



ASSUMPTION

of the
Blessed Virgin Mary
PARISH

ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT

Offers Wonderful Time for Reflection and Fellowship

NOV/DEC 2017
Inside

With the holiday season approaching, many women are staring at the growing to-do list that stares back each day – and with it, the pressures to get everything in perfect readiness to meet everyone’s expectations.

It’s time to hit “pause.”

Women of the parish are invited to do just that by attending our 10th Annual Advent by Candlelight from 6-8 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3 in the Parish Center.

“It’s a beautiful evening for the ladies of the parish to celebrate and rekindle our faith in preparation for the holy season of Advent,” says Tedra Courtis, this year’s coordinator. “It’s also when we can prepare our hearts for Christmas. This is a time for music, food and fellowship, and also a time to pause from our to-do list and stop to remember what the season is really about.”

The women of the parish are being invited to sign up to be a hostess for the evening. Each hostess will decorate her own table with a centerpiece of her own creation, and provide the food and beverages for her eight invited guests. The parish will provide water and coffee. There will also be a guest speaker and music.

“I think by coming together as a community, we can stop and remember what the season is all about through faith and fellowship,” Tedra says.

Although this time is often spent in a flurry of shopping, cleaning, cooking, and baking, the meaning of the season of Advent often is lost



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STEWARDSHIP

THE FOUR PILLARS

You've heard about the three Ts of stewardship, but what about the four Ps?

The three Ts — time, talent and treasure — describe the personal gifts we offer to the Church. The four Ps are the “four pillars” of parish stewardship described by the renowned pastor Msgr. Thomas McGread. They are the hallmark of a stewardship parish — hospitality, prayer, formation and service. Let's take a look at each of them to understand how we can improve in each area.

HOSPITALITY

CHRISTIAN KINDNESS

“When I was a stranger, you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). The Gospel teaches that whenever we welcome the least of our brothers or sisters, we welcome Christ himself. That is why the first mark of a stewardship parish is hospitality. Being friendly is one of the first ways we can be Christ-like toward others.

Modern Catholic parishes are often so large and have so many Masses that many parishioners don't know one another. To create a sense of community, be sure to smile and greet others as you enter and exit the Church. Let's try harder than ever to be a welcoming community.

PRAYER

HEART-TO-HEART WITH GOD

“Do not become so involved in the work of the Lord that you forget the Lord of the work,” a seminary professor once taught. In other words, don't get so caught up with parish projects and outreach efforts that you forget to draw aside to spend time with God in prayer. Every great saint has taught that prayer is the most essential component in the life of the Christian. Through prayer, we nurture our most important relationship — the one that will last for all eternity.

A healthy prayer life should include communal prayer such as Mass, as well as personal prayer and family prayer. The two biggest obstacles to prayer are lack of time and lack of understanding of how to pray. We have to schedule time for prayer just as we would for an important appointment. And we have to learn how to pray from other people. Many saints have written spiritual books that describe different methods of prayer.

FORMATION

CONTINUOUS CONVERSION

Pope John Paul II always emphasized ongoing conversion. From childhood through adulthood, our whole life must be a process of drawing closer to God. He never stops calling us forward to learn more and to examine ourselves more deeply.

Very often our society values material things more than interior virtues. But as personal experience shows, when we finally acquire the car or house or “toy” that we wanted so badly, it doesn't really satisfy. On the other hand, we don't tend to desire spiritual virtues with the same kind of longing, but when we actually have them, we find them far more rewarding than material things.

SERVICE

LOVE IN ACTION

“Amen I say to you, whatever you did to the least of my brothers, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). This Scripture was one of St. Teresa of Calcutta's favorites. Each time she picked up a poor and hungry child, she knew she was ministering to Christ. While we may not view ourselves as saints, we too are called to such heroic service right within our own community. As St. Teresa of Calcutta said, “To be a saint is not the privilege of a few, but the duty of everyone.”

We have many service opportunities right here within our own parish. If you have the willingness to serve and take the initiative to find where you are needed, you'll find that there is no end to the families and individuals who truly need help. How can you reach out to them in love?

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A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Beginning a New Season of Hope

Dear Parishioners,

As we enter the holiday season, our hearts yearn to give thanks and we begin longing for Christ's Peace. It is not an accident that as darkness deepens, we testify to the light. As we enter a new year in the life of the Church, we at Assumption BVM are introducing a new opportunity for us to grow as a Parish Family.

On Dec. 3, we are adding a Sunday evening, 5:30 Mass. Our Life Teen Youth Ministry, led by our new Director of Youth Ministry, Phil Lewandowski, are sponsoring this evening Liturgy. Our greatest hope is that all our young people, especially those who may not feel close to the heart of the Church, will be drawn to worship with us on Sunday nights and to stay for opportunities to fellowship and deepen their relationships with God and each other through our Youth Ministry programs. We also trust that this additional Mass is an open invitation for all in our community to gather for praise and worship and to be nourished by the Eucharist.

Our culture has rightly



identified the need for Thanksgiving and the season of "gifts" which leads us into the New Year. In the light of our faith in Christ, we recognize the longing of our hearts for gratitude as a prompting of the Holy Spirit for us to embrace who and whose we really are in Christ. We prepare to celebrate the coming of God in our day, the Word become flesh, God become a human person; God's answer to our prayer for gratitude is the gift of God's own life to us, an

invitation for us to participate in God's own life. The season of Advent is our New Year, our new beginning. As we and all around us wrestle with hints of despair in our souls, let us count again on God's Mercy to be poured out in abundance; let us trust again God's love revealed through the Infant in the manger and fully present in us.

If you have not been with us regularly at Sunday Mass, I encourage you to join us in a new way and at a new time. The 5:30 Sunday Evening Mass may be exactly what your family needs; it may be precisely where God is calling you. Please respond to God's invitation with thanksgiving and praise. I look forward to beginning this new season of hope with you. God bless you.

Per Matrem Ad Filium,
(Through the Mother to the Son)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Mitch Doyen". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a thick black line.

Fr. Mitch Doyen,
Pastor

PARISH INVOLVEMENT AS A N

..... *Meet the Enr*

One of the greatest gifts we receive through the Sacrament of Matrimony is the encouragement in the faith that husbands and wives are able to offer one another and model for their children. This is certainly the case for parishioners Jonas and Michelle Enriquez! On any given weekend, you can find this couple and their school-age children – Tyler, 17; Zachary, 16; Angelina, 14; and Isabella, 5 – participating in one, two, or even three Masses. Their oldest son, Dominic, 18, has already become an active member of the Catholic Newman Center during his first year at Washington University.

Building a strong faith life is such a team effort for Jonas and Michelle that if you ask which of them is the driving force behind their family's involvement in the parish, each spouse gives credit to the other.

"Jonas always says I'm the one who got him back into church, and I always think he is the one that got me there," Michelle says.

Although Michelle's father had been raised Catholic, she herself was not raised in the Church. In college, she realized she wanted to become Catholic and began frequenting the Newman Center. Jonas, on the other hand, is a cradle Catholic.



The Enriquez family – (from left) Tyler, Angelina, Michelle, Isabella (front), Dominic (back), Jonas, and Zachary

During his first year of college, however, he was only attending Mass during his visits home. At the age of 20, Jonas lost his father, and from that time on, he began making his way back to Mass. About a year later, Jonas and Michelle met, and attending Mass together became a regular part of their lives.

Years later, a mutual desire to draw even closer to Christ would once again work in the hearts of both Jonas and Michelle. Hoping to become more involved in the faith commu-

nity here at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Michelle signed up for a Christ Renews His Parish, or CRHP, retreat. When a back injury prevented her from attending the weekend, she encouraged Jonas to experience CRHP in her place, and she made her own CRHP weekend as soon after as she could.

Amazed by their first CRHP weekends, both spouses continued to participate in these life-changing retreats.

"Once we did CRHP, everything started opening up – we

"To be honest, we don't do more than anybody else. The faith community here is really just an extension of our family. I'm pretty sure our youngest child, Bella, thinks that Assumption is her house! That has just been our life."

– Michelle Enriquez

NATURAL PART OF FAMILY LIFE

Enriquez Family

made friends, we got involved, and we felt closer to God,” Michelle says. “We had been married at that time for about 15 years, and had adopted four children. When I was a spiritual director at a CRHP weekend, I shared that I had accepted I would never feel life inside me. Then a month later, I ended up pregnant with Bella! It was a miracle – there was nothing else to explain it.”

Feeling their faith lives renewed and energized, Jonas and Michelle began diving headfirst into parish life – in addition to working with CRHP, they joined the Choir and the men’s and women’s ministry groups, and began helping with the Fall Festival and the Advent Giving

Tree. They also serve as Eucharistic Ministers, and Michelle is a lector. When it comes to parish involvement, their rule of thumb is to try to do things together as a family. As a result, their children are very active in the Church as well, participating as altar servers, ushers, and Eucharistic Ministers.

While the Enriquez family already serves in so many ways, they are looking ahead to the future and hoping to give even more of themselves in the coming years.

“I think I’m at the point where I’ve received enough that it’s time to give back,” Jonas says. “Michelle and I are in the second year of a lay formation program now, so I’d say there is more to come. I don’t

think we’re where we need to be or want to be yet in our faith community, but we feel we’re getting the guidance that we’ve prayed for. It’s not just us – it’s the youth group, the school community and parish community that has helped raise us as a family.”

When all is said and done, staying actively involved in our parish just seems to be a natural part of life for the Enriquez family.

“To be honest, we don’t do more than anybody else,” Michelle says. “The faith community here is really just an extension of our family. I’m pretty sure our youngest child, Bella, thinks that Assumption is her house! That has just been our life.”

Advent by Candlelight *continued from front cover*

in the turmoil. Advent by Candlelight can be a perfect time for reflection.

“The season of Advent is celebrating Mary and celebrating her ‘yes,’” Tedra says. “Because she said ‘yes,’ when we say ‘yes,’ we’re saying ‘yes’ to our life with Christ. It just quiets your heart. It puts everyone in a place of peacefulness and really gets you focused. We can really get wrapped up in the to-dos, and it makes me sad that our society is so gift-driven and that’s not what it’s about. Take your kids to a food pantry and donate your time. I think this is a really good way to ignite your faith and prepare your heart for Advent and the true meaning of Christmas.”

“It’s a beautiful evening for the ladies of the parish to celebrate and rekindle our faith in preparation for the holy season of Advent. It’s also when we can prepare our hearts for Christmas. This is a time for music, food and fellowship, and also a time to pause from our to-do list and stop to remember what the season is really about.” – Tedra Courtis

If you would like more information about Advent by Candlelight, please call Tedra Courtis at 636-379-5958, or email her at tedra.courtis@gmail.com.

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Returning to the Father

Those of us who have children know what it's like when they come to us apologetically after having done something they know is wrong. As parents, it melts our hearts, and we can't help but forgive them freely, and take them into our arms – sometimes squeezing them with tears in our eyes! At times, we may even feel closer to them than we did before the event occurred.

This, we can assume, is how God feels, being our most clement Father. In His magnanimous love, He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to redeem the world, freeing it from the haunting grips of sin and death. Christ instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation through His Church to offer sinners forgiveness for the offenses they committed against God.

As the Angelic Doctor St. Thomas Aquinas writes so beautifully, “[The Sacrament of Confession is a] sacrament of healing and a sacrament of conversion, returning us to the Father after we have sinned. In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine

so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance.”

As far as the details for the reception of this sacrament are concerned, three conditions are necessary – contrition, which is genuine sorrow for sin, together with a purpose of amendment; confession of sins without any omission; and satisfaction by means of good works. A priest is gravely bound to keeping total confidentiality for all confessions they hear.

Church law requires Catholics to confess mortal sins – the most serious kind of sins – to a priest at least once per year, and to confess them before ever receiving Holy Communion, as well. However, this is by far the minimum; Catholics are encouraged to receive the sacrament freely and frequently since it is so extremely beneficial to the health of the mind, soul and spiritual life in general.

To honor the Sacraments is to honor God and the entire Christian community. To receive the Sacraments is to live in God's love and to strengthen our love for each other. Christ, our tenderhearted, Paschal Lamb, awaits us, His beloved children, to come to Him with all of our hearts.



PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH THE HIDDEN CHRIST

The St. Vincent de Paul Society

Throughout the Gospels, Christ makes it clear that an intrinsic part of discipleship is helping those in need. Just as Jesus spent much of his earthly ministry comforting the poor and healing the sick, we Catholics are each called to do our part to help our suffering neighbor. Here at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the St. Vincent de Paul Society is one of many opportunities for parishioners to fulfill this discipleship calling.

Describing it as a “person-to-person ministry,” current President Jim Beaudry says the Society uniquely allows its members to encounter the hidden Christ.

“We don’t have people come to us,” Jim says. “We actually go out, sit down with, and develop a friendship with people in need. You almost have to see the eyes of the Lord in the people that you are working with. That’s something that truly makes this organization unique.”

Jim became part of the St. Vincent de Paul Society seven years ago. Looking for a way to become more involved, Jim was attracted to the Society’s unique method of administering to the poor and less fortunate. Living by its mission to “witness God’s love by embracing all working of charity and justice,” the St. Vincent de Paul Society strives to administer to all those in need, regardless of their religion or social status.

“I guess that was really the big thing that attracted me to the ministry, namely that they went out and helped our neighbors in need,” Jim says. “It’s not based on religion – it’s a ministry that helps anyone who needs help.”

Typically, this process begins through the Vincentians’ 24-hour call line where individuals can confidentially request aid. Soon after, two caseworkers travel to the person’s residence in order to meet with them and personally assess the level of need. These caseworkers will continue working with the family or individual for quite some time, Jim says, helping them move from a life of instability to stability.

“Once a need has been ascertained, we will help



Vincentian workers organizing food items for distribution.



Some of our parish Scouts helping provide and organize food for a Christmas distribution.

out with all kinds of things such as food, utilities, and even funeral expenses,” Jim says. “We really cover a broad spectrum of needs in our efforts to help people. The big thing that I’m pleased with, though, is that a few years ago, we shifted to a systemic change method. What this means is that when we go out and meet with a person, we’ll sit

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down with them and have a client intake form. We develop a rapport and try to determine why they are in the situation they are in. Then we try to help them identify what they need to change in order to get out of this situation.”

Last year alone the Society provided food for 963 people and assisted 378 families with things like utilities, rent and auto repairs. The St. Vincent de Paul Society also continues to provide other services such as coordinating the Thanksgiving and Christmas programs, providing names for and assisting with the Giving Tree distribution, and main-

taining a Vincentian thrift store. Yet, these good works are only made possible, Jim says, through the generous support of parishioners.

“I truly feel that the whole parish supports this ministry,” Jim says. “If it wasn’t for our parishioners being involved, we wouldn’t be able to do much at all in terms of helping those in need. They help us financially, they help us with food, and they help us through their physical assistance at Christmastime and during special food drives.”

And the joy of doing such work, Jim says, is truly irreplaceable.

If you have a desire to serve our hidden Lord more fully, we encourage you to consider joining the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The ministry currently meets the first and third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. For more information, please contact Jim Beaudry at 636-240-8811.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. (MH), Vigil Mass 5:00 p.m. | **Sunday:** 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., Noon

Daily Mass: Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m., MH at 6:30 a.m.

Perpetual Adoration: 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Reconciliation: Thursday 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Chapel, Saturday 4:00-4:45 p.m. in the Church