WRAP *Presents* & BE **PRESENT**

#BeBoldBePresent

Sign up for Best Advent Ever at
www.dynamiccatholic.com/best-advent-ever/

BEST
Advent
EVER

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Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration

Sunday, December 4th

1:00 pm Mass in Spanish

*(See parish website for more celebration details.
www.stpaulchurch.org)*