



FROM THE DESK OF FR. RICH

Today, we celebrate the Second Sunday of Advent.

The prophet Isaiah lived 750 years before Christ. Despite the political unrest of that period, he looked forward to a kingdom so wonderful that even nature is at peace. This perfect world would be ruled by a descendant of King David (as you listen to the first reading today, it helps to know that “Jesse” is the name of David’s father).

In the early days of the Church, some Jewish converts to Christianity continued to practice their Jewish traditions. Many of them were members of the Church in Rome, along with others who were Gentiles. They sometimes found it hard to get along. As Paul nears the end of his letter to them, he encourages them to live in harmony by drawing upon the Scriptures they had in common --- what we have called the “Old Testament.”

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be celebrated this coming Monday, December 8th. This celebration of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, being born without original sin, is a holy day of obligation in our Church. For this reason, all Catholics should be attending Mass on this day. Our schedule of Masses for Monday, December 8th is:

- 7:00 a.m. at Our Lady, Mother of the Church
- 9:00 a.m. at St. Eugene
- 4:00 p.m. at Our Lady, Mother of the Church
- 7:00 p.m. at St. Eugene

Please join us as we honor and celebrate Mary’s Immaculate Conception.

Next weekend, the 2nd Collection is being taken up for one of the worthiest causes of all – the retirement care of the thousands of men and women of religious communities who (for many generations) have been our teachers, mentors, and caregivers in our schools and hospitals, as well as in a host of other care-giving institutions. Each year, Catholics throughout our country are asked to offer their support for these dedicated men and women who for most of their lives, have worked for practically no salary and received little or no healthcare benefits. This annual Retirement Fund for Religious was begun by our bishops some years ago to help defray some of the escalating costs being incurred by religious communities trying to provide health care for their increasing numbers of aged members.

Many of us would not be who we are or where we are today, were it not for the care and persistence of the religious sisters, brothers, and priests who were responsible for our spiritual and educational needs. This is our chance to say “thank you” for all that these dedicated men and women have given to us over the years. Please show your support and gratitude by your generosity to this year’s Retirement Fund for Religious Collection, which will be taken up next weekend. Envelopes were provided in your monthly packets and are available at the doors of church, as well as in the vestibule.

Our Parish Communal Advent Reconciliation Service will take place on Friday, December 19th, at 7:00 p.m. Confessions will be heard in both English and Polish. As you make your personal preparations for Christmas, I invite you to join us in receiving the

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healing power of Jesus and the gift of God's grace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please plan on joining your parish community on Friday, December 19th. There will be many priests hearing confessions on this night, as this will be the only parish Communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in preparation for Christmas, other than our regular Saturday afternoons at 3:30 p.m. Please plan on joining us.

We have once again purchased the "Little Blue Books" for you to use as another way of coming to appreciate the rich meaning and traditions of the Advent and Christmas Season. Please be sure to take a copy home or to work with you. These books make great companions for meditation and for interesting reading. They will be available at all masses until all are gone.

Christmas Oplatki (wafer) is now available in the gathering space at the back of church and at the parish office during normal business hours, for those who wish to share in this beautiful custom at their Christmas family meals. This Christmas Wafer is a Christmas tradition celebrated in Poland (Oplatki), Lithuania (Kaledaitis), Slovakia, and some regions of Italy. An explanation of how to partake in this custom is provided on the envelope containing the wafer. Each packet contains 4 wafers and is available for \$3.00. Every year we run out, so you might want to pick yours up this weekend before they are gone.

Have a great week, everyone!

Fr. Rich Yanos

