

December 13, 2009 Third Sunday of Advent



Saturday, December 12

5 p.m. *Eunice Durnin*
r/o Mary Rupell

Sunday, December 13

8:00 a.m. *Gina Simone*
r/o Nancy Martinez

10:30 a.m. *Michelina & William Juliano*
r/o Family

Monday, December 14

8:45 a.m. *Altar Rosary Society*

Tuesday, December 15

8:45 a.m. *George & Agnes Foster*
r/o Family

Wednesday, December 16

8:45 a.m. *Vito & Marietta Masellis*
r/o Angela Gross

Thursday, December 17

8:45 a.m. *Sabino Antinolfi*
r/o Family

Friday, December 18 -No Mass

Saturday, December 19

5 p.m. *Jessie & William Reynolds*
r/o Susan Reynolds

Sunday, December 20

8:00 a.m. *Irena Agaciak*
r/o Father Zenek

10:30 a.m. *Pieda Castro*
r/o Sanchez Family

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Penance service: Dec. 15-, 7 pm to 8 pm

Confession: Sat. 4 pm to 4:30 pm

Dec. 20: 10:30 am: Blessing of Baby Jesus

MASSES:

Christmas Vigil: 5 pm: Children's Mass;

11 pm Concert; 12 Midnight Mass.

Christmas Day: 9 am & 11 am

Dec. 28: Special Mass 6 pm: Feast of the

Holy Innocents: Blessing of babies and children at this Mass by Fr. Zenek.

New Year's Eve: 6:30 pm

New Year's Day: 9 am & 11 am

A wise man was once asked 'Why, of all things, did God choose the humble thorn bush as the place from which to speak with Moses?' The wise man replied: 'If he had chosen an oak tree or a chestnut tree, you would have asked the same question. Yet it is impossible to let you go away empty-handed. That is why I am telling you that God chose the humble thorn bush - to teach you that there is no place on earth bereft of the Divine Presence, not even a thorn bush.'

When Jesus comes he does not throw his weight around so we might miss his coming if we were expecting great things. I think Jesus comes in a similar way today, as a humble lamb, and because Jesus comes in so many ways today as a humble lamb we might miss his coming. John the Baptist pointed out and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.' Vatican II acted as a John the Baptist telling us that Jesus comes to us in four ways when we gather here for our Sunday Mass: **Jesus comes in the word of God** in the readings, **in the Eucharist**, in the **congregation** and **in the priest**. When the readings are being proclaimed, God is speaking to you. If a line from the text strikes you we normally understand this as God speaking to you. In Holy Communion Jesus comes to you in the fullness of his body, blood, soul and divinity. Jesus is present in the congregation because where two or three are gathered in his name he is present in their midst. And Jesus is present in the priest who offers Jesus to the Father just as Jesus offered himself to the Father on the cross. Jesus comes to us in four ways when we gather here for our Sunday Mass: in the word of God, in the Eucharist, in the congregation and in the priest.

In which one of those four ways would we find it most difficult to see Jesus present? Is it in the Word of God in the readings because they are from a culture that is so different to ours; in Holy Communion because it looks like a thin white wafer of bread; in the congregation because we know the faults and weaknesses of some people present; or in the priest because we wonder about his sincerity after recent scandals and because we can see his faults and weaknesses too?

When Jesus comes now too in these four ways, in a certain sense you would not pick him out, he has to be pointed out. This is how I would point out the presence of God in these four ways.

It requires faith to believe that Jesus is present in this white bread or wine. Let us be humble during this Advent so that with faith we will see Jesus present in these four ways because if we cannot pick Jesus out from the crowd, the only way we will be able to see him will be by faith.

In Christ, Fr. Zenek, SDS

Dear Parishioners!

OPLATKI WAFERS: PRESERVING AN ANCIENT TRADITION

A part of the Polish family Christmas Tradition is the breaking the Christmas Wafer (*Oplatek* in Polish pronounced *oh-pwah-tek*) during the Christmas Eve Vigil Feast or *Wigilia*, the holiest of all the nights of the year in the Polish home, as their ancestors before them have done during the Christmas Celebration uniting the past with the present. . . heaven with earth.

The sacred white wafers, much like those used for Holy Communion (unleavened wafers baked from pure wheat flour and water), are shared with each person present. The wafers are embossed with elegant Christmas related religious images. Family members and friends break off a piece of *oplatek* and give it to one another to eat. During the exchange best wishes and blessing are expressed as well as forgiveness. The breaking and exchanging part of *oplatek* is intend to remind participants of the importance of Christmas, God, and family. This is the most emotional time of the holiday for the Polish family--the sharing expression of love and forgiveness in celebration and tradition.

The Vigil revolves around the importance of the Christmas Wafer. It literally unites family wherever they are on the Earth. Christmas Wafers have been mailed to each other during the holy season to solidify family unity.

Christmas Gift Giving

During Advent we prepare for the birth of Jesus. Most of us also begin to purchase special presents for our family during the Advent Season. This year many will have to trim their Christmas gift budget because of the current financial crunch our country is experiencing. Your church is also affected by the downturn in the economy.

Please remember that your contribution is our budget and because of your past generosity we have been able to meet our responsibilities. However, those of you who regularly attend Mass are aware that the weekly collections have been declining for more than a year. I have trimmed expenses in every possible way—from landscaping & grass mowing, church & rectory repairs to snow removal, (services which are no longer contracted out) to compensate for the decline in revenue.

I am asking you to please remember your church when preparing a special Christmas gift list and be very generous in your donation to St. Theodore Church. Thank you, Fr. Zenek



Thank you to the Tricky Tray Committee, helpers and especially the parishioners for making Tricky Tray a success. Your hard work and dedication is very much appreciated.

Notice: The Parish Office will be open only until 12 noon on Dec. 14, 15, & 16; closed on Dec. 17 & 18.

Decorating the Church for Christmas

Those interested in helping Father decorate the church for Christmas are asked to come to the church on December 21. Those of you who are able to come at 3 p.m. will help with the outside, while there is still daylight, and those who come later will join the others to finish with the inside of the church.

Please pray for: Chris, Bree, Anna & John Saksa, Stephen, Ray & Alice O'Donnell, Vickie Li Puma, Theresa, Mary, Robert Gross, Lillian Shaffer, Bridget, Beatrice Gillis, Erin Stanton, Theresa Kugelman, Katlyn Faulkner, Chris Gilheany, Dolores, Renee Drag, Geri Hedges, John P., Honol Shah, Barbara Zack, Charlie, Vinnie Perna. *To add Name: Call Parish Office 908-689-8318*

Our Weekly Offering

Last Week \$2,945 Last Year \$3,288.55



Sanctuary Candle in Loving Memory of
Peter Matthew Albano, Jr.
By Mon & Dad

Religious Education Corner

Dec. 21 & Dec. 28: No Religious Education Session

CHILDREN CHOIR REHEARSALS

The Children Choir will meet on December 13 and December 19 at 3:30 p.m. to practice for the Children's Christmas Mass, which will be celebrated on December 24 at 5 p.m.

Dutch Valley Christmas Tree Farm in Changewater, NJ will be open every day 9a to 5p. They have trees, grave blankets & wreaths. Located at 166 Changewater Road; 908-689-0793. **The Dutch Valley Florist** shop is located on Rt. 31 South in Hampton, NJ. They design beautiful, unique floral arrangements for all occasions. Stop by their shop and delight in their outstanding designs. They have been very good to St. Theodore Church by donating roses and other flowers to our church weekly. Tell them Fr. Zenek sent you!

Altar Servers

Dec 19: Evan & Ryan Moran, Christopher Pollack

Dec. 20: Sarah Kochan & Auston Viotto-8; Justin Watt, Philip Koskoff, Kaitlyn Gagliano-10:30

Dec. 26: Sean Flaherty, Nora Renn, Carlee Moran

Dec. 27: Robert & Juliette Capaldo-8; Melody Haag, Walter & William Gonsiewski-10:30

Lectors

Dec. 19: Christine DeLillis

Dec. 20: Theresa Lucas-8; Philip Koskoff-10:30

Dec. 26: Nancy Guerriere

Dec. 27: Mary Rupell-8; Helene Picht-10:30

Eucharistic Ministers

Dec. 19: Ginny Moran E, Tim Moran C, Charlie Shipley C

Dec. 20: Nadie Hill, Monica Merkel C, Emily Cirone C-8; Helene Picht E, Karl & Rose Strohmaier C

Dec. 26: Tim Flaherty E, Denise Flaherty & Ray Vonderheide-C

Dec. 27: Bill Supple E, Joan Capaldo & Diane Kegan C-8; Patricia Kollar E, Joy Haag & Jane Labato C-10:30