



The Anastasian

December 2019

Confirmation
Reaffirming Their Faith

Faith on the Move
We Don't Walk Alone

Advent
Much More Than a
Chocolate Calendar

Cenacle of Divine Mercy
Jesus, I Trust in You

A FORMED Opinion





THE Anastasian

Since 1935

Welcome to *The Anastasian*. We hope you enjoy this newsletter. St. Anastasia is a large, vibrant parish with many different groups engaged in wonderful activities that give life to the parish. This newsletter will offer you the chance to learn more about the many ways our friends and neighbors in Christ engage with the parish to deepen their faith and enrich their lives. And you will see they are having a lot of fun too! Please let us know what you think and how we can improve.

@ E-mail us at promotion@saintannies.org.

👍 "Like" us on Facebook [saintanastasianewtownsquare](https://www.facebook.com/saintanastasianewtownsquare)

📷 Follow the parish Instagram [saintanastasiaparish](https://www.instagram.com/saintanastasiaparish)



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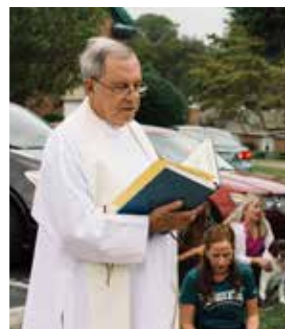


Photo captions:

The Blessing of Animals took place on Sunday, October 6th in honor of St. Francis of Assisi - Photos courtesy of Carmen Smargiassi

The annual Fair Trade Sale took place the weekend of November 2nd and 3rd. - Photos courtesy of Carmen Smargiassi and Katie Downey

The Parish Pilgrimage was on Thursday, October 24th to the St. John Neumann Shrine and the Cathedral. - Photo courtesy of Theresa Haggerty



A Letter from Our Pastor Father Colagreco

Dear Parishioners of Saint Anastasia,

Thank you to our Promotion Committee for the latest edition of *The Anastasian*. Please share it broadly with your family and friends. There are always extra copies available in the church and *The Anastasian* can also be found on the parish website.

Our lives have become busier and busier with more and more gimmicks, gadgets and the like that grab our attention, keep us occupied, and promise to save us time. Despite all this, life is not that much more enjoyable and we seem to have less and less time than ever. This is especially true of this time of the year. No sooner is summer done than the Christmas holidays are upon us. I remember always hearing, from my earliest years in school, about the importance of focusing on the true meaning of Christmas and using the Advent season as a time of spiritual preparation. However, knowing and doing are two different things, as we all know. Advent is always a busy time. Read here about the true meaning of the season of Advent. Make Advent different this year in the comfort of your own home with an interactive Parish Advent Calendar for you and your family.

Three other ways of growing in the faith are featured in this issue. The Cenacle of Divine Mercy has an appeal to people of all ages and a convenient schedule of sessions. Why not come see what it's about? Recently, another faith-motivated activity was initiated called Faith on the Move. With colder weather on the way, this may be something to look forward to as you wait for warmer spring weather. Also, the newly enhanced FORMED is easier than ever to use. Growing in the faith is at your fingertips. If you have not used FORMED, now is the time to start!

Much has been happening at Saint Anastasia these past few months. Enjoy the pictures inside and if you recognize a friend or a fellow parishioner, tell them you saw their picture and listen to their story about what they have been up to. You can't be everywhere, but you can listen and learn from a friend about something that may interest you. Every one of our parish activities and organizations is constantly looking for fresh faces. If your interest is aroused by something you see or read, why not follow it up by getting more information?

God bless you and your families.

Sincerely yours,
Father Colagreco

Right: Confirmation was on Saturday, November 16th. This year, Bishop Timothy C. Senior confirmed 125 parish 7th graders from the CCD program, St. Anastasia School, other private schools and homeschooled children.





Faith on The Move

by Lucia Biddle

I have been a parishioner of Saint Anastasia for 6 years. Since joining the parish, I have participated in a few parish activities and have been a Sunday CCD teacher. I, like many others, have found that sometimes I struggle to set aside quality time to pray and I learned to sneak in my prayer time while doing other things, such as chores, driving, and walking. In fact, I have always felt great physically and spiritually after praying during one of my walks. Then it occurred to me that it would be great to have a group to walk and pray with! Not only would there be physical benefits, but also many spiritual benefits, such as strengthening our relationship with God and understanding that we don't "walk alone." In addition, we could connect with people inside and outside our parish community and be motivated and inspired by others. However, I wasn't sure where to begin.

Then one day last spring, I was speaking to Theresa Haggerty, the Director of Religious Education, after CCD class. She brought up the need for more people to be involved in parish activities. I really believe the Holy Spirit was at work that day because my prayer group idea came to mind. After a few months of pondering, researching, and speaking to other parishioners, I wrote a proposal for a ministry called Faith on the Move. Our purpose would be simply to gather and pray the Rosary as we walked. I decided to focus on the Rosary because it is such a powerful devotion and "[it] is like a portable chapel we can keep in our pocket and pull out anytime, anyplace." [Sri, Edward. *Praying the Rosary Like Never Before*]

This past July, the Faith on the Move ministry was approved and advertised in the Saint Anastasia bulletin and, by the end of the month, our group met for its first walk at Veteran's Memorial Park in Broomall. The group met weekly, on Tuesday evenings, throughout the summer and was a great success- with an average of 6 members in attendance each week. Our group consists of friends, relatives, co-workers, fellow-parishioners, and non-parishioners of various ages. I think what made the group successful is that we are all there to pray and give support to everyone - even to those who are not members. One of our group members shared with me a very special experience she had one evening, "As I started walking, I saw a woman sitting [where we meet] and thought maybe she was part of our group. When I approached her and asked, she said, 'No, and I can't walk but I can pray the Rosary with you.' She was unable to walk due to a recent surgery. We prayed the entire Rosary and near the end, her brother came and joined us when his walk was complete...It was such a blessing and so unexpected for all of us involved...My soul felt so much lighter when I left the park."

I have been thrilled to see our group flourish this past summer and I look forward to seeing how our group will grow in the future. Please join us when we resume walking in the spring! Feel free to contact Lucia Biddle, lilu1012@yahoo.com, for more information and look for our advertisement in future parish bulletins.



Lucia Biddle





Advent

Much More Than a Chocolate Calendar

by **Kristen Mancini**

So much in life requires preparation. We prepare for a presentation at work, prepare to move homes, we encourage children to prepare for tests at school or practice for sports. We prepare, perhaps most of all, for the birth of a child. It makes sense then, doesn't it, that we would spend at least 4 weeks preparing to celebrate the birth of baby Jesus on December 25th each year? Advent, in Latin means "coming" and during the season of Advent we prepare for the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus comes to us at Christmas in **History**, as the baby born in Bethlehem; He comes to us in **Mystery**, in the Eucharist at Mass; and someday He will come to us in **Majesty**, at the second coming.

While many of us are familiar with the Advent calendar, in which we open a tiny door each day and see a picture or perhaps a small chocolate behind that door, as we count-down to Christmas, the most important symbol of Advent is truly the Advent Wreath. Each Sunday during the four weeks leading up to Christmas, a candle on the wreath is lit. There are a variety of interpretations of the meaning of the four candles which help us prepare for the coming of the baby

Photos courtesy of Carmen Smargiassi



Jesus. Week one, a purple candle is lit, and this first candle can represent hope and is often referred to as the “Prophets’ Candle” in honor of the prophets who foretold the coming of Jesus. Week two, another purple candle, which can be known as the “Bethlehem Candle”, is lit representing faith and Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem. Week three is the only pink candle, pink, or rose, is the liturgical color which signifies joy. The pink candle or “Shepherds’ Candle” can represent the joy the world experiences in Jesus’ birth. The final week is once again a purple candle and is often called the “Angels’ Candle” and represents peace. “Peace to people of Goodwill” a peace that will come with the birth of Jesus.

The Advent Wreath is prominently displayed in the church as a reminder of our preparation, and a reminder of the true meaning of the Christmas season. It is also quite easy to have an advent wreath at home. There are versions available at religious shops or you can create your own. There are also many craft options available to make a wreath with children. The colors and the shape, a circle (signifying the eternity of God with no beginning and no end) are the truly important elements in forming a wreath.

While you can still count down the days, and even enjoy the Advent Calendar chocolates, why not use the Advent Wreath as a reminder of ways in which we can truly prepare for the joy of the birth of Jesus, truly the reason for the season.

Parish Advent Calender

Advent begins on Sunday, December 1. There are many ways to use the season of Advent to prepare for Christmas. On the parish website: <https://saintanastasia.net/>, the daily Mass readings are available, as is Bishop Barron’s daily Gospel reflection, or watch a short weekly video reflection on the Sunday readings from Opening the Word. On the Dynamic Catholic website, sign up for Best Advent Ever and receive short video reflections by email every day. There are also daily Advent reflections available on FORMED. Or consider making an Advent wreath for your home this year. Use this link to find out more: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/advent/about-advent-wreaths.cfm> and find prayers here: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/best-advent-ever/advent-prayers/>.

This year, the Promotion Committee at the parish is trying something new, an interactive Parish Advent Calendar available on the parish website. Every day will highlight a special parish event or other fun facts and activities that can be enjoyed by

all parishioners. For children, featured every day, is a special short video reflection just for them from their favorite animated character on FORMED- Brother Francis. If you are not signed up at [FORMED.org](https://formed.org) yet, please give it a try. The parish pays for the subscription to provide for the spiritual enrichment of the parish community. FORMED has recently changed its format for easy viewing on almost any device, with no password to remember and it’s FREE. (See the last page of this newsletter to get started.)

However you prepare this Advent Season, the Promotion Committee wishes you a Joyous and Blessed Christmas.

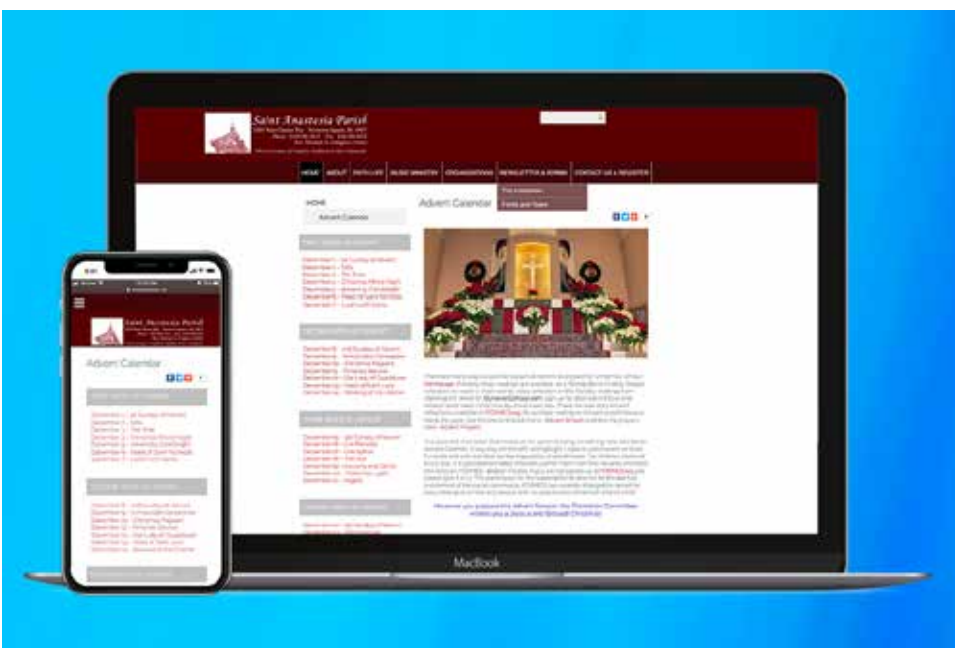




Photo courtesy of Katie Downey

Cenacle of Divine Mercy

by **Katie Downey**

The Divine Mercy Cenacle at St. Anastasia Parish has been meeting for the past 12 years. The Divine Mercy is a devotion begun by St. Faustina. She was a Polish nun who lived from 1905 to 1938. In 1931, Jesus revealed Himself to her and requested her to spread devotion to His Divine Mercy. When the Cenacle, or small gathering, meets, parishioners pray prayers of petition and of thanksgiving. They read and discuss passages from the *Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul* by St. Faustina, in which is recorded the many things that Jesus revealed to St. Faustina. Then the Chaplet of Divine Mercy is recited for the sick and dying. In the *Diary*, Jesus recommended the Chaplet to St. Faustina, "At the hour of their death, I defend as my own glory every soul that will say this Chaplet, or when others say it for a dying person."

Cenacle of Divine Mercy is one of the most inspiring meetings we have. Jesus is our most welcome visitor. God is with us here. -Judy

I pray the Chaplet for my mother, who has died. Every time I go, it makes my faith stronger and my spiritual life grows even more. -Anne

I joined the Cenacle of Divine Mercy because I wanted to know about Our Lord's Divine Mercy. We experience mercy by deeds, words and prayers. We read the diary and pray for each other and it gives peace and joy. We become friends, we become more merciful in our lives. -Mary

I have developed a closer relationship with the Lord and have experienced joy in finding Jesus. I enjoy the camaraderie with the other members. -Sarah

The devotion of the Divine Mercy can be summed up in five words, "Jesus, I trust in You." The Cenacle of Divine Mercy is looking for new members who are willing to open their hearts to Jesus. They meet every first and third Tuesday of the month at 2:00 PM in the rectory basement meeting room. Everyone in the parish who is free in the afternoons is invited to a meeting to see if it will fulfill their desire to get closer to Jesus through His Divine Mercy.

The Anastasian **10 Dec 2019**



St. Anastasia School Endowment Fund is providing \$33,000 to support tuition assistance and technology improvements for the 2019-2020 school year.

A FORMED Opinion

One-Time Sign-In at
FORMED.org

Rating **++++**



Watching favorite Christmas programs on the newly enhanced FORMED.org is easier than ever.

Now there is:

- A one-time registration and sign-in into FORMED using only your email address – NO passwords needed! Once you are signed into FORMED, it keeps you signed in. No need to sign in again, (unless you choose to sign out each time you use FORMED).
- The ability to download content for off-line playback on your smartphone or tablet to enjoy FREE downloads anywhere you go.
- New apps to access FORMED on Apple TV, Roku and Chromecast. FORMED may, in some cases, be accessed via a web-browser on Android TV, Amazon Fire TV and Xbox.

My Christmas favorites include the documentary, The Story of The Nativity: The Truth of Christmas. This program includes many Catholic leaders and scripture scholars who help tell the story of the nativity. For the whole family, I recommend from The Brother Francis animated series, O Holy Night, The King is Born: What Christmas is All About. - Cara Stolarczyk

NOTE: The best way to access content on your Smart TV is to download the App from your TV App store if you have a supported Apple or Android TV.

If you'd like to try, here are the steps to watch on a Smart TV's browser:

1. On your TV, open the internet web browser and visit FORMED.org
2. Enter your email address and you will be emailed a link.
3. On a SEPARATE device, (other computer or mobile device), open your email inbox, open the login email and click the LOGIN link.
4. Go back to your TV browser and you should be logged in to watch FORMED. Enjoy!

If you are not able to watch FORMED via your Smart TV's web browser, you can hook up your computer to your Smart TV via an HDMI cable to watch FORMED on your TV.



We, the parishioners of Saint Anastasia, are a strong faith based community, grounded in more than a century of Catholic tradition, rooted in worship and service. Compelled by the Good News of Jesus Christ, we are committed to growing in a deeper relationship with God and with one another. We strive to become a more vibrant parish by inspiring an atmosphere of belonging, of welcoming, and by promoting opportunities to share and spread our Catholic faith, so that we may be more united as one parish community.

