

Parish News

Here is your weekly update. There are also attachments for this week.

This Monday is a Holy Day of Obligation

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary-
Mass 12:15pm and 6Pm

Conversation Series

We are happy to announce a brand new Conversation Series. We will meet once a month on the first Monday of the month in the Cow Placen
This coming Advent on December 2nd @6PM we will start off by watching and discussing the first part of the moving about the Eucharist.
Hope you can join us for this new and exciting spiritual, education opportunity open to all

The Lights is on Campaign

Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation
Mary, the Mother of Our Savior Parish
Monday December 16th
Confession from 4pm-7pm
There will several priests available to hear confession

December 24th Children Mass @ 4pm

The Parish on December 24th @ 4pm will have the children's Christmas Mass. I am looking for a family to be the Holy Family with their infant child. Please contact me if your family would be interested.

Also looking for animals, shepherds, angels and 3 wise men. Please call me as I only have a number of costumes for the children to use.

Tomorrow is the PCA family faith Event @ St. Pauls Whitesboro from 2pm-4pm

CHRISTMAS DONATION

We would like to thank everyone for their donations to the needy this time of year. We have already been able to assist those in need for Thanksgiving. We continue to ask your donations for those in need for Christmas as well. Gift cards to local grocery stores are very much appreciated in addition to any monetary donations. Many, many thanks and God Bless!

Stewardship-

Operating expenses for the Parish on a weekly basis are \$6,900.00 Collection.
due to the Thanksgiving Weekend the figures are not noted.

Parish Giving-

The Parish is pleased to introduce “Enhancing Stewardship through Electronic Funds Transfer. It is convenient no more searching for a checkbook or Sunday morning stops at the ATM. To excess simply Log on the parish website www.sacredheart-saintmary.org and click on the Parish Giving Log and follow the easy registration instructions. It is Secure.



Hope Appeal 2025

The Assessment for the Parish is \$32,143.00
Currently received as of



As always, I like to share the deep traditions and meaning of our Church. What a great way to learn as a family and learn more about this great Faith of ours.

As we start the season of Advent, I will share with everyone some of the symbolism of the season. This week is the Christmas Creche. Again, if one wishes to learn more please use the hyperlink for additional information.

Many of you have a Nativity in your homes. Please remember to bring you infant Christ Child to be blessed on Christmas



The Christmas creche is a tableau of sculptures or living beings that depicts the birth of Jesus. **It is usually displayed in churches, homes, and sometimes on public property during the Christmas season¹. The Nativity scene, as well as the closely related Adoration of the Magi, traces its origins back some 1,500 years. The first depictions of the infant Christ were recorded in the New Testament, but the Nativity narrative known today only emerged in the seventh century, with the circulation of what was believed to be an unknown Gospel by Matthew¹. Saint Francis of Assisi is often erroneously credited with creating the first creche, but the tradition has changed over time, taking on new meanings as Christianity itself has evolved.**

Does It Matter if Christians Say Creche or Nativity?

Christians can and do use the terms interchangeably. But they need to understand that neither word appears in the Word of God.

Technically *creche* refers to just the manger bed at Jesus' birth, and the word used in Scripture accounts is "manger." Over time, the word *creche* has lost its former meaning. It now refers to the entire nativity setting. The word nativity is taken from the Latin *nativus*, which means "arisen by birth."

Does 'Creche' Refer Specifically to Jesus' Birth?

Again, "creche" does not appear in the Bible. But what *was* written in Scripture? And how did it refer to Jesus' birth?

The biblical narratives regarding the birth of the Messiah are [Matthew 1:18-25](#) and [Luke 2:1-7](#). The Luke passage notes the manger: "and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in clothes and place him *in a manger*, because there was no guest room available for them" (v. 7, NIV).

The shepherds were told ([Luke 2:12](#)) their Messiah would be found "lying in a manger," and they did find him there. Some sources say the word "manger" comes from the Latin word [munducare](#), which means "to eat." A manger—sometimes wood, but more often stone—held hay for larger animals. Mary likely did not want to place her newborn son on the hard, cold ground or floor, so a nearby manger provided a better alternative with its soft hay and raised sides to keep Jesus safe.

There may be some spiritual significance to this. As a feeding trough, animals found physical nourishment; but Jesus would forever nourish His followers spiritually as the Bread of Life ([John 6:35: 51](#)). How interesting that His birthplace, Bethlehem means "House of Bread" in Hebrew.

Who Made the First Nativity Scenes?

According to Smithsonian Magazine, St. Francis of Assisi is credited with staging the first recorded Nativity scene in 1223 AD—although there were possibly earlier models. His biographer said the manger scene was set up in a cave in the Italian village of Greccio with real people and animals. Francis reportedly wanted to help children understand the true meaning of Christmast instead of focusing on gift-giving.

Portrayals of the Savior's birth through these special scenes spread throughout Christendom, especially in Catholic churches; and Protestant churches, such as in Germany, soon created their own versions. In modern times, three of the most well-known Nativity scenes are at the Vatican in Rome White House in Washington, D.C

A Simple Prayer As We Observe a Nativity Scene

Father God, Renew my wonder of the miracle of Your Son's birth. May I say with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest heaven," as I meditate on the miracle of His coming. Amen.

Events at other Parishes in our area

Please remember we are all a Catholic Community and need to support each other.

Mary, Mother of our Savior Parish invites all teens in the Greater Utica Area to join us for Youth Ministry Nights:

Who: Teens in grades 7 thru 12 from the Greater Utica Area

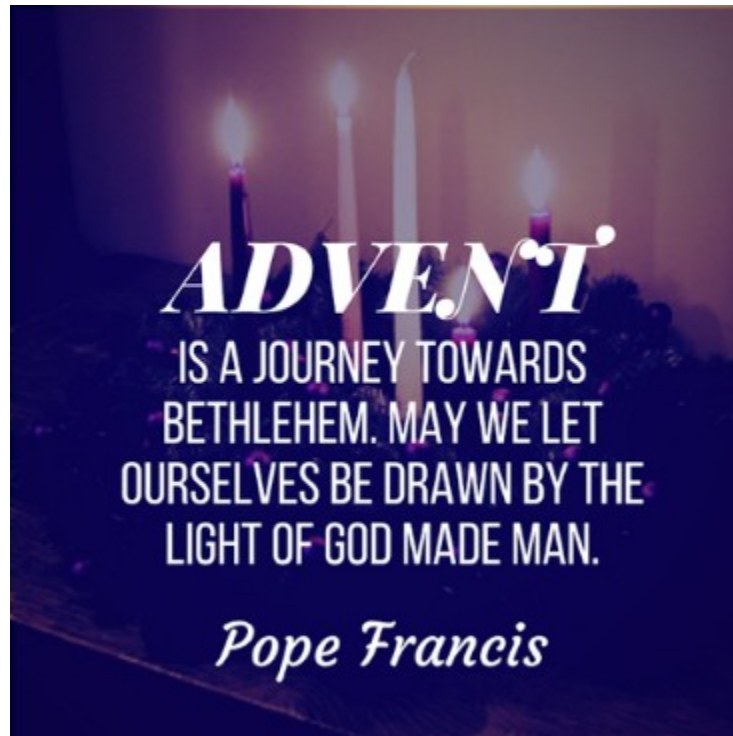
Where: Mary Mother Of Our Savior Parish, Seton Center, 2 Barton Ave, Utica (look for the welcome flag)

When: Monday evenings 6:30PM-8:00PM
(following the school calendar)

www.motherofoursavior.org

Our Youth Ministry Nights (YMN) consist of games and snacks, followed by a short faith message. Then the teens form small groups to talk about that topic in a safe, honest, authentic way with their peers. This is a highlight of the night, to hear from peers about the faith, to share doubts and questions and to be lifted up and encouraged in their faith in God, all guided by an adult core team member. Then we go to the chapel for a short prayer service and end with an awesome dinner! We also make sure to include social nights once a month. Social Nights may include: Movie Nights, Camp Fires, Holiday Parties, Trips/Teen Outings like GetAir, Retreats, Service Opportunities and more...
For information please reach out to Brittany Wilcox: bwilcox@syrdio.org

Food for thought





Registration for the Faith Formation 2024-2025

I have received a number of calls if it is too late to register for Faith Formation. No it is not too late to register children for the program. If you have not registered your child (ren) simply come to the school on Sunday before class to register.

Fee of \$25 for 1 child and \$45 per family

December 22nd -Christmas Caroling

Parents are welcome to join the children in singing Christmas Carols around the 2nd floor Christmas tree on December 22nd -Parents are welcome to join the children. The door will be opened at 10:30 for parents to enter the building.

Mark your calendars-Tomorrow



PCA Collaborate Event -December 8th

St. Pauls, Sacred Heart/St Mary's/ Holy Trinity & Mary Mother of Savior Parish

St Paul's Whitesboro
From 2-4pm Activities
Grades Pre-K to 6th and Parents



Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday @3:15PM prior to Mass

Saturday Vigil Mass: 4PM

Sunday: 8am and 11am

Weekdays 12:15 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Friday.

There will no Mass on Thursday

Let's remember that as Catholics, the importance of attending Sunday Mass. At Mass we stand at mystically at the foot of the cross and witness for ourselves the same self-sacrifice of Jesus, in an unbloody manner. Mass is a celebration of this sacrifice. It is the active participation of all that come together in the place of worship.

Second Sunday of Advent

1st Reading: Bar 5:1-9

Responsorial Psalms: PS 126: 1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6

2nd Reading: Phil 1:4-6, 8-11

Gospel: Lk: 3:1-6

While these are wonderful reflections, please remember that they are not to be a substitute for the wonderful sermons of Father or Deacon Kirk at Mass.

As always, I try to find wonderful reflections for this week's Gospel reading. I let the Holy Spirit guide me.



This week's reflections come from Fr. John Bartunek, LC

“For Jesus Christ reigns over the minds of individuals by his teachings, in their hearts by his love, in each one’s life by living according to his law and imitating of his example.” – Pope Pius XI

Luke 3:1-6: In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar’s reign, when [Pontius Pilate](#) was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah: A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley will be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, winding ways will be straightened and rough roads made smooth. And all mankind shall see the salvation of God.

Christ the Lord Great personages announce their official visits ahead of time. This provides people with an opportunity to prepare for the visit, so as to be able to take full advantage of it. John the Baptist is Christ’s precursor, the one sent to announce his coming and get people ready to welcome him. He plays a central role in the liturgy of Advent, the season during which the Church recalls Christ’s first coming, readies itself to welcome him at his new, spiritual coming each Christmas, and looks forward to his definitive, second coming at the end of history (“Advent” derives from the Latin for “coming towards”). Luke emphasizes the incomparable importance of Christ’s coming by pointing out how Isaiah had prophesied not only the arrival of Jesus but even the appearance of the precursor, John. God had long been preparing this pivotal moment in the world’s history, and wanted to do everything possible to alert his people of its imminence.

Although Christ has come to the earth, and although he has come to dwell in many human hearts and societies, many more have still not heard of him or welcomed him. The Lord has

his eye on those and is planning events for each one of them. With each person, he continues to use this same methodology: he sends his heralds ahead of him. We are those heralds. Every Christian is another John the Baptist, boldly drawing others' attention to the truth and grace of Christ with his words, deeds and example. Among the many responsibilities each of us has, none is greater or more rewarding than teaming up with the Holy Spirit to prepare hearts for the Lord.

Christ the Teacher Isaiah's prophecy, which summarizes John's message, offers us two lessons:

1. **First**, it tells us *what* to do in order to get ready for Christ's coming in our lives and those around us. We are to "prepare the way," filling in valleys, leveling hills, straightening crooked roads, and smoothing out rough paths. The imagery comes from a typical scene in the ancient world (before concrete and asphalt highways). Roads were notoriously unreliable in Isaiah's time, long before the establishment and spread of the Roman Empire. When a king or emperor made the rounds of his territories, his officials would travel ahead of him, making sure that the roads were safe and in good condition so that he wouldn't be delayed and would be less vulnerable to enemy ambushes. Likewise, we are called to examine our own souls on a regular basis, especially in the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent, to see where selfishness has encroached upon our relationships with God and with other people, and where laziness and self-indulgence have worn away our self-discipline. We may need to fill in some spiritual potholes or clear away some unwelcome debris, so that the graces God has in store for us during each season of our lives will be able to stream unhindered into our hearts.

2. **Second**, Isaiah tells us *why* we should prepare our hearts for Christ's coming: "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." He reminds us that we (the entire human family, as well as each of us individually) need God's grace. The peace, meaning, and joy that we thirst for above all else is out of our sinful reach; we need someone to bring it to us, to search us out in this desert of our earthly exile and give us the waters of eternal life. Christ is the one to do this. He always wants to bring us closer to God, closer to the fullness of life that we long for. But he won't force his way in; we need to ready ourselves to welcome him.

Christ the Friend St. Luke begins this chapter of his Gospel curiously: with a list of names and places that seem irrelevant at first glance. Twenty centuries after the fact, we are interested in Jesus, not in tetrarchs and obsolete geography. But these details reveal something crucial about Jesus: he is not an abstract God. He weaves his action and presence into the fabric of our day-to-day lives; he takes up his stance on the crossroads of everyone's personal history and addresses us there. And he does it because he wants to. Jesus Christ is a God who is our friend, not a faceless, aloof divine architect.

Jesus: I know where you were born and when. I remember every moment of your childhood, every one of your experiences growing up. I have been with you through it all. I will continue to be with you. Nothing about you is indifferent to me; all the circumstances of your life matter, and I am using them all to draw you closer to me, to show you your mission and guide you to its fulfillment. If you look for me, you will always find me, right there beside you.

Christ in My Life Am I a good messenger, Lord? Do my words stir up noble sentiments? Do my actions clear the way for your grace? Does my manner point people to the goodness of Christ? Do I even try to help bring others a step closer to you? Life is so busy, Lord. Can I be your ambassador in the midst of my busy-ness? Of course I can, if you will show me the way... I know that my fears and self-centered habits obstruct your actions in my life. I want to be free of them. Thank you for always being ready to forgive me and supply me with your grace. I want to take advantage of your generosity, to make use of confession and all the other ways you give me to grow, little by little but surely and constantly, into the saint you created me to be...

You teach me so clearly that the drama of salvation history is played out in the mundane reality of my life and the lives of those around me. Tune me in to this drama. Open my eyes. I want to see you in every event and every person. I want to detect and seize every opportunity to love you and make you known. You are my hope, my light, my Lord...

This week's Saints of the week:

The saints are models of human excellence, perfected by the life of Christ and the communication of his Spirit. They demonstrate in their lives how to really live and how to really die. They consistently point to the horizon of love which leads to the fulfillment of all human desire: eternal communion with the Holy Trinity

December 12-Feast of Saint Lucy, Virgin and Martyr; December 14-Memorial of John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church



The program has started. There are children who are too young to attend the program or have decided not to return this year. As always, I find material to you to share with your children so they may understand today's Gospel reading

Theme

Announcing the coming King

Object

A trumpet, a shofar, or a recording of a fanfare and the advent wreath.

Scripture

As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God's salvation.'" Luke 3:4-6 (NIV)

(If possible, begin by having someone play a fanfare on the trumpet or a blast on the shofar.

If that is not possible, just show the children a trumpet or shofar or play a fanfare on a recording and adapt the sermon to fit your situation.)

Wow! That was exciting, wasn't it? That exciting piece played on the trumpet is called a fanfare. A fanfare is a loud, short piece of music that is usually played on a trumpet to announce the arrival of someone important. For example, a trumpet fanfare is often played to announce the arrival of a king, queen or president.

The trumpet fanfare has been used to announce the coming of a king for many, many years. It was even used in Bible times! The Bible tells us that when Solomon was crowned as the King of Israel they blew the trumpet and shouted, "God save king Solomon." (1 Kings 1:34)

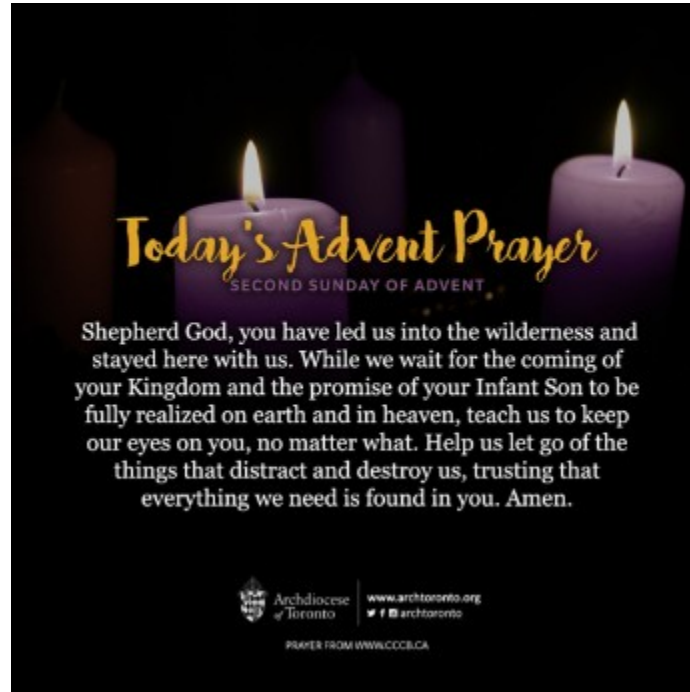
The word fanfare is also sometimes used to describe any showy celebration surrounding a special event. There is always a lot of fanfare surrounding the coming of a king, isn't there? Well, not always. There wasn't much fanfare surrounding the coming of Jesus. There were no trumpets and no one shouting, "God save the king!" The Bible tells us that there was only a man named John who was like a voice calling out in the desert saying, "Prepare the way for the Lord."

That wasn't much of a fanfare for a king, and it sure wasn't much of a fanfare for the King of Kings. As we look forward to the celebration of his birth, we do it with great fanfare. (Have the trumpeter play the fanfare again.)

Today we lit the second candle on our Advent wreath. We light the candle of peace -- for our King -- the Prince of Peace.

Heavenly Father, we look forward to celebrating the birthday of our King, Jesus. He is King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and the Prince of Peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Prayer is such an important part of our faith. As we enter the Advent Season let us remember to focus on the true meaning of Advent Season, preparing ourselves for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ .



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