



THE

Recording Angel

St. Mary Catholic Church
127 Monroe St., Monroe, MI 48162
(734) 241-1644
www.stmarymonroe.org



Winter 2009

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MARCings

Advent: a seson to prepare for Christ

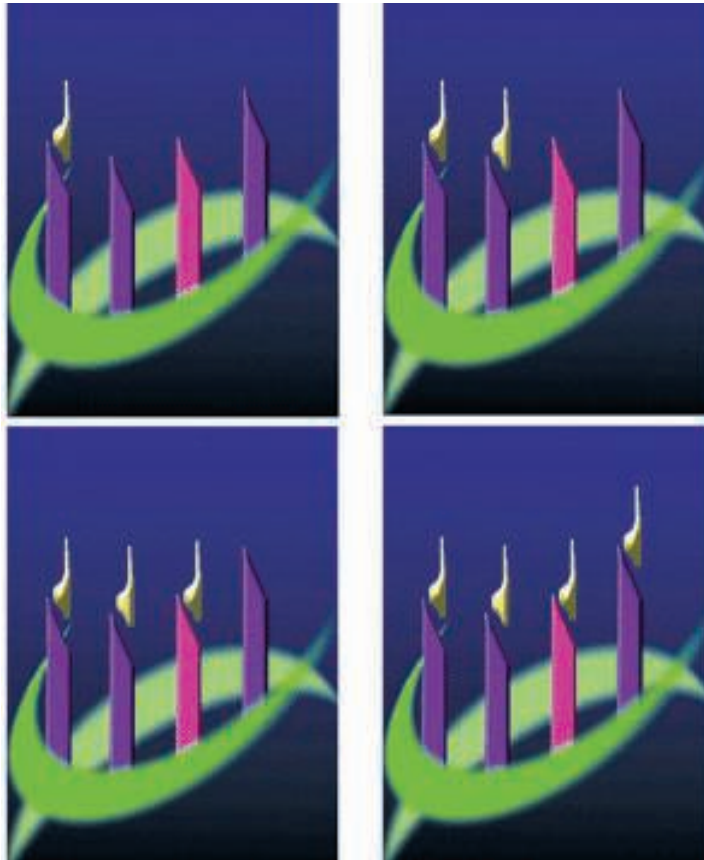
Advent has a twofold character: as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ's first coming to us is remembered; as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. Advent is thus a period for devout and joyful expectation. (*General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar #39*)

The last word in the Church's description of the season of Advent is "expectation." We are accustomed to thinking of Advent as a time for waiting. We should wait for the Lord. But how can we wait if we don't know that someone is coming? So the mind and heart are directed to await the Christ! When we focus on waiting, we focus on what we are doing. But when we recall the coming of Christ, we recall God's action in our lives. The former is what we are in charge of, the latter is God's freely given grace for us in Christ. We are accustomed to focusing on what we can do, but sometimes

we forget what God does for us. Advent is a time to wait, but it is also a time thank God for saving us in Christ.

The readings at Mass for the season of Advent give us some description of the one who is coming, "...the Lord our justice."

“Advent is a time to wait, but it is also a time thank God for saving us in Christ.”



Who will "...strengthen your hearts." (First Sunday of Advent), so that "the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it." (Second Sunday of Advent). He will baptize us "with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Third Sunday of Advent), and will be "God with us." So the one who is coming will change our lives, if we let him. Our waiting can also change our lives, because we know what he brings: justice and peace and salvation. We know what we need to do to prepare the way for His coming.

So during this Advent Season, don't just wait, but keep your eyes, ears and heart open and alert for His coming. Christ comes with love. In the words of Elizabeth to Mary "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." (*Luke 1:45*)

Rev. Marc A. Gawronski

Rev. Marc A. Gawronski, Pastor

Check out the Advent & Christmas calendar on page 5.



Advent prayers and works bring hope

Lorie Bronson, Pastoral Minister

Nurturing the Gift of Married Love

Men and women considering marriage yearn for certain things. They want to be accepted unconditionally by each other. They want their marriages to be filled with love and happiness. They want their life together to be a lifelong source of joy and fulfillment.

The United States Catholic Bishops have drawn attention to the meaning and value of married life for the Church and society. The bishops urge the Catholic Church to become a community of hope and help for marriages and to join others in building a culture of marriage.

In support of the bishop's teaching, St. Mary Parish Community is committed to promoting, strengthening, sustaining and restoring marriages. The work of nurturing a healthy marriage relationship requires an investment of time, an openness to honest dialogue and the sharing of one's very self with their spouse.

Like most Catholic parishes, our ministry

in this area has focused on engaged couples. However, St. Mary Parish has designated five evenings in which married couples will have the opportunity to use a tool called **REFOCCUS**. This will assist married couples as they talk together about finances and family, communication, intimacy and commitment. It is a chance to see how your marriage has changed since your wedding day.

On the Friday evenings of January 8, 22, February 5, 19 we will gather in the Parish Life Center for prayer, some wine and cheese and conversation. Additionally, on Saturday, January 30, 2010 Dr. Timothy Hogan, a Clinical Psychologist will be our guest. His presentation ***Creating a Marriage You've Always Dreamed Of*** will address ways in which married couples can engage, or re-ignite the gift of marital love. Please mark your calendars for these evenings which will begin at 7:00pm and conclude by 9:00pm.

Childcare will be provided if necessary as a way of encouraging your presence and participation.

Although not a pre-requisite, your RSVP will help us in our planning. Please RSVP by contacting the Parish Office (734-241-1644 or parishoffice@stmarymonroe.org) or the Office of Faith Formation (734-241-6097; lorieb@stmarymonroe.org).

Marriage REFOCCUS

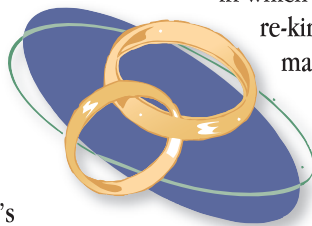
On the Friday evenings of January 8, 22, February 5, 19 we will gather in the Parish Life Center for prayer, some wine and cheese and conversation. Additionally, on Saturday, January 30, 7-9 p.m., Dr. Timothy Hogan will present ***Creating a Marriage You've Always Dreamed Of***

Advent Prayers and Works Bring Hope

We look to the coming days of Advent with hope. Our hope springs from the light of knowledge that fills our lives with the beauty and wisdom of those who have walked this human path before us and opened the way. Our hope is that our preparations for the Christmas feast will foster gratitude and reverence for the gift of our Savior. In our gratitude, may our prayers and works be blessings to ourselves and the many with whom we share this beautiful Earth.

In these days of preparation we are invited to expand and transform our daily lives. Through our prayer and our acts of kindness we become the light that shares the hope of Christ with others.

(Continued on next page)



St. Mary's offers multiple ways to care for ourselves and others during this holy season of Advent.

† Beginning on the first Sunday of Advent the church will be open each day for prayer (7am – 7:30pm). Using Scripture as a starting point from which to ground your Advent prayer, you might want to consider using the daily Mass readings from the Old Testament book of Isaiah and the Gospels of Matthew and Mark as a framework for entering more deeply into the beauty of this season. On Tuesdays during this liturgical season there will be Exposition of the Eucharist. This time for both private and communal prayer invites us to “rest with the Lord” in the midst of our daily busyness.

† **The Spirit of Giving** is one way we can live Christ's command to love as Christ does, to make ourselves the neighbor of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ himself (CCC: Catechism of the Catholic Church 1825). This initiative invites Monroe citizens to extend charity to those in need through their donations of furniture and household items. These donations are stored at the old SMCC Development Office and given freely to those referred to us from MCOP, Salvation Army, United Way, Catholic Charities and the local St. Vincent DePaul societies. Parishioners with pick-up trucks are needed for the pick-up and delivery of donated items. Please call the Office of Faith Formation to offer your help (734-241-6097).

† **St. Mary's St. Vincent DePaul** volunteers respond to the many calls for assistance that are received daily in the parish office. The requests for food as well as financial help for payment of rent and utilities have multiplied. Your continued support of this ministry is needed. Sharing the following foods will help to secure a supply of needed food items: cereal, soup, tuna an mayonnaise, macaroni and cheese, spaghetti sauce, pasta, canned fruits and vegetables, peanut butter and jelly, ketchup and mustard. Financial donations are needed as well to meet the increasing calls for assistance.

Praying through Advent and Christmas

St. Mary Faith Formation Commission continues to sponsor Generations of Faith events. Most recently parishioners gathered to explore several ways to Pray Through Advent and Christmas.

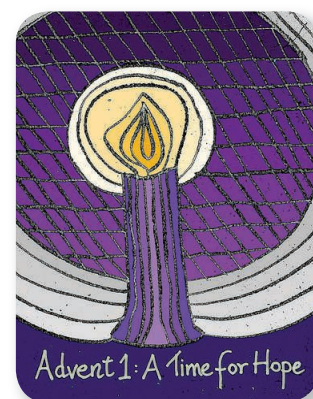
Those who gathered saw an array of Advent and Christmas images. Each of these presentations invite us to prayerfully enter into these holy seasons. Please visit the parish website at www.stmarymonroe.org to see prayers and activities that foster family Advent and Christmas traditions. There are many options from which to choose to begin new family traditions for Advent and Christmas. Marian candles, the Christ candle, an O Antiphon House, a Christmas tree blessing, ways to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 8th) and other saints whose feast days fall within these holy seasons, a multitude of prayer suggestions and much more is readily available on our parish website. Thank you to catechist Sharon Mason for her many hours of research and creativity.



Family traditions were celebrated with a “recipe table.”



Families celebrate Advent by constructing an O Antiphon House introduced at the Generations of Faith event.



All powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. AMEN

The Mystery of Advent at St. Mary Catholic School

Melody Curtis, Principal, St. Mary Grade School

St. Mary Catholic School celebrates Advent as a liturgical season of waiting and preparation for the coming of the Messiah in history, in our daily lives, and at the end of the world. The school children and the teachers participate and live the special days and once-a-year customs throughout the Advent calendar.

A sure sign that Advent has arrived is watching the students build and create Advent wreaths. There is no one right way to build an Advent wreath.

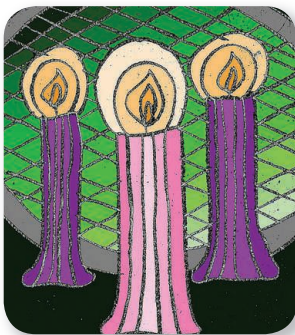
However, even the youngest children are taught that the most important part of making an Advent wreath is praying around it with their teachers, classmates, and family members.

The special liturgical time brings scripture readings, prayers of devotion and commitment to the arrival of Jesus Christ. While in one classroom students are engaged in creating Advent calendars and opening

the tiny doors, other classrooms find children assembling Jesse Trees that emphasize the royal lineage of Jesus. In most classrooms it is tradition to collect gifts during Advent for those in need. Sharing gifts with those in need and sharing other forms of hospitality is an essential part of who we are as Catholics. The service projects deepen the children's faith and teachers realize how giving has the power to be transformational.

The families of Catholic school students often continue the celebration by observing Advent at home. The reinforcement of Catholic teachings at home and school provides a foundation for deepening the faith formation of the entire parish community.

Advent is a brief season of preparation for a winter of celebration. In the quiet of Advent we make ready to hear angel songs. In the darkness we prepare to be dazzled anew by the star of Bethlehem. So bring on the candles, the songs, the colors, and the seasons because Advent is a road, a way, a symbol of the very heart of the meaning of the Christian life.



Update Loving in Word and Deed



Stage III of our Capital Improvement Campaign is underway, with a new roof and energy efficient windows to cut down on the rectory fuel bills. Over the next six months, we hope to complete more improvements to the rectory, including electrical work and update our Parish Social Hall.

- Total pledged \$1,325,637.
- Total Down Payments: \$300,935.
- Total Payments: \$ 888, 641.
- Balance Due: \$136,061.
- Average Pledge: \$2,114.25
- Numbers of Pledges 627
- 90% paid as of Monday, October 26, 2009

Thanks for your support, as we continue to prepare our parish buildings for ministry for years to come.

Christmas Concert

John E. Raymond, Director of Music

Our 22nd annual Christmas Concert is scheduled for Sunday, December 6, at 7:00pm in the church. All of us involved in the music ministry here at St. Mary have been diligently preparing a wonderful evening of music and reflection.

The Parish Choir has been practicing Christmas and Advent selections along with their regular Sunday anthems each Wednesday evening. Tuesday mornings you can find the Resurrection Choir hard at work in church rehearsing their music for the coming concert. Rockin' with Jesus Choir is comprised of 16 students from the parish school who have volunteered to give up their recess time each Tuesday so that they might adequately prepare their musical selections for the coming holiday season. The St. Cecilia Singers, made up of students

Mark your calendars and plan on joining us on Sunday, December 6 at 7:00pm.

from the Faith Formation classes, have been practicing on Sunday before their classes begin in order to have their selections ready as well. Finally, our Liturgical Music Ensemble has also been hard at work Wednesday evenings in the social hall fine tuning their musical renditions.

Yes, it requires much work to offer a program such as this. But honestly, we all consider it our gift to all of you as gratitude for your unwavering support throughout the year. If you have never attended, why not make this the year. It truly is a night of wonder and awe. The great tower bell joyously summons you into church. Upon entering the darkened sanctuary, your eyes are drawn to the immense Christmas tree lit for the first time. Soon the warm glow of candlelight flickers off of the walls much as it would have when our ancestors gathered in this very same space to worship as we do. You have an opportunity to sing Christmas carols as well as socialize with fellow parishioners and neighbors at the Parish Life Center after the concert.



Advent, Sacrament of Reconciliation & Christmas calendar



Sacrament of Reconciliation

Monroe Vicariate
Advent 2009

St. Mary, Rockwood

Tuesday, December 1
6:15 p.m.

**Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
Temperance**

Sunday, December 6
3:00 p.m.

St. Mary, Monroe

Monday, December 12
11:00 a.m.

St. Michael the Archangel

Sunday, December 13
3:00 p.m.

St. Anne

Saturday, December 19
11:00 a.m.

St. Joseph, Monroe

Sunday, December 19
2:00 p.m.

**>> Sunday, November 29
First Sunday of Advent**

The Advent Wreath will be blessed at lit at the 4:30 p.m. Mass on Saturday. The light will grow as the darkness in us decreases, while we await the coming of the Lord

**>> Beginning Monday, November 30
The Church will be open for prayer
between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.**

**>> Tuesdays during Advent
Exposition of the Most
Blessed Sacrament**

will take place on Tuesdays during Advent beginning on Tuesday, December 1 from 2:00 p.m until 6:45 p.m.

**>> Tuesday, December 8
Feast of the Immaculate
Conception,
(Holy Day of Obligation)**

Masses at 8:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Today we celebrate our belief that Mary was free from sin from the moment of her conception. Come and celebrate our parish on the Patronal feast we share with of the United States.

Let the Christmas Lights Shine! Despite what the stores say, The Christmas Season does not end until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord: Sunday, January 10, 2010!

**>> Sunday December 6
Second Sunday of Advent**

**>> Sunday, December 6
St. Mary Parish Festival
of Lessons & Carols**

7:00 p.m. in Church. Followed by a reception in the Parish Life Center

**>> Sunday, December 13
Third Sunday of Advent**

The Second half of Advent turns our gaze toward Bethlehem, where we will find God entering into our world in the person of Jesus Christ. O Come Emmanuel.

**>> Sunday, December 13
Fr. Marc installed as Vicar-9:30 Mass**
Bishop Reiss will install Fr. Marc Gawronski as Vicar of the Monroe Vicariate. Reception to follow in the PLC

GIVING TREE GIFTS ARE DUE TODAY

Giving Tree Gifts will be delivered on Saturday December 19, 2009. Call (734) 241-6088 to volunteer.

**>> December 20
Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**Parish Office closes at noon on
Tuesday, December 22-January 4**

**>> Thursday, December 24
Christmas Eve**

- 4:00 p.m. Mass with carols sung by children before Mass, and a homily especially for children
- 6:00 p.m. Mass
- 8:00 p.m. Misa en español
- Midnight Mass, Solemn Celebration of the Nativity (Carols at 11:30 p.m.)

*Children are welcome
at all Christmas Masses!*

**>> Friday, December 25
Christmas Day**

Masses will be celebrated at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m.

**>> Sat./Sun., December 26 & 27
Feast of the Holy Family of
Jesus, Mary and Joseph**

Saturday: 4:30 p.m.
Regular Sunday Mass Schedule:
Sunday: 7:30, 9:30, & 11:30 a.m.
Misa en español at 1:00 p.m.

**>> Friday, January 1, 2010
Octave of Christmas: Solemnity
of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
the Mother of God
(Holy Day of Obligation)**

Mass at 9:00 a.m.

**>> Sunday, January 3, 2010
Solemnity of the Epiphany
of the Lord**

Regular Sunday Mass Schedule

Other events in the life of St. Mary parish

December 10

Christian Women Advent Dinner
4:00 p.m. , PLC,

December 12

Parish Communal Penance Service and First Reconciliation, 11:00 a.m., Church

December 13

Giving Tree Gifts Due

December 20

Christian Women Bake Sale, PLC

December 22 (at noon)-January 4

Parish Office Closed

January

January 6

Christian Women Soup Luncheon,
11 a.m. – 1 p.m., PLC

January 8

Marriage Enrichment, 7 p.m., SH

January 11

Vicariate Vocations Gathering
7:00 p.m., PLC

January 14

Vicariate Mass & Reception
with Bishop Reiss, 6:00 p.m., Church

January 16

Ushers Spaghetti Dinner, Gym

January 16

Health Ministry's "Walk to Jerusalem"
kick-off, 5:30 p.m., PLC

January 22

Marriage enrichment, 7:00 p.m., SH

January 24

SMS Open House and Pancake Breakfast,
8:00 a.m. – Noon

January 27

Vicariate Council Meeting,
7:00 p.m., PLC

January 30

Dr. Timothy Hogan Presentation
Marriage Enrichment, 7:00 p.m., PLC

February

February 3

Christian Women Soup Luncheon
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., PLC

February 5

Marriage Enrichment, 7:00 p.m. – SH

February 7

"Will Our Teens Have Faith?"
6:00 – 9:30 p.m., PLC

February 19

Marriage Enrichment, 7:00 p.m. – SH



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BE SURE TO VISIT OUR FRESH, NEW, EASY-TO-USE WEBSITE!

Includes calendar of parish-wide events, Mass times,
"The Chronicle," Liturgy Schedule and more!

www.stmarymonroe.org

Design & Layout by Crysti Esper

Spirit of Christmas Giving Tree



To help celebrate the Advent Season, St. Mary's will again take part in the "Spirit of Christmas" project in Monroe with our "Giving Tree." The Spirit of Christmas" committee is made up of representatives from various churches and service organizations who work with Social Services and the Salvation Army to see that everyone in our community is remembered in some way at Christmas time. With the "Giving Tree," St. Mary's parishioners help these families and foster kids as well as our parishioners who are in need of some help at Christmas. For some of these people, the gifts from St. Mary will be the only gifts they receive this Christmas.

Each card on our tree will have a particular person listed with their age, size and some special needs. A gift for this person could include any of the

items listed or something else appropriate for a person of that age. Each child has at least 2 tags on our tree, one for clothing and one for something fun. Also, a tag for a household gift for each family will include something they requested.

Wrapped gifts with the card attached need to be returned by Sunday, December 13. The gifts will then be checked in a package for delivery, Saturday, December 19. If anyone would like to help us with delivery, please call Linda in the bookkeeping office at 241-6088. Also, if anyone has a need for assistance this Christmas, please call Linda. All requests are kept confidential.

St. Mary's response to this project has always been overwhelming. The sight of so many gifts under our tree, which came from the generosity of St. Mary's people, is indeed heartwarming. Also, after Christmas each year, we receive a number of thank you notes for the people who benefitted from our "Giving Tree."