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Sisters of St. Clare srsclare.com/prayer

BEFRIENDER

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COMMUNION FOR HOMEBOUND

Pam Graul-Gwizdala513-3027

**SCHOOL ENDOWMENT
 SPREADING THE SPIRIT FUND**

Clark Switalski, School Principal662-6431

MASSES

Saturday 4:30 PM	Wednesday 8:00 AM (Not July)
Sunday 9:30 AM	Thursday 8:00 AM (Not July)

WORD & COMMUNION SERVICE

Tuesday 8:00 AM (Labor Day through Memorial Day)

NEW PARISHIONERS

Contact Parish Office for appointment to register.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Celebrated the 2nd weekend each month. (Please check with parish office for current schedule) Must be active, registered member of parish family. Contact the Parish Office

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Arrangements should be made by contacting Parish Office at least six months in advance. Must be active, registered member of parish family.

SACRAMENT OF THE SICK

Notify Parish Office of parishioners experiencing serious illness, injury, or hospitalization. Communal Anointing of the Sick is celebrated annually in the Fall.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Available 1st Saturday each month at 11:00 AM in the Sacristy at St. Gabriel Parish call Parish Office for appointment.

AUBURN AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOL

114 W. Midland Rd., Auburn, MI 48611

Ph.: 662-6431 Fax: 662-3391 www.auburnacschool.org

Clark Switalski, Principal cswitalski@auburnac.org

School Office..... schooloffice@auburnac.org

WEATHER POLICY

If Bay City Public Schools close due to inclement weather, daytime (8:00 AM – 4:00 PM), parish activities are canceled. Cancellation of all (including the St Anthony site) evening activities will be announced by 3:00 PM. Closures will be posted on TV: NBC 25, ABC 12, CBS 5

WEEK OF DECEMBER 21, 2020

MONDAY

197: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a Lk 1:39-45

TUESDAY 8 am Word and Communion

198: 1 Sm 1:24-28 Lk 1:39-56

WEDNESDAY 8 am Mass

199: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Lk 1:57-66

THURSDAY 6 pm Christmas Eve Mass

13: Is 62:1-5 Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 Acts 13:16-17, 22-25 Mt 1:1-25

FRIDAY 9:30 am Christmas Day Mass

16: Is 52:7-10 Ps 98:1-6 Heb 1:1-6 Jn1:1-18

SATURDAY 4:30 pm Mass

696: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 Mt 10:17-22

SUNDAY 9:30 am Mass

17: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 Ps 128:1-5 Col 3:12-21



PARISH ACTIVITIES

Merry Christmas!

Thursday & Friday, December 24th and 25th-Parish Office Closed

STEWARDSHIP

Weekly Target: \$10,962 Offering: \$10,949.23

Food Pantry: \$50 Diocesan Collections: \$1,863

Christmas Flowers: \$49

Thank you for your continued financial support. It is appreciated!

Children Good Deed

...I helped fold laundry...Helped set up the Christmas tree...
...I helped my Mom wrap presents...I kept my room clean all week...
...Helped Mom make lunches for work...To install a new toilet...
...I watered the Christmas tree...

AUBURN AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Clark Switalski, Principal

It's Christmas break! The teachers and children have been terrific and resilient through everything thrown at them, but it is time for them to have a nice break. We have been talking about how to display humility during this Christmas season during our announcements, and soon it will be time to see how the lessons we teach translate to the students. I hope you all have a Merry Christmas!



The readings this week focus on faith and give us specific examples of how people throughout the ages have had their faith tested. Mary is the ultimate example of not wavering in her faith when she was given the news from the Angel Gabriel. Even though her body is filled with fear and questions, she agrees to carry Jesus into this world. I admire and look up to the resolve Mary had in this situation, and hope that when I am

presented with a difficult choice, I have the resolve to make the right decision.

✝ **God Bless**

Reminder: We will have the "Christmas Prayer Service" available on the tables at the entrance to church, at the parish office or you can go to the St. Gabriel website and on the Home Page, scroll down to the red box and click on the prayer service button. We hope this will add to your Christmas celebration!

EDUCATION / FORMATION

Family Talk Time Celebrating Sunday for Catholic Families: Sara McGinnis Lee

How does it make you feel that God loved us so much He sent his Son to be with us?

Reflecting on the Word:

Mary was chosen to bear the Messiah. Through her, God was able to be fully with us in our humanity. She committed herself to following God's plan for her, though she did not understand it. Mary reminds us to allow ourselves to be loved, and to be transformed by that love so that we can follow God in all we do and say, all the days of our lives.

Living the Word:

The angel Gabriel brought Mary a message of God's love. As Christmas is only a few days away, spend time making homemade cards for those close to you. Gather art supplies and enlist your children to personalize each greeting with messages of love and joy.



A Symbol of the Season:

The Christmas Tree is a beautiful symbol of the Nativity. Like the evergreen branches, God's love

never withers. The lights remind us that Christ is the light of the world. An angel atop the tree points to the angel that announced Jesus' birth, and the star on the highest branch represents the Star of Bethlehem that guided the Magi to the Christ child. Christmas trees help us remember Jesus and why he was born.

Blessing Prayer for the Christmas Tree Lord our God, we praise you for the light of creation: the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night. We praise you for the light of Israel: The Law, the prophets and the wisdom of the Scriptures. We praise you for Jesus Christ, your son: he is Emmanuel, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the wonder of your love. Lord God let your blessings come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gift Giving at Christmas is very important. God gave us Jesus as a gift to the world. Because Jesus has been born, we are given everlasting life with him. On Christmas we give gifts just like God gave us the gift of Jesus. In addition to our loved ones, we are also called to give gifts to those who are in need. Giving gifts is the perfect way to honor Jesus as the best gift to the world!



Christmas Wishes...

On behalf of our parish staff, on behalf of those who serve in the office, in the school, in Religious Education Programs, best wishes are extended to all the members of our parish family. To say the least it has been and continues to be a very difficult year. It was a difficult time for Mary and Joseph as well. Because of their Faith in God they managed to work through the difficulties and challenges they faced. Ultimately, they found peace and inner contentment because their trust was in God. May the same be true for us as individuals and collectively as a community. May God dwell within us.





**FROM
FR. TOM'S
DESK**

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Patricia Sanchez, *Celebration*

Israel's first holy spaces were places where a human being had experienced God. That encounter could have occurred anywhere, from a mountaintop to a running brook, from an expanse of desert to a verdant forest. Meetings with God were often memorialized by a stone or pile of stones placed on the spot so that subsequent passerby would realize they were on holy ground and afford that place the reverence it was due. Gradually, holy places became more permanently established, as in the tent of meeting referenced in today's first reading. Eventually, the moveable tent evolved into a stationary temple and was recognized as the holiest place for meeting and communing with God.

With the coming of God in Jesus Christ, holiness took up residence in a new location. No longer would humans commune with God solely in the precincts of the temple. Rather holiness itself had come to live within the parameters of the human condition, and humanity itself became a holy space. This wonder is celebrated in today's Gospel as Luke tells the story of Jesus' conception. Through the power of the Most High and Holy God, the very Spirit of God overshadowed Mary, and she became what the early church was proud to call the living Ark of the Covenant. A holy place, a sacred space by virtue of the child she conceived and carried, Mary is held out to Advent believers as both an example and an inspiration.

Just as Mary welcomed the Spirit and brought forth Jesus, thereby becoming a holy space that God fully occupied, so did Mary become the place where others could come to encounter God who dwelled within her. In this, she showed herself to be an authentic disciple. Her discipleship continues to teach us how to make room in our lives for God, for Jesus, for the Spirit, and thereby to become the holy places and sacred spaces of which this world is in so much need.

This special role of ours as living sanctuaries where God chooses to dwell and through whom God chooses to be revealed is most poignant during Advent. We who await the Coming One often prepare symbols of welcome: the manger, the creche, the cave, the inn. But in truth, all these symbols are to be realized in each of us. We are the empty creche awaiting the presence of God. Individually, and especially together as church, we are the place made holy by God's presence.

Humble Prayers: (2 Samuel 7)

Celebration

David's humble, grateful prayer speaks to the heart of each Advent believer, reminding each of us that in all we are and in all we shall ever be, we are to acknowledge God as first, foremost and central to our lives. God's will should strike the path and set the pace of all we do. David was willing to learn this. In today's Gospel, Mary will join him in teaching us the attitude of acquiescence to God that should characterize every believer.

Free to Choose: (Romans 16)

Celebration

In remembering what Jesus has accomplished for sinners in his first appearance among us, we would do well to anticipate the second and final coming of the Lord by working diligently to appropriate his gift of salvation. Advent is the perfect season for us to become more attuned to God's gift and to Jesus, who has put them within our reach. Like Paul, we are to be fully cognizant of the fact of our freedom to accept or to reject God's gifts. Paul was also aware that one day, there will be no more days to use our freedom to take hold of our salvation. On that day, it will be too late to prepare.

Part of preparing to welcome Jesus' final appearance will consist in handing on the good news to others. Preaching this good news with our lips as well as our lives is both our privilege and our duty.

Taking God In: (Luke 1)

Celebration

God's plan for Mary and the future of all humankind was revealed through the angel. If Gabriel had been delivering a PowerPoint presentation, it would have had four bullets: (1) Mary was to have a son named Jesus; (2) he would be the Son of the Most High God; (3) he would be the promised heir to the throne of David; (4) what would transpire would be under the auspices of the Holy Spirit.

This is the Jesus whose coming we await. Mary was able to welcome Jesus and all her life because she had cultivated a space for God. In our own preparations for Jesus' coming, she remains our mentor. Her response to God, "I am the handmaid of the Lord," encourages us to remain open to God even when we cannot know where our journey with God will lead us or how it will end.

Mary as Model:

Patricia Sanchez, *Celebration*

Precious little is told of Mary in the in the Christian scriptures. Precious little can be known for certain about her, and yet that which has been included in scripture regarding Mary represents her as the disciple par excellence. Sensitive to the ways and will of God, Mary was receptive to God's Word; she heard and listened and kept that Word, allowing it to inspire, direct and change her life. In her capacity as disciple, Mary continues to teach the Advent church how to welcome and how to witness to the good news whom we call Jesus Christ. To put it another way, Mary teaches those who long for the coming again of Jesus how to be virgins, not so much in a biological sense, but spiritually virginal, i.e., Mary teaches all would-be disciples to become that empty, open, welcoming, holy place where God enters in and love is free to happen.

Mary's response to God challenges us to ask of ourselves: When God makes a loving overture into my life, do I try to avoid the encounter? Do I demand full knowledge before I acquiesce, or do I trust without full understanding and believe without being completely and personally in control of *my* life, *my* plans, *my* future? Do I ask of God what cannot be answered, or I respond from my deepest truest self and say something new, a "Yes" that will change me forever? Because of Mary's "Yes," she became God's living temple.



**"Lord Jesus, be born
anew in me"**

The Christmas Event:

Rev. Greg Kandra, *Connect*

There is a truth that strikes at the heart of every believing Christian—that truth defines Christmas. It is there, in the middle of the Gospel, in the very first words that are spoken. "Do not be afraid." And then it gets even better. "Behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." "A savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord." These are the words we have been longing for .

With this moment, the course of human history changes forever. God has become one of us. The savior's very name proclaims the truth that no one ever thought possible: "Emmanuel." God is with us. It is a stunning thought, almost overwhelming. And yet we are told: "Do not be afraid." Across two thousand years, those words reach out to us in joy and hope and consolation. No matter who you are, no matter where you live, no matter what your circumstances, this is what matters: do not be afraid. To the sick, the suffering, the lonely, the lost. To those who feel that God has forgotten you, do not be afraid.

Because even in this darkest of nights, there is light. A savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. Here is our hope. He did not come in grandeur or majesty, to intimidate us. He came as the most helpless and dependent creature of all: a baby, in a manger, in Bethlehem. He loves us so much. God came to us as someone we could not help but love. So, do not be afraid.

December Report: The Diocese is doing all the record keeping for Christ's Mission Appeal (CMA). We received a report thru 12-16-2020. Our target this year is \$71,201. So far 39% of our parishioners (209 families) have responded pledging \$51,380 which is 72% of the target. If you have not responded, I ask that you do so. Despite the turbulent times the parish still has an obligation to support the diocesan budget.



**A Prayer for
the Fourth Sunday of
ADVENT**

Mother Mary, pray for us, that we might be inspired by the way you received your life and God's. Draw us close to your Son, that we might trust Him with our lives, as He learned to trust His Father by His trust in you. Amen.

Michael Kaczynski
Painting/Carpentry

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St. Anthony Cemetery
4485 S. Eleven Mile Rd.
Auburn, MI 48611

COLUMBARIUM	Parishioner	Non-Parishioner
Single (1 Urn)	\$1,000	\$1,500
Double (2 Urns)	\$1,400	\$1,750
Inurnment	\$ 250 per niche	\$ 300 per niche
CEMETERY	Parishioner	Non-Parishioner
Plot	\$ 500	\$1,200
Burial	\$ 650	\$ 850
Burial of Cremains	\$ 150	\$ 175
Saturday Burial	\$ 200 additional	\$ 200 additional
Foundation	\$ 0.40 per sq. inch	\$ 0.40 per sq. inch

Contact St. Gabriel Parish Office at 989-662-6861

Prices Effective July 1, 2019