



2024 Advent Week 3



Dear Parishioners,

Today we celebrate Gaudete Sunday. We part from the potential colors of violet this week and don rose to represent joyful

anticipation of the Christ who is soon to come. We should rejoice in the first reading (Zep 3:14-18), which reminds us again that “the King of Israel, the LORD, is in our midst.” And our second reading (Phil 4:4-7) builds on the message of Hope and Peace from the previous two weeks: “The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your request known to God.”

This is a week for joy and thanksgiving, and one of my greatest joys is seeing how much our parish has grown over the last decade. We are truly blessed to have a parish where all ages are growing in holiness and pursuing the Lord. Please take this week—as I am—to be grateful for the wonderful faith of our congregation. As our Sunday readings suggest: the King of Israel is truly in our midst. He is here at the altar, and He is present in the hearts of our parishioners.

In Christ,
Fr. David Reamsnyder

This Week's Prayer: WRAP Scripture Journaling

This method of prayer, which builds upon Lectio Divina, helps to facilitate a personal encounter and conversation with Jesus Christ through scripture. The WRAP method—which stands for Write, Reflect, Apply, and Pray—forces us to be more intentional and focused in our dialogue with God as we pray through journaling.

1. **Write:** Place yourself in the presence of God. Read and re-read a passage from scripture until something catches your attention. Prayerfully write out the images or verses from the passage that speak to you.
2. **Reflect:** Reflect on and write out the principles or truths that the passage is teaching you. Is there a word that God is giving you in prayer? Write down the thoughts, emotions, and desires stirred by scripture. Write as if you are sending a letter to, or speaking with Christ.
3. **Apply:** Consider how Jesus is calling you to apply these principles and truths from scripture. What does Christ want you to take away? Write down your response to His message. How you can apply this to your life today?
4. **Pray:** Write out a simple prayer related to the verse. Offer praise and thanksgiving, or ask for God's grace. After you are done writing, sit for a minute in silence.

Please spend 20-30 minutes each day (preferably first thing in the morning) to pray through the WRAP method. We'll pray from the following passages inspired by the daily readings.

- » **Mon 12/16** - Mt 21:23-27
- » **Tue 12/17** - Psalm 72
- » **Wed 12/18** - Mt 1:18-25
- » **Thur 12/19** - Psalm 71
- » **Fri 12/20** - Lk 1:26-38
- » **Sat 12/21** - Song of Solomon 2:8-17
- » **Sun 12/22** - Heb 10:5-10

In your intentions and final prayer each day, please ask for wisdom, focus, and zeal to be upon our faith formation ministries.

Ministry Updates: Youth Faith Formation and Adult Faith Formation

Growth (Where We've Been)

- » We have 250+ students in youth faith formation (up from 150 just 5 years ago)!
- » More college students are helping to lead our youth faith formation (especially young men) than ever before
- » We hosted an impactful summer mission trip that saw dozens of teens serving our parish
- » While our YFF offerings serve the children of our parish, by their nature they also serve the adults. CGS Catechists receive significant personal formation through their training and service, and our confirmation and youth group leaders grow as they teach and pray alongside our students

Hope (Where We're Going)

- » 17 of our youth will receive full initiation into the Church through Confirmation this Spring
- » Pray for our students in CGS preparing to receive first communion this spring
- » Our high school students are preparing to host our annual Christmas Eve Community Dinner on December 24th. This serves many members outside of our parish, but all are welcome
- » We continue to see impressive numbers at OCIA—please pray for our catechumens

Thank you

Our Youth Faith Formation is bigger than ever before. We've been able to offer 19 CGS sessions, serving 160 children ages three through twelve. In these sessions children and catechists encounter Christ through quiet contemplation as they work with simple and beautiful materials. Our confirmation catechists teach thirty middle school students, who study a curriculum of salvation history, sacraments, scripture, liturgy, and prayer. Students also encounter Christ through the reception of the Sacraments, Eucharistic Adoration, Scripture study, service of others, and Lectio Divina. Close to 50 high school students continue to participate in a sacramental life, grow in fellowship, learn to pray, share the faith in small groups, and serve our community. None of this would be possible without over 60 parishioners leading our YFF. This includes parents of all backgrounds and ages, as well as dozens of college students.

Many parishioners also support our Adult Faith Formation through a variety of events, classes, retreats, small groups, fellowship nights, and sacramental opportunities year-round. As our parish continues to grow, we are focusing on how we can better support and align our youth and adult faith formation ministries. Our leadership is prayerfully making plans for the future of faith formation at St. Anthony's and we earnestly ask that you pray for wisdom and zeal to be upon our ministry leaders. We offer sincere thanks for every volunteer, staff member, and deacon supporting adult and youth faith formation.

