



CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

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Dear Parish Family,

December 12, 2010

Today is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe! However, because it is also the Third Sunday of Advent, Our Lady's Feast is suppressed. On Monday we will celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe with Mass at St. Paul the Apostle in Ithaca at 7:00 pm.

The Third Sunday of Advent is also called *Gaudete Sunday*, from the Entrance Antiphon of the Mass which begins: "*Gaudete in Domino semper,*" or "Rejoice in the Lord always." On this Sunday, rose-colored vestments may be worn in place of violet. The rose-colored candle on the Advent wreath is also lit. This signals that we are half-way through our penitential period of preparation.

There has been much talk about the Pope's latest book in the press. In reading it myself, I was struck by these words: "*It is sad that there are what you might call professional Catholics who make a living on their Catholicism, but in whom the spring of faith flows only faintly, in a few scattered drops.*" It is my hope that there are no such people at our parishes whose only reason for what they do is power or money or praise. Our life of Faith is not about what we get, but about what we give. Let us use the rest of Advent to purify our motives and ask the infant Jesus to renew in us a lively and true Faith.

This Wednesday at 7:00 pm at St. Mary is one of our two Advent Penance Services. There will be extra priests on hand to assist with confession. There is a great beauty in private confession. No one of us (**myself included**) is exempt from needing the graces of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The power that pours out from this SACRAMENT OF MERCY can help us overcome not only our little faults, but also gives us God's forgiveness for our bigger faults. Confession is NOT a final exam for eternity. Rather it is a FREE car wash for your soul. Don't miss out on this opportunity to renew your soul in Christ!

The series *Boundaries* begins January 5 at 6:45 pm, ending on the first Wednesday of March. The movie *The 13th Day* will be February 11 at 7:00 pm. Both events will be at St. Mary's and are free of charge.

Engaged couples - it is *your* responsibility to meet with me at *least six times* before your wedding date. If you do not complete the wedding preparation, you will have to postpone your wedding until you have done so.

Let us continue to pray for each other as we move past the half-way point in this Advent Season. Jesus is coming, SOON! God bless you!

Fr. David

The Faith Explained

VESTMENT COLORS AT MASS

- White is used at Masses during the Easter and Christmas seasons; also on celebrations of the Lord other than of his Passion, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Holy Angels, and of Saints who were not Martyrs; on the Solemnities of All Saints (1 Nov) and of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist (24 Jun); and on the Feasts of Saint John the Evangelist (27 Dec), of the Chair of Saint Peter (22 Feb), and of the Conversion of Saint Paul (25 Jan).
- Red is used on Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion and on Good Friday, on Pentecost Sunday, on celebrations of the Lord's Passion, on the feasts of the Apostles and Evangelists, and on celebrations of Martyr Saints.
- Green is used at Masses of Ordinary Time.
- Violet or purple is used in Advent and Lent. It may also be worn at Masses for the Dead.
- Besides violet, white or black vestments may be worn at funeral services and at Masses for the Dead.
- Rose may be used on *Gaudete Sunday* (Third Sunday of Advent) and on *Laetare Sunday* (Fourth Sunday of Lent).
- Gold or silver colored vestments may be worn on more solemn occasions.

RECONCILIATION 101: THE SACRAMENT OF MERCY

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (also referred to as Penance or Confession) is a wonderful opportunity for us to be touched by Christ's healing presence and to be unburdened of our sins. Being human means that at times we make mistakes and commit sins. Accepting blame and admitting ownership of our mistakes is a sign of Christian maturity. Expressing our sorrow verbally to another is often a catalyst for healing relationships. We need to say we are sorry when we have sinned against someone. We also need to hear, "**You are forgiven.**" Jesus gave the power of absolution to the apostles and their successors (John 20:23). In the Sacrament, the priest is the **instrument** through whom Christ acts.

THE ROLES WE EACH PLAY IN THE SACRAMENT:		
WE:	THE PRIEST:	GOD:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• REVIEW OUR SINS• CONFESS OUR SINS• REPENT OUR SINS• MAKE UP FOR OUR SINS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LISTENS TO US• HELPS US IDENTIFY OUR SINS• ENCOURAGES US TO DO BETTER• PRONOUNCES OUR FORGIVENESS AND PRAYS WITH US	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WELCOMES US HOME• FORGIVES US• RESTORES US• CELEBRATES WITH US DURING THE SACRAMENT

Almost everyone finds confessing their sins to be a very difficult thing to do and to understand. Somehow, being alone with God doesn't seem as embarrassing as facing another person. But when we are honest with another person, it confirms that we have been honest with ourselves and with God.

1. To prepare for the Sacrament, place yourself in the presence of God.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you review your days, weeks, and months leading up to now.
 - What good things happened to you?
 - Where and when were you a true sign of God's love?
3. Then turn to those times when you might have missed the mark.
 - What words, thoughts and actions were self-centered?
 - What attitudes were unworthy of a child of God?
 - What did you fail to do that you should have done?
 - What in your life needs the healing touch of the Lord?

THE FOUR IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT:

Confession: telling our sins to the representative of Christ, the priest.

Contrition: true sorrow for our mistakes and sins; a firm resolve not to repeat the sin.

Penance: the prayers or actions (penance, *to repair*) which lead us to a change of heart.

Absolution: the words of forgiveness through which Christ forgives us our sins.

+ GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD! HIS MERCY ENDURES FOREVER! +