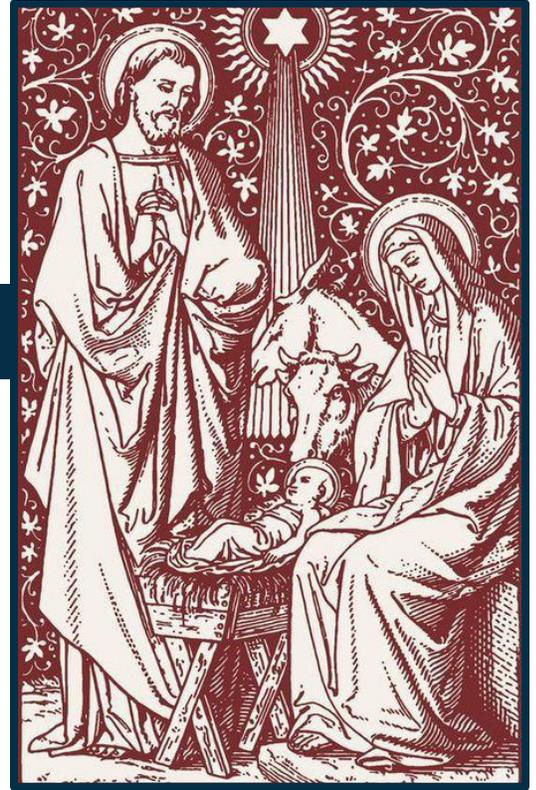




## SAINT ANTHONY CATHOLIC CHURCH

### *Love in the Fourth Week of Advent*



Dear Parishioners,

This final week of Advent celebrates the theme of Love. We light what is often referred to as the "Angel's Candle," which commemorates the heavenly messengers who bring the good news of Jesus' birth to the shepherds in Luke 2:8-14.

At this point in the Advent season, we have obviously been reminded of the need to love others. Even though we live in a world where Christmas becomes less about Christ with every passing year, this is still a season where one of the central messages of Christianity cannot be taken away: that we are made happier and more complete when we Love our neighbor as ourselves. But Christmas does easily lose the message of the greater truth and commandment that we were made to *love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind.*

Please continue to take time at Christmas to focus on your loved ones and cultivate relationships. Serve and give to those who have less. Reach out to family and friends, send gifts that bring joy to others, and be grateful for all the people in your life. This is good. Just don't let holiday busyness overshadow the time that you need to give to your relationship with God.

The "Angel's Candle" reminds us that the message of the Nativity was not an instruction to love others, rather it was revelation of God's love for us, freely given in the mystery of the Incarnation. If we are to receive the gift of God's love properly, two things are required: that we first choose to receive the gift of Love, and that we then put forth effort on our part to build that relationship with God.

I've always said that I want St. Anthony's to be a place of healing, a healing that is the outpouring of God's love. If you haven't had the best Advent, if you haven't made time for prayer like you've intended, if you're struggling with sin, please take the last four days of Advent to rest in God's mercy. Accept His love, which is perfect for you even in your imperfections. Pray with us this week. Put forth a strong effort to pray every day and attend the sacraments. God receives even those who come at the eleventh hour. It's not too late to prepare for Christmas.

In Christ,

Fr. David Reamsnyder

## *This Week: ARRR Silent Prayer*

Sometimes called "pirate prayer" because of its acronym, the ARRR method helps facilitate a conversation with the Lord. Rather than using scripture, rote prayer, or a devotion to guide our thoughts, this method directs us to engage God solely with mental prayer. Here are the steps:

**1. Acknowledge:** Begin with the beautiful reality that, in this moment, God is with you. Acknowledge His presence. Slowly acknowledge your thoughts, feelings, and desires. Be completely honest with yourself—there is no need to justify, hide, or make excuses. This is an opportunity to lay all of your heart, soul, and mind before the Lord.

**2. Relate:** Just as if you were confiding in a close friend or family member, tell God everything you acknowledged. Relate your thoughts, feelings, and desires to Him. Hold nothing back and share without overthinking.

**3. Receive:** After speaking to the Lord, sit in silence and listen to the Lord. Notice what moves in you: new thoughts, fresh desires, memories, images, sensations, or lines from Scripture? How is God inviting you to come closer to Him? If you receive or hear nothing, be patient and trust in Him. Sometimes receiving the Lord this way, as an act of contemplation, means that He works on your spirit in a way that eludes sensation. You might feel nothing. This is not necessarily dryness of prayer, or desolation, or a failure on your part. It may simply be a chance to trust in the promises of God and believe that he is working in your soul without notice.

**4. Respond:** What you receive from God is a gift. Respond to that gift and finish by thanking God, asking for needed graces, expressing hopes or convictions of faith, or restating any resolutions from prayer. Show God your love for Him and thank Him for His work in your life.



## *Advent Prayer Appeal*



**From December 21st to 24th, we invite all parishioners to pray daily the ARRR method daily, in anticipation of Christmas.**