

DECEMBER

NEWS

November 30, 2016

Dear Parents,

During this busy month, I hope you will be able to find time for peace filled waiting and Advent stillness. Perhaps just five minutes a day to gather around the Advent Wreath or Advent Calendar to set the tone for your joyful anticipation of Christmas. Let us remember to "Keep Christ in Christmas."

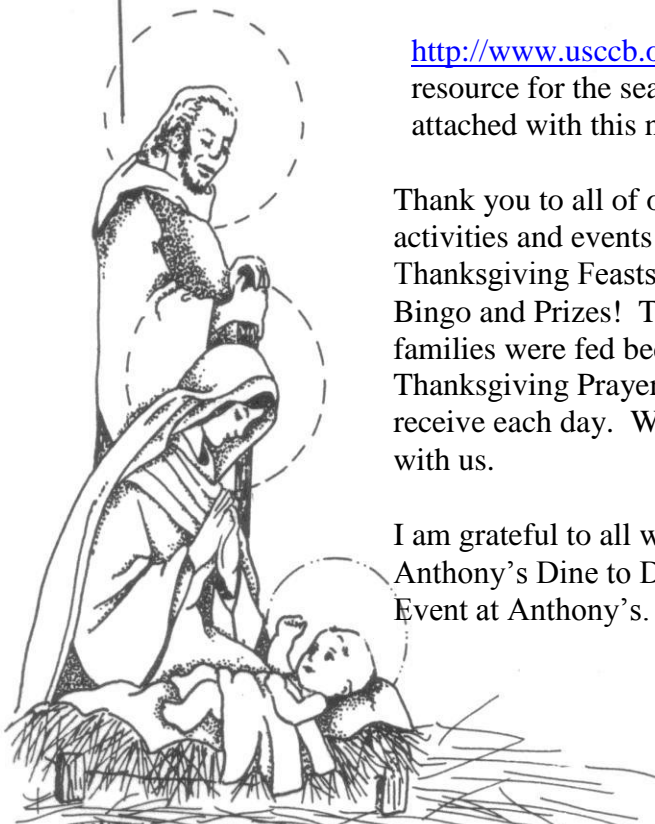
Advent is an especially lovely season and we can make great use of it. With the beginning of the season of Advent, we began a new liturgical year. Advent comes from the Latin word for an "arrival" or a "coming". Advent means that the Lord is coming. Jesus Christ, our brother in our humanity and our God in His divinity, is about to arrive. But He comes to us in different ways. First, Jesus came to us at a specific point in history at Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. But in the Church's great feast of Christmas, He mystically comes again. Second, the Lord, Alpha and Omega, will come to judge the living and the dead in the Second Coming. Third, the Redeemer comes to us in grace. He speaks to us in our consciences; he comes to us in the Eucharist and in the Word of God proclaimed. He arrives in the person of the beggar, the needy, the suffering, and the oppressed. We must be ready to receive and welcome Him when He comes, however He comes.

May the joy and expectation of this Advent Season be yours. Our prayer is that the Christ Child will bring peace to your heart and to your homes. Let us pray for each other during this Holy Season.

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/advent/> is a great resource for the seasons of Advent and Christmas. Other resources are attached with this newsletter.

Thank you to all of our parents and teachers, who made the "Thanksgiving" activities and events so successful. The Pre K and First Graders enjoyed their Thanksgiving Feasts." The Kindergarten celebrated Grandparents Day with Bingo and Prizes! The Thanksgiving Food drive was a big success. Many families were fed because of your generous donations. During our Thanksgiving Prayer Service, we paused to give thanks for the many blessing we receive each day. We are most grateful to all who share their time and talents with us.

I am grateful to all who participated in the fundraisers during November. Our Anthony's Dine to Donate was successful. Over \$500 was raised by the first Event at Anthony's. I purchased a charging cart for our new ipads.



Dates to remember:

December	2	First Friday Mass at 8:30 First Trimester ends Piano Recitals at 5:15 and 6:30pm	
	3	First Penance Retreat (Parents and Students) 9:15am	
	4	Sixth Grade Family Mass 9am Penance Retreat 1:15pm	
	5	Second Trimester Begins	
	7	Picture Re-Take Day	
	8	Feast of the Immaculate Conception Holy Day of Obligation No School	
	13	Mommy and Me Confessions for Grades 3 – 8	
	15	Band Concert 7pm	
	19	Parish Penance Service	
	22	Tableau at 11am Noon Dismissal	
	25	Happy Christmas!	
	January	1	Happy New Year!
		3	Classes resume
6		First Friday Mass at 8:30am	

Have a Blessed Advent and Christmas!

Gratefully,
Sister Helen



Laudato Si, On Care for Our Common Home



Incarnation: God Becomes One of Us

Within all of us, there is a yearning for God. We most especially experience this deep longing when life presents difficult, painful, challenging or fearful situations. The ancient Advent hymn “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” captures this very human desire. Emmanuel means “God is with us.” The lyrics name trying conditions of life such as mourning, loneliness, exile, sin and death which can not be dispelled “until the Son of God appear...to open wide the heavenly home.” Only then can we know true joy for God is made man in the second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ.

In this spirit, Pope Francis states that through Jesus Christ, God has entered “created cosmos” and is with us for all times. He is the Divine Word who became flesh (Jn. 1:14) who has thrown “his lot with it, even to the cross. From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the Incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world.”(99) In other words, God is reflected through all creation and even “the very flowers of the field and the birds which his human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued

with his radiant presence.” (100)

Jesus lived in harmony with His creation. He loved to eat and drink and to enjoy life with others. He admired the beauty and goodness of the natural world. He respected the human body and healed many through miracles. He spoke lovingly of all creatures.

Pope Francis notes that Jesus was one of us in all of things but sin. He is with us in our joys and sorrows. He beckons us to pray to Jesus for deeper appreciation of all of His created world.

This Advent, when the hymn is sung, “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”, know that God is with us in our hearts, mind and souls and throughout all of creation until the end of times!

THE CHRISTMAS CRÈCHE

In 1223, St. Francis of Assisi established the tradition of the Christmas crèche or crib scene.

What traditions does your family celebrate that remind you of the birth of Christ?



December 4 Second Sunday of Advent	Matthew 3: 1-12	<i>As stewards of the creation, we must protect our natural resources. Name some ways that you can protect nature as a way to prepare the way of the Lord?</i>
December 11 Third Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 35:1-6, 10	<i>Isaiah tells us that all the land will rejoice at the glory of the Lord. How can you take care of and add to the beauty of God's creation?</i>
December 18 Fourth Sunday of Advent	Matthew 1: 18-24	<i>How are you and your family preparing your hearts for the true meaning of Christmas? Try praying together this week by saying Grace Before Meals.</i>
December 25 The Nativity of the Lord	Luke 2: 15-20	<i>How can you be like the shepherds who shared what they had seen about Jesus with others?</i>



Laudato Si, On Care for Our Common Home



BACKGROUND FOR THE RESOURCE

HOW DO CATHOLICS CELEBRATE ADVENT?

The Advent season is meant to be a joyful anticipation of the mystery of the Incarnation. In the Incarnation, Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, is born of Mary with both a divine and human nature. He is both truly God and truly man. He became one of us to make all things holy, to experience the joys and sufferings of humanity and to die for us on the cross for our salvation.

What are some ways Catholics celebrate Advent?

Jesse Tree—a Biblical representation of the life of Jesus from the beginning of creation to his birth. You may find more ideas at <http://www.loyolapress.com/the-jesse-tree.htm>.

Advent Wreath—Using a circle of green branches, make the base of the wreath to represent the circle of life. Four candles are placed within the ring of the wreath to represent the four weeks of Advent. You may use the Scripture readings on the other side of this newsletter for the prayer each week.

Advent Angels—Put the names of the people in your family on separate pieces of paper. Each person picks a paper and keeps the name a secret until Christmas. During Advent, the Angel does thoughtful acts of kindness for that person secretly. On Christmas, the family discovers who the angels are.

Go to www.sophiainsituteforteachers.com for additional ideas.

What is an angel?

An angel is a pure spirit created by God as a messenger of God.

Guardian angels are angels appointed by God to each individual person as a protector.

Catechism of the Catholic Church #336

Art project: Create an angel by soaking cloth or newspaper strips in a mixture of half water and half flour. Place over a cardboard form that you have made in the shape of an angle. Let dry and paint.

