

ST. ROBERT BELLARMINÉ

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2015

CELEBRATING ADVENT!

Here we are again in Advent, that beautiful time in our Church when we begin our liturgical new year and eagerly prepare for Christmas! This is a time of joyful anticipation and a time we celebrate together as a family! You may have traditions you do as a family (please share what you do with us! It is always exciting to hear how you celebrate!). You may be looking for some new ways to celebrate, so here are some ways to really get into this season:

- **Advent Wreath:** The wreath hold four candles (3 purple, 1 pink) for each week of Advent. Light your Advent Wreath and sing a song like “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” or “Come, Lord Jesus” and incorporate that into your family prayer.
- **St. Nicholas Day:** I have to admit, this is one of my favorite traditions! Dec. 6th is St. Nick’s feast day, the saint behind the legend of Santa Claus. Celebrate it by having family members put out a shoe in a designated spot together the night before. The hope is that St. Nick will come with his miter, staff, & a bag of gifts. Then read a book about St. Nick. Perhaps the next morning, there will be a small present in everyone’s shoes!
- **Jesse Tree:** Decorate your tree with Jesse Tree ornaments! The ornaments of the Jesse Tree tell the story of god in the Old Testament, connecting the Advent season with the faithfulness of God across four thousand years of history. Great resource for this is loyolapress.com/the-jesse-tree.htm.

May your family have a joyous and wonderful Advent!

-Hannah Turchi

LEVEL ONE

The 3-6 year old children will enter into Advent, our time of preparation and we will have a special procession to mark that change (we are so excited to change our prayer table cloth to purple!). Also, we will be seeing the presentations of The Annunciation and The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, as well as the Messianic Prophecies.

In *The Annunciation*, Mary is told two wonderful mysteries: that God was going to become human in the person of Jesus and that He chose Mary to be the mother of His son. We see Mary freely consented to be part of God’s plan of Salvation and we wonder what Mary must have felt that day. We also wonder about this baby who is to be “Son of the Most High.”

In *The Visitation*, we hear how Elizabeth was filled with joy (the Holy Spirit) and how the baby jumped inside her with joy. From this presentation, we know that God became human in the person of Jesus and that Mary is blessed among women because she is the mother of God. We see that encountering Jesus brings great joy (through the examples of Elizabeth and Mary)!



Search for **myParish** on the App Store or Google Play to download our app today!



Level One figures of Mary, Gabriel, & the Holy Spirit

LEVEL TWO

The 6-9 year olds will enter into Advent by hearing *The Annunciation* and *The Visitation*. We have been presented these presentations in Level I but now that we're older, we can go even deeper into the scripture passages and hear them with new ears (especially after working the *History of the Kingdom of God* material). In *The Annunciation*, we reflect on how the angel tells Mary that the baby will have a "Kingdom without end." We think about this Kingdom and what we know of it (the Kingdom is the Parousia). We think about Mary who calls herself a servant and who collaborated with God. We think back on *the Fettuccia* and our Blank Page. We wonder: does God's plan need collaborators in order to be realized? Are we also called to be collaborators with God?



3rd grader working with the "Visitation" figures (Elizabeth & Mary)

In *The Visitation*, we reflect on how Elizabeth knew about the baby Mary carried and where her knowledge came from (the Holy Spirit). We think about what other gifts of the Holy Spirit that might be present in the scripture passage and if these are gifts for us too. We also reflect on the *Magnificat*, which is Mary's joyful prayer praising God and a daily prayer of the Church.

LEVEL THREE

As we enter Advent, our studies for the 9-12 year olds will be focused on the Prophets- *Call & Vocation of the Prophets*, *Struggles of the Prophets*, and work with the *Messianic Prophecies*. Now, since we were in Level One, we have been learning that the prophets are those who listen to God with their whole heart and speak God's words to the people. Now as we are older and have been studying the *Plan of God*, we are going to look at the lives of the prophets...who were they? In collaboration between God and humankind in salvation history, the prophets, who differed in age and background, shared a common call from God to interpret Israel's history in light of God's deeds of salvation and to point to God's constant presence and love even in the midst of darkness. God's message of Hope comes alive in the waiting for a person, the Messiah, and in waiting for the Parousia, when God will be all in all. *Messianic prophecies* preach three elements: "Do not be afraid," "Rejoice," and "the Lord is with you." We find so much hope and joy reflecting on these prophecies!

So we explore and appreciate the call and role of the prophet in pointing to God's constant presence and love in Sacred Scripture. We also see how the prophets many times faced struggles, specifically Jeremiah, both interior (within the prophet's own heart) and exterior (persecution from the people and rulers). We can see God's faithfulness in His promise to be with the prophet in the face of his mission and struggles. We can relate our struggles to those of the prophets and ponder how we see God's faithfulness in our own struggles. We also think about how being obedient to God's call can bring difficulties, yet there is a sweetness and peace in faithfulness.



NEWS & EVENTS

- **HOLY DAY! THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY** is December 8th. There is no school or Religious Ed classes on Dec. 8th. Mass times for this Holy Day of Obligation are Monday, Dec. 7 at 7 pm and Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 8:30 am. Have a wonderful Holy Day!
- **THERE WILL BE A SPECIAL MASS FOR THE FEAST DAY OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE** on Saturday, Dec. 12 at 8:30 am. She is our patroness for North America and going to Mass is a great way to honor her and ask for her continued intercession.
- **SPECIAL RECONCILIATION TIMES DURING ADVENT! TAKE YOUR WHOLE FAMILY AND PARTICIPATE IN THIS BEAUTIFUL SACRAMENT!** During this preparation time, let's get our hearts ready for Christmas and draw closer to Jesus by going to confession and getting rid of all the blockages that get in the way of our relationship with Jesus! The following times are available for Reconciliation:
 - * *Penance Service on Friday, Dec. 11 at 7 pm (extra priests will be in attendance).*
 - * *Friday, Dec. 18 from 7 pm-9pm.*
 - * *Saturdays, 9:30-10:30 am*
 - * *Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30 pm*
- **ADVENT NIGHT OF REFLECTION IN THE ATRIUM FOR ADULTS:** As adults, we need to experience peace and joy just like our children do! On December 15th at 6:45 pm in Room 13, we will be having a night just for adults in the atrium. We will have a presentation on the prophets and enter more deeply into our Advent season! Join us and experience some of the peace and joy of the atrium!
- **CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES!** Mass times for this Christmas Season will be:
 - * *Christmas Eve at 4:30 pm & 11 pm at St. Robert (Good Shepherd, Montrose at 7 pm)*
 - * *Christmas Day at 9:30 am (Good Shepherd, Montrose at 11:15 am)*
- **CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER:** Does your family have any big plans on Christmas Eve after Mass? Please join us for our annual Christmas Eve Dinner! The church will provide a delicious ham and we ask that you bring a dish to pass. Please RSVP by contacting Marianne Goergen at 810-496-3491/goergensrus@charter.net
- **NO CLASS FOR RELIGIOUS ED.** Dec. 20-30. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!
- **CHILDREN'S EPIPHANY MASS** for all children ages 3-8th grade are invited to participate in this very special Christmas Mass! This celebration will be Saturday, January 2nd at 5 pm. Practice will be at 12:30 pm in the church.
- **HEARTBEAT COLLECTION:** We will be collecting baby clothes and toys (gently used or new) for Heartbeat of Flint, which helps mothers in need. Boxes will be in the church Dec. 19-January 2nd. Please donate and help babies (like Jesus) and their moms.
- **CLASSES RESUME:** The week of January 3rd!

"At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God's own love and concern."

-Bl. Mother Theresa