

FIRST SUNDAY *of Advent*



St. James the Greater
Montague, New Jersey

St. Thomas the Apostle
Sandyston, New Jersey



Another Way to Reach God: Lectio Divina

Advent is meant to be a time of prayer and preparation for the coming of Jesus into the world—for us. We are called to go counter to our natural impulses at this time of year, and instead to slow down and to make time for the Lord.

Here is a way to help accomplish this. The method of prayer described below has been practiced almost since the beginnings of Christianity. It leads us to explore the Scriptures and discover the deeper meanings that the Lord hopes we will find.

This is a short article found recently in:

Our Sunday Visitor

November 11, 2023

Catholics are used to hearing Scripture during the Mass, but are often not taught how to pray with it during personal prayer time. *Lectio Divina*—meaning ‘Sacred Reading’—is an ancient practice of prayer that helps guide the faithful through a passage of Scripture to better enter into it and receive what the Lord might desire to reveal to them through the scene.

Here’s how to pray using *Lectio Divina*:

- 1. Reading:** Choose a passage (preferably not too long, maybe a verse or a few) and read through it in order to understand what is happening. Find out the context of your verses by checking the passages *before* and *after* your chosen verses? Ask, what is your passage saying?
- 2. Meditation:** Take time with the passage, letting certain words or phrases stand out to you. Try to commit part of it to memory and let it sink into your soul. What thoughts or emotions are brought to mind by the passage? What do you feel God, as the author of all Scripture, is saying to you through this verse?
- 3. Prayer:** Respond to God in prayer. After hearing Him speak to you through the passage, what can you say in response? Spend time talking through the verse with Him, and explore what it is calling you to do in your life.
- 4. Contemplation:** Let your prayer move beyond thoughts and allow yourself to simply rest in God—simply *be* with God.

Finding a certain time each day to spend time in Lectio Divina, is the best way to experience it. With a little effort and practice, the Scriptures will open up for you new understandings and a deeper appreciation. Begin anywhere in the Gospels and then branch out to the other Books. Allow God’s Holy Spirit to give you continuing inspiration.

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 3, 2023**

St. James the Greater

The Sanctuary Lamp this week burns in
Memory of Muriel Kennel at the
Request of her Family

SATURDAY, December 9

8:00AM – Laurie Janocko
req. by her Family

**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 10**

8:00AM – Elsie Spinapolice
req. by Linda & Michael Spinapolice

11:30AM – William F. Coe, Jr.
req. by his Family

ST. JAMES THE GREATER

\$2,648.00 – Regular Collection – November 19, 2023

\$ 506.00 – Online Giving

\$ 587.00 – Regular Collection – November 26, 2023

\$ 456.00 – Online Giving

\$2,477.00 – Weekly Budget Need

Consider a gift to St. James Parish in your will.

For On-Line Giving: log onto our website:

saintjamesthomas.org Then go to On-Line Giving Link.

St. James Altar & Floral Society If any ladies in the parish are interested in joining, please call Joan Henn at 973-293-3690 or Linda Spinapolice at 973-293-7031.



Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima Statue/Legion of Mary

This beautifully adorned statue is a visible reminder of the love God has shown in the Blessed Mother. Placing such a beautiful image in your home turns hearts to prayer and brings grace to those who open their hearts to any image of God's love. If you would like to have the statue of Our Lady of Fatima in your home, or need any further information about the Legion of Mary in our parishes, please contact the parish office. *Pray the Family Rosary*

TO CHRIST THE DIVINE HEALER WE PRAY FOR:

T.J. Albert, Phyllis Coneys, John Conrad, Sr., Melissa Cunningham, Geraldine Dayko, Audrey DeMarco, Terri Eaton, Marge Erickson, Peggy Gray, Patricia Harrington, Tracy Harriott, Patricia Hassan, Erin Hockenberry, Diane Hoos, T. J. Huffman, Charles Jensen, L. Lawson, Fred & Pat Leute, Nancy Lodema, Gerry Mahon, Sara Mahon, Teresa Mantani, Gen Miller, Richard Nowicki, Kim Osonitsch, Deacon Joe Roder, Ginny Sabia, Frances Sangiorgi, Joan Sangiorgi, Brian Scarpone, Kathleen Sibbio, Cecelia Smith, Yvonne Summers, Pastor Mike Sweeney, Richard Vergona, Walter Winkler, Ricky Wunder



We ask your continued prayers for the following men and women of our parish who are serving our country in the Armed Forces: George Abboud, Bryce Brigham, Saige Bruzard, Brandon Heimall, Mikey Heimall, Nicholas and Karissa Kealy, Ryan Kowal, Colton Lawrence, Joseph Mannion, Luke McDermott, Hunter Olenick, Christopher & Ana Sarao, Nicole Sarao, Marissa Snook, Peter Spinks and James Orr

The Legion of Mary for both St. Thomas and St. James parishes meets on Tuesday mornings at St. Thomas the Apostle Church after the 9 AM daily Mass in the Father Lewis Center. The Legion of Mary is a world-wide organization of the lay apostolate in which Catholic men, women and youth sanctify themselves through prayer and apostolic work in union with Our Lady under the guidance of a priest.

St. Thomas the Apostle

The Sanctuary Lamp this week burns for the
Birthday Intentions of Jim Matthews at the
Request of his Family

MONDAY, December 4

9:00AM – Mary Luteran
req. by Tony & Alicia Batko
-Sister Catherine Novo, FMA
req. by Mary Flexer

TUESDAY, December 5

9:00AM – Mary Luteran
req. by Walt & Diana Seville

WEDNESDAY, December 6

9:00AM – Bertha Owens
req. by the Kim & Owens Families
-Intentions of the Children & Teens of the Parishes
req. by Mary Flexer

THURSDAY, December 7

No Mass

FRIDAY, December 8

9:00AM – Healing Intentions of Father Edward Rama
req. by Margie Mullins
-Agnes Ciesielski
req. by Fran Whitesell
-Wedding Anniversary Intentions of
Ann & Brian Benson
req. by Rosemarie
7:00PM – Intentions of Mary Flexer
req. by the Rimshnick Family
-Deceased Pastors, Priests & Parishioners

SATURDAY, Vigil, December 9

4:30PM – William Pagano
req. by Sue Friel & Aldo Cicchetti
-Special Intentions of Lucille Pagano
-Birthday Intentions of Jim Matthews
req. by his Family

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 10

9:30AM – Gregory Stetzel
req. by the Cunico Family
-Special Intentions of Gene Hudson
req. by Dawn-Anne Fugger

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE

\$2,449.00 – Regular Collection – November 19, 2023

\$ 867.00 – Online Giving

\$1,461.00 – Regular Collection – November 26, 2023

\$ 867.00 – Online Giving

\$4,410.00 – Weekly Budget Need

Consider a gift to St. Thomas Parish in your will.

For On-Line Giving: log onto our website:

saintjamesthomas.org Then go to On-Line Giving link.



Religious Education Classes for November and December

Grades 5 & 6 and Conf. I & II – Sunday, Dec. 3 & 17 – 9:30am
Mass at STC until 12:30pm at REC

Grades 1 – 4 – Tuesday, Dec. 5, 12 & 19 – 4:00pm until 5:30pm
at REC



SAVE THE DATE...Children's Christmas Pageant ~ will take place on **Sunday, December 17th** at **St. Thomas Church at 2:00PM**. All children in Grades 1 – 6 (actors) and 7 and 8 (readers, costume helpers, props – easy and fun way for Service Hours!!!) are encouraged to participate. **Rehearsal will take place on Saturday, December 9th** (Snow date is Saturday, December 16th) from 9:00AM until 10:30AM at STC.



Listen Up – It's in the Bible

Dec. 3 – “Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.” (Mk. 13:33).

“How do we make ourselves ready for Jesus?”

Celebrate December

This month we do a lot of waiting. Then, we do a lot of celebrating. For four weeks during the season of Advent we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus into the world. Then, on Christmas Day, we celebrate His birth!

Dec. 3 ~ The First Sunday of Advent ~ Set up your Advent Wreath and light a purple candle (Hope) **Family Activity** ~ Read the Gospel accounts of the birth of Jesus from either Matthew 1:18-23 or Luke 2:1-20.

Dec. 4 ~ **St. John Damascene**

Dec. 6 ~ **St. Nicholas** – Pray for the children in your natural and parish family. (PS: Hope you remembered to set your shoes out last night!!!).

Dec. 7 ~ **St. Ambrose**

Dec. 8 ~ The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Wear blue to Mass today (Holy day of Obligation), in honor of Mary!

Dec. 9 ~ **St. Juan Diego**



Advent Traditions ~ The Advent Wreath

The Advent Wreath, perhaps the most vivid symbol of the Advent season, reflects our collective anticipation for Christ, our Light, to come into the world. Each week, with another candle, a little brighter, we are a little closer to the moment when, laid in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes, He is born, the Child Divine!



Children's Liturgy of the Word

C.L.O.W. will take place again on **Sunday, December 3, 10 and 17** at the 9:30am Mass.



Our Lady of Fatima Pilgrim Statue

The beautiful statue of Our Lady of Fatima in the Sanctuary of St. Thomas is waiting to visit your home!

The purpose of the statue is a way the message of Fatima is spread throughout the world. It brings the graces of Fatima along with Our Lady's message of hope, peace and salvation. Each week, a family or a parishioner will receive this image at the end of Mass. You will be provided with a safe way for it to travel to and from your home. You may keep her in your home for the week and then return her back to church the following week before the start of Mass. Included in the box will be rosaries, prayer cards, books and holy water to help you in your prayer time. These things must be returned when you bring the statue back.

We encourage all of our Religious Education families and all parishioners to take part in this beautiful and holy experience! There is a sign-up sheet in the Gathering Space at St. Thomas Church on the old altar near a picture of Our Lady of Fatima. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call Mary at 862-268-1876.



Youth Group for 7th through 12th graders of Our Lady Queen of Peace, St. Thomas the Apostle and St. James the Greater parishes are waiting for YOU! Come and enjoy the companionship of new and old friends! Come for the food, fun and friendship! Come and find out about all the great activities and events they have planned for YOU!

REMEMBER – we were given the option of an 8th grade Confirmation because we have an active Youth Group for our teens!!! For more information, please call Mary Flexer at 862-268-1876.

Here is the December Schedule:

December 9 at 7:15PM at OLQP

December 16 at 2:00PM – at Bentley Assisted Living as part of our Youth Ministry Outreach Program. We plan on hosting a Christmas party. Then back to OLQP for more festivities!!!

The Sacramental Sign-In Book for our children and teens who are preparing for the Sacraments of First Eucharist (**grades 1 & 2**) and Confirmation (**grades 7 & 8**) These Binders (**Red – Conf. Class/White – FE Class**) will be kept in the back of BOTH churches and **must be signed each week**. Joyful participation in the weekly Celebration of the Eucharist as well as on Holydays of Obligation is a requirement for the reception of these sacraments. It is also expected of all faithful Catholics!!!

Lottery Calendar - St. James will again be selling the Lottery Calendars for 2024. The calendars are \$20 each and are eligible to win every day in 2024. Benefit of St. James and Knights of Columbus #13935 (Milford). Tickets will be available after Masses or contact Bill Ricciardi wjr218@optonline.net. They make great Christmas presents!!!

Yoga Classes at St. Thomas Church

St. Thomas is offering a fitness class with a mix of Yoga moves (for flexibility and calm mind) and Pilates (for strength and tone especially in your core muscles). The class is on **Wednesday nights from 6:15 to 7:15pm**. Last class is on **December 27th**. **You may join us at any time**. The class is easy to follow but a full body workout. Any questions, please call instructor Chris Dube at 862-266-8418. Bring a mat, hand held weights (1-8lbs.), water and a friend. Join for \$6.00 per class. Twenty percent of the class money will be going to our St. Thomas Parish. So, please come and try it out!

This Week in Our Parishes

STC – St. Thomas Church or Fr. Lewis Center

SJC – St. James Church or Church Hall

REC – Fr. Gacquin Religious Ed Center

Sunday, December 3, 2023

1st Sunday of Advent

9:30 a.m. STC Mass & Class Gr. 5—6

and Conf. I and II

2:00 p.m. REC Christmas Caroling through town I

Monday, Dec. 4

7:00 p.m. Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

--at Minisink Reformed Church

Tuesday, Dec. 5

1:00 p.m. STC Bible Study

4:00 p.m. REC Rel. Ed. Gr. 1 – 4

Wednesday, Dec. 6

6:15 p.m. STC Yoga exercises

Thursday, Dec. 7

Friday, Dec. 8

Feast of Immaculate Conception

8:00 a.m. SJC Mass of Immac. Conception

9:00 a.m. STC Mass of Immac. Conception

9:45 a.m. STC Adoration of Blessed Sacrament

7:00 p.m. STC Mass of Immac. Conception

Saturday, Dec. 9

9:00 a.m. STC Christmas Pageant Practice

Sunday, December 10, 2023

2nd Sunday of Advent

2:00 p.m. REC Christmas Caroling through town II

* * * * *

Next Sunday's Readings: 2nd Advent - B

1st Reading: *Isaiah 40: 1—5, 9--11*

Resp. Psalm: *Psalm 85*

2nd Reading: *2 Peter 3: 8--14*

Gospel: *Mark 1: 1—8*

* * * * *

The Delaware Valley Choral Society in concert: *“Christmas in Germany,”* at Milford United Methodist Church, 206 Ann St., Milford. Sat. Dec. 16; 2:00 p.m. Tickets: \$ 15 adults / \$ 10 students.

The Feast Immaculate Conception, is an important part of the Advent Season. It reminds us that our Blessed Mother was chosen for the most special task of bringing our Savior into the world. For her to be a worthy instrument in this sacred work, she herself was conceived and born without stain of Original Sin. She preserved that sinlessness all throughout her life. We honor all this at our **Masses on Friday, December 8th, a Holy Day of Obligation.** Masses are: 8 a.m. St. James; 9 a.m. St. Thomas; 7 p.m. St. Thomas.

A First: Diocesan Celebration: Our Lady of Guadalupe. Join Bishop Sweeney in this celebration of *“Our Lady, Empress of the Americas.”* A joyful Mass will be held at **St. Peter the Apostle Church, 179 Baldwin Rd. (along Rt. 46), Parsippany, N.J.** The date is: **Saturday, Dec. 9th, beginning at 10:30 a.m.** Refreshments will be served afterwards.

Christmas Caroling in Advent. Warm up your vocal chords and join us on **one or both Sundays of Christmas Caroling: Sun. Dec 3rd and Sun. Dec. 10.** A tractor from Liberty Farms will pull us through the town and enable us to spread the cheer and joy of our Lord's birth. Both days we meet at the Relig. Ed. Center at 2 p.m. We'll return at about 4 p.m. and warm up with hot chocolate and snacks.

Sunday, Dec. 17th: Join us for an afternoon filled with happy events. **1. Children's Christmas Pageant** at St. Thomas, at 2 p.m., presented by our religious ed. students. **2. Christmas Tree lighting and blessing.** **3. The Great Christmas Cookie Contest,** inviting you to submit your favorite Christmas cookie specialty. Plan now to be with us.

2024 Lottery Calendars Available. Lottery Calendars are \$ 20 each, It is possible to **win every day in 2024.** They would make great Christmas gifts. Available after Masses or by reaching Bill Ricciardi at his e-mail site: wjr218@optonline.net

Soup on a Sat. We are attempting to resurrect a popular fundraiser: **Soup on a Saturday.** We are asking for volunteers who could make and donate a minimum of 10 quarts of your delicious home-made soup. If you are able, please contact Bill Ricciardi at 845-341-3686 or at: wir218@optonline.net.

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