



A PARISH FOR THE PEOPLE

QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH

DECEMBER 13, 2020

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.”

Isaiah 61:1 (cited in Luke 4:19)

6603 CHRISTOPHER DRIVE
St. Louis, MO 63129

Parish Office Hours
Monday—Friday
8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Phone: 314.846.8207
FAX: 314.846.0636

Queen of All Saints School
Phone: 314.846.0506
Fax: 314.846.4939

www.qasstl.org



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations and best wishes to Fr. Patrick Hambrough celebrating his 35th anniversary to the Ordination of Priesthood on December 14, 2020. We are grateful for all of your years of faithful service to Our Lord and His people. May He grant you many more.

SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST SUNDAY MASS

Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 7:30, 9:00, and 10:30 a.m., 12 Noon

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday — Friday 6:15 a.m. and 8:15 a.m.
Saturday 8:15 a.m.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Tuesday 9:00 a.m.—7:00 p.m.

PERPETUAL HELP DEVOTIONS AND BENEDICTION

Tuesday 7:00 p.m.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CRY ROOM)

Tuesday following the 6:15 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. Masses
Tuesday 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Saturday 7:30 a.m.—8:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m.—4:45 p.m.
Anytime please call the rectory.

HIGHLIGHTS

Pope Francis's Prayer To Mary During Coronavirus Pandemic



O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your

faith firm.

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee, we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus, who has taken upon himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.

BULLETIN DEADLINE

The deadline for articles for the Sunday bulletin is Monday morning, 5 business days before the article appears in the bulletin. Half and full page requests are due 15 business days before publication date. This schedule changes for Holy Days and holidays.

Please send all bulletin articles to queenparish@qasstl.org.

MASS INTENTIONS AND READINGS

Monday, December 14 - St. John of the Cross

Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a/Matthew 21:23-27

6:15 a.m. Bud and Evelyn Barron (†)

8:15 a.m. Debbie Willet (†)

Tuesday, December 15 - Advent Weekday

Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13/Matthew 21:28-32

6:15 a.m. Ruth Elsner (†)

8:15 a.m. Doris and Peter Perniciaro (†)

Wednesday, December 16 - Advent Weekday

Isaiah 45:6c-8, 18, 21b-25/Luke 7:18b-23

6:15 a.m. Dr. Francisco Santos (†)

8:15 a.m. Priest's Intention (†)

Thursday, December 17 - Advent Weekday

Genesis 49-2, 8-10/Matthew 1:1-17

6:15 a.m. Purgatorial Society (†)

8:15 a.m. Bernadette Godfrey (†)

Friday, December 18 - Advent Weekday

Jeremiah 23:5-8/Matthew 1:18-25

6:15 a.m. Catherine Horne (†)

8:15 a.m. Myrt Fahlkamp (†)

Saturday, December 19 - Advent Weekday

Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a/Luke 1:5-25

8:15 a.m. Bob Clark (†)

5:00 p.m. Jen Marr (†)

Sunday, December 20 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Romans 16:25-27/Luke 1:26-38

7:30 a.m. Ed Hill (†)

9:00 a.m. Michelle and Julie Gilmore (†)

10:30 a.m. Pat Anderson (†)

12:00 Noon For the People

Sunday Mass (Live Video Mass Streaming)

9:00 a.m.

10:30 a.m.

Weekday Masses (Live Video Mass Streaming)

Monday—Saturday

8:15 a.m.

Mission Statement

As members of Queen of All Saints Parish we are a community united in the Catholic faith, nourished by the Eucharist, and sent to make Christ known to all through word and deed.

Stewardship

"Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

This scripture reading sums up Stewardship. "Rejoice always" means place your trust in God; He will provide all that you need. "Pray constantly" means prayer should be a running conversation with God throughout the whole day, every day. "Give thanks in all circumstances" means even in bad situations, thank God. Suffering a little bit helps empathy for others in similar situations and shows our dependence on God.

FROM OUR PASTOR

PASTORAL STAFF

Dear Parishioners,

A man went to the pastor and complained: "Life is unbearable. There are nine of us living in one room. What can I do?"

The priest answered: "Take a goat in the room with you." The man is incredulous, but Father insists, "Do as you are told and come back in one week."

A week later the man comes back, looking half dead. "We cannot stand it," he exclaims "the goat is dirty, eats everything, and is constantly noisy." The priest replies, "Go home and let the goat out. Come back in a week's time."

A week later the man arrives at the rectory door, beaming. Through his broad smile he proclaims, "Life is beautiful, Father we enjoy every minute. There's no goat, only the nine of us."

The appearances of a goat may not do much for us, but the appearance of the Messiah should. St. Paul in today's Second Reading implores the Thessalonians to "Rejoice always." The prophet Isaiah boasts, "I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul." Today, on this Third Sunday of Lent, the Church celebrates Gaudete Sunday, Gaudete being Latin for rejoice. As the celebration of the Birth of our Lord draws near, the Church assures us that we have reason to rejoice.

Too often, especially in these days of a pandemic, we can feel like the guy who lives with eight other people in one room. We're anxious, uncomfortable, wary. An upheaval that began in March continues still. The wondrous atmosphere found in gatherings of family and friends seem like smoke, ready to be blown away. It's like we have a goat in our house. Everything is messed up.

Yet, faith demands that we lift up our heads and allow our eyes to behold the coming of the Lord, travelling to us on highways that we have prepared, on roads we've made straight. Currently, this is not the easiest thing to do. But Isaiah was speaking to a people who had been forced into exile, and Paul was writing to new Christians who had been mistreated by their fellow countrymen. Nevertheless, both urged believers to rejoice - heartily and always. We do the same as we travel through Advent, even in a topsy-turvy world. Following St. Paul's admonition, we pray without ceasing, we don't quench the Spirit, we test everything and we retain what is good. And we know, of course, what is best - Jesus Christ, coming to save us all. Thus, we could mimic the man above standing at the door, beaming, "Life is beautiful, we enjoy every minute. The Messiah is with every one of us."

May God bless all of you.

In Christ,

Fr. Hambrough

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o

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Preparing for Christmas

Christmas Mass Times Queen of All Saints

Christmas Eve, Dec. 24th

4:00 pm Vigil- Church*

4:00 pm Vigil- Limbach Hall

6:00 pm Vigil- Church*

Christmas Day, Dec. 25th

12:00am Midnight- Church*

7:30 am- Church*

10:30 am- Church*

* This Mass will be livestreamed at qasstl.org

Advent Idea:

Get an Advent Wreath, light the candles, and pray with your family each night.

Oakville Advent

Reconciliation Weekend

Where: St. Francis

When: Dec. 18 (6-8pm)

Dec. 19 (9am-3pm)

Advent Idea:

Spend some extra time with Jesus in the Eucharist at Adoration on Tuesdays

Advent Idea:

Read one chapter of the Gospel of Luke for each day of December.

QAS Confession Times:

Tuesdays: 6:45am

8:45am 6-7pm

Saturdays: 7:30-8 am

4:00-4:45pm



Reconciliation Weekend

Prepare your heart for Christmas by celebrating
the Sacrament of Confession

Friday

6-8 p.m.

Msgr. Bill Leach

Fr. Pat Hambrough

Saturday

9-11 a.m.

Fr. Samuel Inameti

Fr. Anthony Yates

11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Msgr. Norb Ernst

Fr. Clark Philipp

Fr. George Staley

1-3 p.m.

Fr. Conor Sullivan

Fr. Kent Pollman

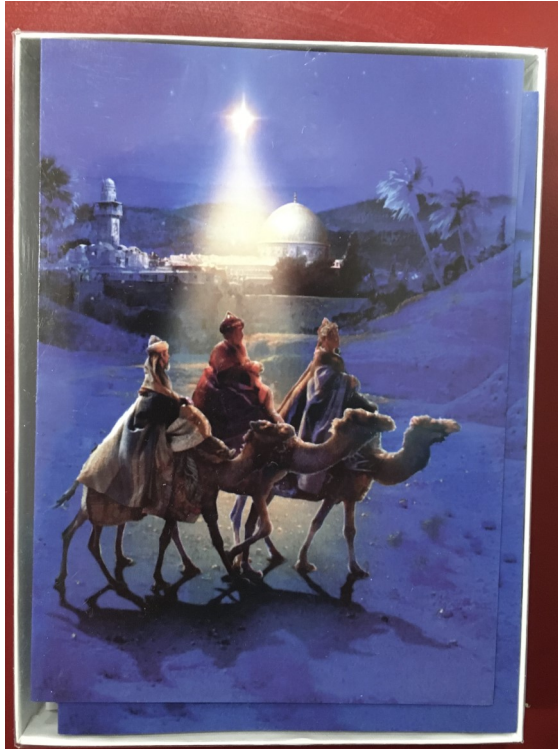
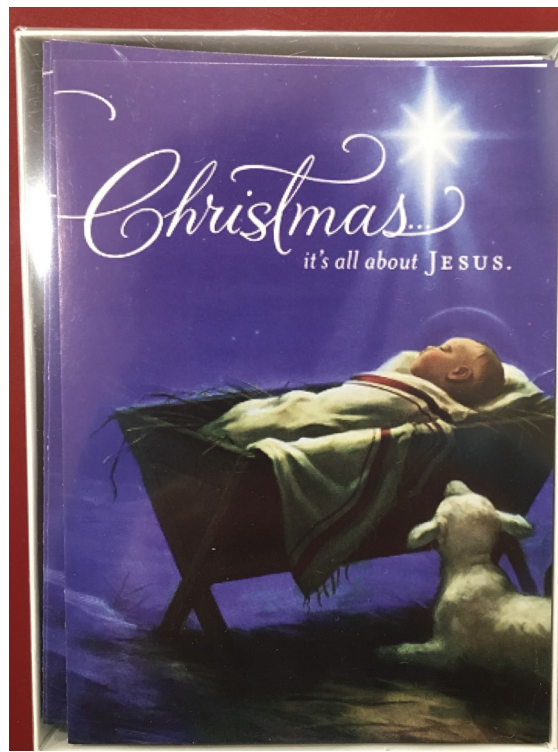
December 18 & 19

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
4556 Telegraph Rd., St. Louis, MO 63129

sfastl.org

PRO LIFE CHRISTMAS CARDS

Beautiful pro life Christmas cards are now available with proceeds supporting the large pro life billboard on I-55. Cards will be sold after Sunday Masses, December 13. You may also buy cards at the rectory office Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Cards are \$13, 18 cards/box. Donations also accepted to keep the pro life message on the billboard. Checks should be made payable to MO Right To Life. Questions? Call Jeannine at 565-6085.



**ADVENT TALK
AND
EVENING OF ADORATION**

Reflection by Seminarian Jake Braun

December 16, 2020

7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Church

BULLETIN DEADLINE CHANGE

Due to the holidays, the bulletin deadline for the following weekends have been changed.

ALL announcements must be in the parish office no later than:

The bulletin for the weekend of December 27, 2020, is due on **Tuesday, December 15, at 8:00 a.m.**

The bulletin for the weekend of January 3, 2021, is due on **Monday, December 21, at 8:00 a.m.**

REST IN PEACE

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Harold Fleischmann, husband of Dolores Fleischmann of our parish.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of James Matthew Borawski, son of Ronald and Bonnie Borawski of our parish.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Kenneth Siesener, brother of Bob (Carol) Siesener of our parish and teacher at Queen of All Saints School.

May God welcome them home and comfort their families in their time of sorrow.

Chaplet of Divine Mercy

Please join us for The Chaplet of Divine Mercy every Tuesday at 8:00 a.m. before the 8:15 a.m. Mass.

A BEAUTIFUL ADVENT PRAYER

My hidden Lord Jesus, I love You and thank You with profound gratitude for uniting Yourself with fallen humanity. When You first entered into this world, You remained hidden for nine months in the immaculate womb of Your Blessed Mother. She carried You, body and blood, soul and divinity, within the sanctuary of her body. She also carried You within her heart as a result of her perfect love for You and her perfect obedience to the will of the Father.

Precious Lord, as I embrace this Advent Season, please open my eyes to see the great value and blessing of Your Incarnation. Help me to discover Your hidden presence in this world and within my own soul. I desire to see, understand and experience the profound effects that Your Incarnation has on my life and I desire to receive those effects more fully this Advent. May I become a sanctuary in which You dwell so that I, like Your dear Mother, may bring Your presence into the world.

My loving Jesus, I choose You, this Advent, as my King and my God. I abandon myself to You and seek to put all my trust in Your tender care. Draw me close to You and free me from my sin so that I may love You with a pure and holy heart.

Mother Mary, as You carried your dear Son in your immaculate womb, you also carried Him in your heart. Pray for me, this Advent, that I may surrender myself to the will of the Father in imitation of you. You said "Yes" to all that God asked of you and never hesitated to fully embrace His divine will. Pray that I may imitate your perfect example so as to share a deeper union with you and your divine Son.

Come, Lord Jesus,
Come, Lord Jesus,
Come, Lord Jesus!

Amen.

Prayer taken from mycatholic.life website

BANNS OF MARRIAGE

Bann III Molly Sweeney and Robert Berra

PRAY FOR THE SICK

Mary Ann Amato	Bill Manz
Dennis Amelung	Dolores McMullin
Zachary Amelung	Missy McMullen
Bob Basse	Gary Meadows
Pat Basse	Amy Meadows
Debbie Bayless	Annie (Pozzo) Meahl
Susan Beckner	Carmen Molett
Loretta Borchetta	Greg Mueller
Lynda Burke	Kelly Mueller
Mary Callahan	Marie Murphy
Tony Dedic	David Murrell
Ron Dieckmann	Rosemary Nagy
Keith Duewell	Marilyn Novak
Helen Erlinger	Helga Ogent
Carol Faust	Judy Pelton
Hal Fleischmann	Cynthia Pozzo
Ruth Frahm	Neri Prichard
Rick Frazier	Diane Romano
Jane Gacioch	Carla Rowell
Pauline Green	Don Sammelman
Ken Hagemann	Marilyn Sammelman
Dorothy Hermann	Patricia Schmitt
Betty Huegerich	Belinda Spencer
Diane Jones	Norma Stillman
Pat Keller	Kathryn Sullivan
Bill Kerbler	Karen Thaman
Nicole Koenig	Robert Warren
Steve Kohner	Michael Werschling
Connie Laux	Pat Will
Loretta Lewandowski	Holly Wille
Jason Loring	Jeffrey Williams
Michael Maniaci	Ronald Winston



SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Rosary Rally For Our Country

America

SUN . DEC 20 . 12:00

<><><>

Monastery of St. Clare

(On Telegraph Road near Monument)

Please join us in a peaceful public Rosary Rally to pray for our country through the intercession of the Immaculata!!

"I want you to know that, in this kind of warfare, the battering ram has always been the Angelic Psalter (Rosary), which is the foundation stone of the New Testament."

-Our Lady to St. Dominic

FORMED

Join us for the Road to Bethlehem, a journey that includes daily Advent reflections and enrichment from FORMED.

- Daily Advent reflections by Dr. Tim Gray
- Brother Francis Advent reflections for kids
- Weekly videos, audio talks, and book excerpts related to the theme for the week
- A weekly action item to help you put the Advent message into practice

Free when using parish code

To access FORMED:

- go on-line to www.formed.org
- Type in access code: 87b3dc
- Register your name address, etc.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS - DECEMBER 19 - 20

	Presider	Lectors
5:00 p.m. (Sat)	Fr. Hambrough	Dave Horne Jackie Horne
7:30 a.m.	Fr. Philipp	Barb Mantia Tom Hart
9:00 a.m.	Fr. Hambrough	Eric Treptow Mike Altepeter
10:30 a.m.	Fr. Philipp	Gayle Millburg Helen Fogarty
12:00 p.m.	Fr. Hambrough	Youth Ministry

Ite Ad Joseph: Go To Joseph



FROM OUR SEMINARIAN JAKE BRAUN

On December 8, 1870, Blessed Pope Pius IX proclaimed St. Joseph to be Patron of the Catholic Church. Now, one hundred and fifty years later, on the anniversary of this proclamation, Pope Francis has declared that this liturgical year (2020-2021) will be the Year of St. Joseph. While many who drink in the milieu of our modern world tend to view masculinity as toxic and fatherhood as superfluous, St. Joseph stands out as a strong father to imitate and a powerful patron to implore. For a world that needs good men – good fathers – more than ever, there is no better saint than St. Joseph to ask for help.

The picture included in this article is of the ciborium (also referred to as a baldacchino) that stands above the altar of the St. Joseph Chapel at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary. Inscribed on the front of the structure is the Latin phrase, “Ite ad Ioseph,” which translates, “Go to Joseph.” The phrase is actually a quote from the Old Testament, referring to the son of Jacob who was sold as a slave into Egypt, before eventually becoming the head of Pharaoh’s household. Joseph’s journey from the shackles of slavery to fortune and freedom are evocative of Jesus’ foster father, Joseph. Just as Joseph was chosen by God to be a wise and prudent custodian for the household of the King of Egypt, so St. Joseph was chosen by God to be the leader of the household of the King of Kings. Just as the Old Testament

Joseph used his freedom and wealth to feed a people starving for food, so St. Joseph freely became foster father of God’s Incarnate Son in order to provide a redeemer for a world starving for salvation. Now, the Church provides us with a new encouragement to go to St. Joseph, our spiritual father, to ask for his intercession and to imitate his holiness, courage, and love.

To these ends, many opportunities for plenary indulgences are given by Rome for various acts of devotion to St. Joseph. Next week, I will elaborate on some of these opportunities. For now, I will just leave you with a prayer to St. Joseph, from Pope Francis’ document *Patris Corde [With a Father’s Heart]*:

***Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.***

***Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.***

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL "RAG LADIES" IN ACTION

A pandemic won't slow this dedicated group of ladies from doing their good work.

One Monday a month they sort and pack the gently used clothing and household goods donated by parishioners.

Once completed they summon the Holy Haulers to deliver several truckloads to St. Anthony of Padua Food Pantry with the remaining going to the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store on Christy.



DYNAMIC CATHOLIC, *ALIVE!* - GAUDETE SUNDAY

Rejoice! On Gaudete Sunday we remember the joy that is coming soon to the world: Jesus Christ. Where do we find our joy in life? If we seek it in anything but Christ, we are missioning out because true joy comes from the knowledge that God loves us and has come to save us from sin and death. As John the Baptist preached, true joy comes by way of repentance. Our desire for holiness and pursuit of genuine freedom from sin and death inspire us to renounce evil and to open a place for Christ to enter our hearts, minds, and souls. When we are open to experiencing the grace of Christ, we can receive mercy, forgiveness, healing, consolation, and peace along with joy. (CCC523-524, 719-7-20)

archstl.org/dynamic

FIAT WOMEN'S GROUP

All women are invited for prayer and a talk presented by a Kenrick-Glennon Seminary faculty member on the third Thursday of each month. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the meetings are currently held virtually. On Thursday December 17, the program will include a rosary prayed at 8:00 a.m. and a talk given by Fr. Mirco Sosio, Spiritual Director.

To receive access to the live rosary prayer group and a link to Fr. Sosio's talk, please sign up for Fiat emails at www.kenrick.edu/fiat.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

You can preach a better sermon with your life
than with your lips.

YAY!



We are excited to announce that the 8th Annual Virtual Auction raised \$55,000 profit to fund the QAS Classroom Remodel Project!

Thank you to all who participated!



CYC BASKETBALL IS STARTING LATE THIS YEAR



The first weekend will be January 22 – 24, or possibly later if further COVID restrictions are announced.

Anyone interested in Officiating or Scorekeeping should contact Rob Gerber at umpno1972@sbcglobal.net. In previous years scorekeepers would attend a training session; there will not be a session conducted by CYC this year. But the scorekeeper must complete and submit a form electronically.

In previous years Officials were required to attend a training session and pass an exam. The training session is virtual this year. The exam is on-line again, and must be passed by 31 December2020.

QAS Junior Golf **2020**

<p>Program 1: For 2nd–4th (boys & girls) Registration opens January 15, 2021 Registration closes February 7, 2021</p>	<p>Program 2: For 5th–HS (boys & girls) Registration opens January 15, 2021 Registration closes February 7, 2021</p>
<p>Program cost is \$150 which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Four one-hour practices with a golf pro and golf balls Four golf matches at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverside Par 3 Golf Course <p><i>Please review dates before registering. We are unable to offer alternative practice and match dates.</i></p> <p>Practice Dates will be on Monday evenings at the First Tee Driving range (Exact dates and times to be determined):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 12 April 26 May 17 May 31 <p>Match Dates will be on Sunday Afternoons, excluding Mothers Day weekend (Times to be determined):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sunday, 4/18 at Riverside (Par 3) Sunday, 4/25 at Riverside (Par 3) Sunday, 5/2 at Riverside(Par 3) Saturday, 5/8 at Riverside (Par 3) Sunday, 5/16 at Riverside (Par 3) Sunday 5/30 at Riverside (Par 3) Sunday, 6/6 at Riverside (Par 3) Sunday, 6/13 (rain date if needed) <p><i>* The schedule includes 4 matches and 3 bye weeks</i></p> <p>Please log on to www.qasaa.org to register</p>	<p>Program cost is \$155 which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Four one-hour practices with a golf pro and golf balls Four golf matches at either <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crescent Farms-The Colt The Club at Castle Bluffs rounds may be played in Late April-June on Monday evening during our practice time slot) <p><i>Please review dates before registering. We are unable to offer alternative practice and match dates.</i></p> <p>Practice Dates will be on Monday evenings at the First Tee Driving Range (Exact dates and times to be determined):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 29 April 5 April 19 May 10 <p>Potential Match Dates will be on Saturday mornings (Times to be determined):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Saturday, 4/10 at Crescent Farms-The Colt Saturday, 4/17 at Crescent Farms-The Colt Saturday, 4/24 at Crescent Farms-The Colt Saturday, 5/1 at Crescent Farms-The Colt Saturday, 5/8 at Crescent Farms-The Colt Saturday, 5/15 at Crescent Farms-The Colt Saturday, 5/29 at Crescent Farms- The Colt Saturday, 6/5 at Cresent Farms- The Colt Saturday, 6/19 at Cresent Farms- The Colt <p><i>* The schedule includes 6 matches and 3 bye weeks</i></p>

Thank you for your continued support!

DONATIONS

The weekly collection remains absolutely essential to our parish operations. Even though we will not gather physically for Mass, please continue to give via WeShare or Faith Direct or by bringing or mailing your contribution to the Parish Office. Please use the slot in the door. Thank you for your generosity.

To donate through WeShare, go to:

- qasstl.org/giving
- Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the small church that says Give Online
- Complete your information

If you have any questions or need help, contact WeShare at 1-800-950-9952.

You can return any time to edit your donation or to review your financial records.



Queen of All Saints
YOUTH MINISTRY

ADVENT LIFE NIGHT TONIGHT!

December 13th, 2020; 7:15-8:45 in the QAS Church Hall

All High Schoolers are invited to join us for the second Life Night of our Advent mini-series! All are expected to wear a mask and social distance.

XLT THIS THURSDAY

December 17th, 2020; 7:15-8:45pm in the QAS Church Hall

PREVENT AND PROTECT STL

If you are a volunteer of ANY kind or an employee (church, school, sports, etc.) at Queen of All Saints and are not yet registered in the new system for Protecting God's Children, please do so ASAP.

- 1) It is mandatory.
- 2) It is free to you.
- 3) QAS will pay for your background check, but after 12/31/2020, the cost will increase.

The new system is called Prevent and Protect STL.

To register, please go to

www.preventandprotectstl.org

Enter the passcode stlprotect when prompted. Please complete ALL of the modules to be Approved.

Please contact Jan Schroeder at

schroederj@qasstl.org or 314-846-8207 or 314-221-3352 for assistance.

COVENANT NETWORK, CATHOLIC RADIO

Keep your radio set on AM 1460 or FM 96.7 to find many educational and inspirational programs to nurture your faith. In addition to the radio stations, you can listen live, day or night, on free Covenant Network app or at OurCatholicRadio.org.

Offertory

	Offertory 11/29/20	WeShare 11/29/20
Offertory	\$23,956.00	\$ 5,389.58
Loose	\$ 214.00	
Capital Improvement	\$ 495.00	\$ 33.62
Tuition Assistance	\$ 255.00	\$ 439.12
Saint Vincent de Paul	\$ 2,518.00	\$
Human Development	\$ 30.00	\$ 231.00
Christmas Flowers	\$ 265.00	
Christmas Offering	\$ 485.00	
Seminary	\$ 655.00	
Solemnity of Mary	\$ 100.00	
Immaculate Conception	\$ 145.00	
Friends for Life	\$ 25.00	
Electronic Withdrawal	\$ 355.00	



"Never, ever give up on hope, never doubt, never tire, and never become discouraged. Be not afraid."

~ St. Pope John Paul II

HOPE: UNWRAP YOUR GIFT FROM GOD TODAY

The trees have shed their leaves, the wind blows cold, and the sky is often cloudy and gray. Welcome to the season of Advent. But, don't despair. God has a special gift for you that He wants you to unwrap right now. That gift is hope.

Many of us recognize the Merriam-Webster definition of hope which is to cherish a desire with anticipation or to expect with confidence, to trust. In these uncertain times with COVID, political, and social uncertainty, this version of hope is hard to grasp. But, there is a more genuine and transformative hope. It is a hope that is a gift from God and an act of the will. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes it this way:

The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it takes up the hopes that inspire men's activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven; it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. Bouyed up by hope, he is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity (CCC 1818).

St. Paul expresses his gratitude for the gift of hope by saying, "...and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5 RSV, SCE). This is a selfless, theological virtue we know as hope. And, while it comes with joy, the rejoicing is over suffering "knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces

character, and character produces hope" (Rom 5:3-4). St. Paul's rejoicing recognizes that his hope is in the Lord and the anticipation of everlasting happiness with God.

Some may ask, "Well that's wonderful and lofty but what about me today?" "My parents are sick. My children are driving me crazy. My eldest son won't talk to me, and there are grandchildren I have never met. I don't know how to stretch my paycheck this thin. I am losing hope. I am losing faith. Why doesn't God answer my prayers?" With a hope that leads us to Christ, step back and ponder from God's perspective. Am I asking for the wrong things? Am I asking for God to take free will away from someone else? Am I forgetting the times God has answered my prayers both big and small? And, perhaps, is God already working on answering my prayers and I am simply having a hard time being patient? We say 'Lord your will be done' but we want God to see things the way we do and give us what we want when we want it. As Fr. Corey Cole, SM said, "Let God transform us to be more like God, not God more like us."

This Advent season, let's unwrap and use the free gift of the Spirit, to have a real and genuine hope for what truly matters. Remember the words of Pope Francis, "Hope is God's gift that draws us towards life, towards eternal joy." What are you hoping for? Unwrap your gift today!

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