

Welcome! A letter from our Pastor

Dear friends in Christ,

We rejoice on this 3rd Sunday of Advent for the Lord draws near. We're just 10 days away from Christmas Eve and our hearts quicken as we anticipate the birth of our Savior. We light the rose-colored candle on our Advent wreath today as a joyful reminder of the two-fold coming of Christ at his birth and at the end of time. Today is traditionally known as *Gaudete* Sunday from the Latin word meaning "rejoice."

As I mentioned a few weeks ago, the prophet Isaiah is our constant companion during these Advent days and our first reading on Gaudete Sunday from him is particularly encouraging: "*Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak, say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not!*" It's good to be reminded that the Lord is there to lift us up when we are weary. I suspect many of us are feeling a bit that way these days with much going on in our lives and in our world. We're tired. We're weary. We're exhausted. But as Isaiah says, fear not. Let us resolve to take time for the peace of Christ to dwell deeply in us just as surely as he dwelt in the manger at Bethlehem.

A beautiful way to make room for the Lord is by going beyond ourselves and giving help to others in need, and so the annual SVdP Gift Giving Weekend comes at a fitting time for our community. Thank you to everyone who are donating either a toy or gift for the children through Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, or who are making a financial gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul this weekend. Thanks to your generosity, hundreds of families in our surrounding area will have a much brighter Christmas. If you missed the drop-off at Mass this weekend, we can still take your gift or donation at the parish office on Monday morning. Do act quickly, please.

As the year comes to a close, I want to thank Megan Johnson who is stepping down as our coordinator of our SVdP Nursery. She has served our community for a number of years in that capacity, and we're grateful for her work with our children and families. We're blessed that one of her assistants, Paula Archuleta, will take over as coordinator, ensuring that we have a seamless transition. Paula has a great love for children, and will see that we continue to offer parents a safe, clean, and

playful environment for their infants and children during Mass.

To that end, however, we are looking to hire a few assistants to help Paula and the others who work in the nursery. The main hours we are seeking to fill are 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. on Sundays, with other hours (School masses, Holy Days, etc.) occasionally in need as well. If you, or someone you know, love working with toddlers and are available on Sunday mornings, please contact the parish office, or see me after Mass. It's a paid position, and applicants must be at least 18 years of age and complete Safe Environment training for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Please help us spread the word.

Speaking of our nursery, it will be open for the 4:30 p.m. Mass only on Christmas Eve. In fact, it'll open an hour prior to the start of Mass and we encourage you to arrive early as we know we'll have big crowds that day, particularly for that first Mass. That's the only Christmas Mass it will be open for, however, so make plans accordingly. And if you are new to SVdP, or a new parent who has never used it before, you will find the nursery inside the Msgr. Jamail Family Center, just to the right as you enter. Can't miss it.

As a reminder, our full Christmas Mass schedule is as follows: **Wednesday, December 24, Christmas Eve:** 4:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m., 8:30 p.m. in Spanish, and 11:30 p.m., with the traditional Lessons and Carols beginning 30 minutes prior to the 4:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. Masses. On **Thursday, December 25, Christmas Day:** 8 a.m., 10 a.m., and 1 p.m. (Note that the 1 p.m. Mass will be bilingual in both English and Spanish.) There is no 3 p.m. or 5 p.m. Mass on Christmas Day.

Finally, as we near the end of 2025, I invite you to prayerfully consider a special year-end financial gift to SVdP to help further our mission and ministry at the parish. Gifts of cash and stock are also most welcomed at this time of the year. In addition, those 70½ years of age or older might consider a charitable IRA rollover donation, and we'd be happy to assist you with arranging that through your financial institution. For more information, please contact Nora Pena, our Business Manager, in the parish office at 713-667-9111, or npena@svdp-edu.org. Thank you for remembering SVdP at Christmas and for your generosity and support throughout the year.

Peace,
Fr. Sean