

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2014

Please pray for those in special need of prayer:

Margaret Robson, Joseph Tubridy, Aldana Katinas, Barbara, Melissa, Peg Torma, Betty Porterfield, Alec Hitt, Travis, Amber Hoyt Phraner, Angel, Carmen, Raymond Bivens, Jr., Helen Pratti, Agnes Henry, Rose Gunderson, Ronnie Hunter, and Robert Bivens.

No Masses Monday & Tuesday the 22nd & 23rd.

**St. John's Sunday Mass is changing to
11:15 am on January 4.**

St. John Ministry Christmas Sign Up

Volunteers are still needed for our Christmas Masses. Sign-up sheets are in the Sacristy.

Living Nativity

The Living Nativity presented by the First Presbyterian Church in Delhi as a reminder of the true meaning of the Christmas season is Monday and Tuesday, December 22, 23. Come by between 6:30 and 8 pm to contemplate for a few minutes.

Christmas Closures

Parish offices will be closed Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, December 24, 25, and 26.

Christmas Eve Masses: 4 pm at St. John
6 pm at St. Peter
Christmas Masses: midnight at St. John
8 am at Holy Family
9:30 am at St. Peter
11 am at St. John
Mary, Holy Mother of God:
8 am at St. Peter
9:30 am at St. John
6 pm at St. Peter
7:15 at St. John

✦ OFFERINGS ✦

St. John: \$ 1,809
Holy Family: 303
St. Peter: 1,682

Christmas Mass Televised

Enjoy Christmas Mass presided by Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger on Time Warner Channel 23 on December 24 at 9 pm and December 25 at 10 am.

🕯🕯🕯 ***Advent Contemplation*** 🕯🕯🕯

"Grant us peace" is a prayer that we fervently utter at every Eucharist, but still the wars go on. Too often we pray for peace with the misconception that peace remains in God's hands, and we must wait for the Lord to bestow it on us. Christmas teaches us the truth that the gift of peace has already been granted to us in the Prince of Peace, Christ Jesus. If war rages on, either in our world or in our hearts, it may be that we are the ones who have refused to make peace.

The instruments of peace lie within us, but time after time we instead choose anger, bitterness, retaliation, or punishing silence. Christmas both heartens and haunts us with the truth that the gifts of peace are already ours: mercy, forgiveness, humility, gentleness, compassion, and forbearance. We need only show the willingness in Christ to hear and answer our own prayer and "grant us peace."



Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

This Christmas remember your task as a parent is the same as Mary's: we must not let our doubts, fears, and unfulfilled expectations get in the way of our loving **acceptance** of our children.

Joseph, a Faithful and Just Man

Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will be a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

Matthew 1:20-21

Matthew's Gospel reveals to us the greatness of St. Joseph's heart and soul. He was following a good plan for his life, but God was reserving another plan for him, a greater mission. Joseph always listened to God's voice, was deeply sensitive to God's secret will, attentive to the messages that came to him from the depths of his hear and from on high.

Joseph did not persist in following his own plan for his life or allow bitterness to poison his soul. Rather, he was ready to make himself available to the news that, in such a bewildering way, was presented to him. By accepting himself according to God's design, Joseph fully finds himself, beyond himself.

Joseph's freedom to renounce even what is his, the possession of his very life, and his full interior availability to the will of God challenge us and show us the way.

Confirmation Retreat

A Retreat for Confirmation candidates is scheduled for March 15 at St. Mary's Church in Oneonta, 1 to 7 pm.

The Season of Advent

Mary was transformed by God's grace from the first moment of her existence, which we celebrated on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. When invited to share in God's plan despite her misgivings, Mary accepted her destiny and role as Jesus' mother, saying, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to Your word." With great joy the Church contemplates her "full of grace" This is how God saw her from the first moment of His loving design.

Mary's willingness to allow God to work in her life is a model for us in a culture that often refuses to acknowledge God and fears to make any commitment. Her story reminds us that when we say our "yes" to God's plan, we too will be given the strength and the courage to follow through. In these last days before Christmas, let us renew our commitment to accepting God's plan for our lives.

Parenting Pointers by Susan Vogt

The Christmas Vigil uses the genealogy of Jesus as the Gospel ~ Matthew 1:1-25. Do your children know their heritage back several generations? Talk with them about their relatives living or passed and their ethnic roots.

O Mary, help me live as a faithful disciple of Jesus. You see in my heart the desire to know the truth, to practice virtue, to be prudent & just, strong, & patient, a friend to all. Enable me to fulfill the sacred promises of my earthly vocation, give glory to God, & win eternal salvation.

O Mary, like you in Bethlehem, I too wish to stay always close to Jesus. Amen