



Shepherd of Souls Area Faith Community **Called to be the Loving Face of Christ**

Dear Parishioners of the Shepherd of Souls AFC,

We all know that Christmas is one of our most holy days of the Church year. To get ourselves prepared to worthily celebrate the Nativity of the Lord, we have the short season of Advent. During Advent we contemplate the Second Coming of Jesus at the end of time. What needs to change in our life to be ready?

I encourage you to prepare for meeting Christ by celebrating the **Sacrament of Reconciliation**: Wednesday, Dec. 1st, 6:30 pm at St. Philip; Sunday, Dec. 5th, 4:00 pm at St. Philip, Wednesday, Dec. 15th at 6:30 pm at St. John's Education Center, and Wednesday, Dec. 22 at 6:45 pm at Our Lady. In addition to these communal penance services, we offer the sacrament a half an hour before the Saturday evening liturgies, and after the 8:00 am Sunday Mass by request. St. Philip also has the sacrament 4:00—5:00 pm on Dec. 7th and 21st.

The Masses for the **Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary** will be Tuesday, Dec. 7th, 5:30 pm at St. Philip, Wednesday, Dec. 8th, 8:00 am at St. John, 12:00 noon at St. Philip, 5:30 pm at St. John's Education Center, 7:00 pm at St. Philip, and 7:00 pm at Our Lady.

Christmas Eve Masses are Friday, Dec. 24th, 4:00 pm at St. Philip and St. John, 7:00 pm at Our Lady.

Christmas Day Masses are Saturday, Dec. 25th, 8:30 am at Our Lady, 10:00 am at St. John, 10:30 am at St. Philip, and Noon in Spanish at St. Philip.

Please note that on Saturday Dec. 25th, there will not be any Masses in the evening. If we had Masses then, they would not be for Sunday but for Christmas.

The Mass for **Mary, Mother of God** is Friday, Dec. 31st, 5:00 pm at St. Philip. There is no obligation to attend Mass this year.

May God bless your Advent and Christmas seasons,

Fr. Jeff Horejsi

The end of the year is not far away, and it is time to start thinking of strategies to maximize the tax benefits of year-end giving. Federal tax laws and many state laws make it possible to reduce or eliminate taxes on gifts to charities like your parish, diocese, schools and other ministries. Remember that only gifts made by December 31st can help reduce the amount of taxes you owe next April. Please consult **your professional tax advisor for tax strategies for your personal situation.**

The most popular way to give to charity is still by cash or check. Gifts completed by December 31st will qualify for tax deductibility for the current tax year. Gifts of cash qualify for up to one-half of your adjusted gross income (AGI). You will receive an acknowledgement for gifts of \$250 or more. If you are a registered member you will receive a statement in January indicating your 2021 giving.

For more information about giving gifts of cash, please contact the parish office.

**Volunteers
needed!**

AFC Christmas Ministries - If you are available to volunteer for Lector, Usher or Eucharistic Minister for the Christmas Masses in the Area Faith Community please contact Julie at the Parish Offices or at jschmitz@shepherdsouls.org



A Blessing of a manger scene:

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:
Our help is in the name of the Lord.
R/. Who made heaven and earth.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example, **Luke 2:1** (lines 1-8) or **Isaiah 7:10** (lines 10-15, the birth of Emmanuel).

The leader prays with hands joined:

God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have made manifest your love:
when our need for a Savior was great
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.
To our lives he brings joy and peace,
justice, mercy, and love.

Lord,
bless all who look upon this manger;
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,
and raise our thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Savior of all,
and who lives and reigns forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Consecration to the Holy Family: On the Feast of the Holy Family (Dec. 26), we will once again invite all our families to consecrate themselves to the Holy Family. The end of the prayer identifies what we ask for, "May our home, O Holy Family, truly become a domestic church where we reflect your example in our daily life. Amen."





Our Lady of Guadalupe Patroness of the Americas

On December 9, 1531, in Mexico, Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego, a poor humble Aztec Indian who had recently converted to the Catholic faith. She asked him to go to the Bishop and tell him to build a church where she said "I will show and offer all of my love, my compassion, my help and my protection to my people."

Juan Diego did as she asked, but the Bishop asked for a sign that this message was really from Our Lady. Mary granted his request. On December 12, she showed Juan where the most beautiful Castilian roses were and told him to gather them. It was a miracle that the roses were there and in bloom because there was frost on the ground, and the ground was an infertile place where only cactus and thistles grew. After he gathered them, she helped arrange them in his tilma, or poncho, and told him to show them to the Bishop. When he brought them to the Bishop, the Bishop was amazed at the roses, but was even more amazed at what began to happen to Juan Diego's tilma. Right before their very eyes, the image of Our Lady began to form on the cloth. The picture of Mary was beautiful and the Bishop fell to his knees. He had the church built at her request. The tilma is still intact after 470 years. The colors have not faded and the cloth has not deteriorated. It has been on display in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe for all this time.

Our Lady showed the Aztec people about the one true God. Her clothing and appearance on Juan Diego's tilma showed this. Our Lady's message of faithfulness has continued to spread in North and South America, so Our Lady of Guadalupe is known as the Patroness of the Americas.

In honor of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, all are invited to Mass at 12:00 noon, followed by a fiesta. We will have food and music and celebration in Mary's honor. We will begin with a procession at Mass. Please bring roses or other flowers to present to Our Lady. All are welcome to this celebration.

As we continue to wait for the new Bishop for the Diocese of New Ulm, please continue pray our prayer for the new Bishop.

***Almighty God, Who by the Holy Spirit moves the heart of Your people,
Direct the counsels of those who are appointed to choose a bishop for
The Diocese of New Ulm, that we may be given a pastor who in faithfulness
And wisdom shall lead Your people in the way of holiness.***

***Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us.***

