

Saint Francis Xavier Parish

First Sunday of Advent

December 2, 2018



REV. DENNIS M. DINAN, PASTOR

ABBY RODDEN, PARISH SECRETARY

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY-FRIDAY 7:30AM-11:30AM

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Our Lady of the Lake Church

Rt 52, Lake Huntington

Masses

Sunday 8:30am
Holydays of Obligation As Announced

Confessions & Daily Mass

At St. Francis Xavier

St. Francis Xavier Church

Bridge St., Narrowsburg

Masses

Saturday 4:30pm
Sunday 11:00am
Daily (Tuesday-Friday) 8:30am
Holydays of Obligation As announced

Confessions

Saturday 4:00pm
Or by appointment

Dear Parish Family,

Hear the words of Jesus to us in the Gospel this week: *"Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from ... the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth"* (Lk 21:35). First, let's admit. These are some strange words! What does it mean, for one's heart to become drowsy? He says it can be a consequence of *"carousing & drunkenness,"* but I omitted that from the quote above because that does not apply to everyone. Yet, Jesus says we can all experience it, simply from *"the anxieties of daily life."* We all have our share of anxieties. We have a familiar example given by Jesus in the *Parable of the Sower*. It implies a way all of us can respond ineffectively, without any benefit, to hearing God's Word, *"The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit"* (Mt 13:22).

According to our Christian tradition, and those who have written on this subject, we are being warned not to become "sluggish" in the *Spiritual Life*. Sadly, we know that it can happen to us all. Basically, this is a condition with the Latin name *"acedia"* (pronounced *a-kay-dee-uh [Classic], a-chay-dee-uh [Church], uh-see-dee-uh [English]*). From Greek origin, it means, literally, "without care." It also has been explained as "sadness" or "idleness." Within our Monastic tradition, *acedia* is a complex spiritual state sometimes called: *the Noonday Devil*, defying simple definition. It depicts a "weariness" and "gloominess" that can actually overwhelm any—or all—of our spiritual resolve. Yet, synonyms and translations do not really bring us to "ground" that we are familiar with. So, let's call it what it is. In our tradition of the seven deadly sins, *acedia* would simply be called: "Sloth!" It's defined as both in the *Catholic Catechism* (see 1866). That this defies simple definition is easily shown because this is not merely "idleness" or "laziness." Rather, it involves "a dullness of the soul" (yes, Jesus was right on-target: a *drowsy heart!*) that can stem from agitation or anxiety, just as easily as from neglect.

Father Lawrence Scupoli, in his classic work, *The Spiritual Combat*, devotes an entire chapter to this vice. He begins as if to caution us with an admonition, "It is of the greatest importance to make war against sloth. This vice is not only an obstacle on our way to perfection, but it delivers us over to the enemies of our salvation." Do yourself a favor now. Read Father Scupoli's words again. Now read those of Jesus once more, *"Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from ... the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap...."* You probably noticed: what we are being told is at stake in both of these warnings is: our salvation! For sure, no one's salvation is certain, so Advent calls us to get ready!

And so, we avoid presumption! There is a vigilance required of us that sometimes almost does not seem proportionate. Fatigue may end in weariness. This too may trigger our sloth. Still, the *Catechism* tells us we must do our part. About this *acedia*, it says,

The spiritual writers understand by this a form of depression due to lax ascetical practice, decreasing vigilance, carelessness of heart. *"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* The greater the height, the harder the fall. Painful as discouragement is, it is the reverse of presumption. The humble are not surprised by their distress; it leads them to trust more, to hold fast in constancy.

Furthermore, Jesus made sure we knew well how the game was played. He told his disciples, *"The law and the prophets lasted until John; but from then on the kingdom of God is proclaimed, and everyone who enters does so with violence"* (Lk 16:16). Also, *"The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent are taking it by force"* (Mt 11:12). We know also, this is just not any kind of violence. It is a violence closely aligned and resembling "hatred" directed towards

anything that could be considered an enemy of our salvation. Yes, we can assume that this is part and parcel of the necessity of *"denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily"* (Lk 9:23) in which Jesus insisted discipleship entailed.

We fall into sloth and usually the trouble is just beginning. This is because we resist the cure. The *Catechism* describes how then we can sin against God. It says, *"acedia or spiritual sloth goes so far as to refuse the joy that comes from God and to be repelled by divine goodness"* (2094). We can then suffer what it also calls "Two temptations [that can easily] threaten prayer." These are: "lack of faith and *acedia* - a form of depression stemming from lax ascetical practice that leads to discouragement" (2755). We may not even be aware or acknowledge what is happening or that we are in danger, which makes it all the worse. Remember what Jesus told Saint John to write to the Church in Laodicea in the Book of Revelation? He said, *"I know your works; I know that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, 'I am rich and affluent and have no need of anything,' and yet do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked"* (Rev 3:14-17). Like sloth, the *Catechism* says, *"lukewarmness is hesitation or negligence in responding to divine love; it can imply refusal to give oneself over to the prompting of charity"* (2094).

Father Scupoli says this "dread of any kind of effort" (here especially the spiritual) and "the love of ease" increase in us to the extent that we do not resist and are lenient with ourselves, so that what we should be doing becomes distasteful, results even in total neglect and easily becomes habitual and very hard to shake off. He says that sloth "is a poison that spreads itself through the faculties of the soul. It affects the will by making work odious to it, but also the understanding by so blinding it that the resolutions of the slothful usually have no effect." This is similar to what Saint Paul meant, in speaking about being a *"prisoner to the law of sin in his body's members"* (Rom 7:13, ff.). On this, Saint Augustine elaborates, *"the law of sin is the fierce force of habit, by which the mind is drawn and held even against its will, and yet deservedly because it had fallen willfully into the habit"* (*Confessions*, Bk 8,5).

Do you experience the difficulties and temptations in prayer that accompany all of this? The *Catechism* reminds us:

Filial trust is put to the test when we feel that our prayer is not always heard. The Gospel invites us to ask ourselves about the conformity of our prayer to the desire of the Spirit (2756).

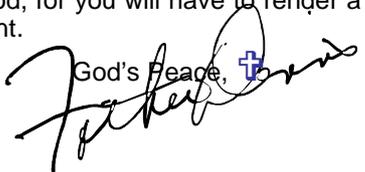
"Pray constantly" (1 Th 5:17). It is always possible to pray. It is even a vital necessity. Prayer and Christian life are inseparable (2757).

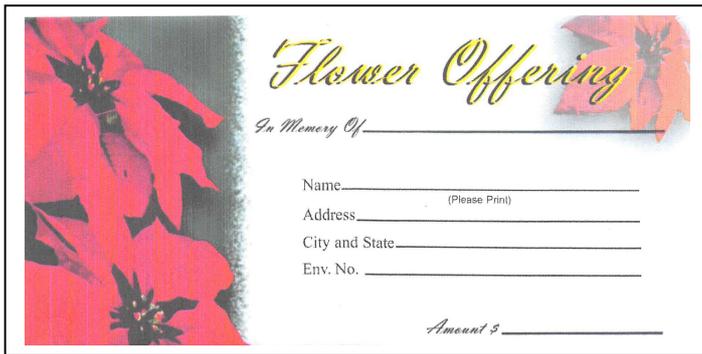
And, how to prepare that, *"the day [should not] catch us by surprise like a trap?"* Fr. Scupoli suggests we consider this:

Realize that in this vice there is a poison which not only chokes the first seeds of virtue, but even destroys those already formed. What the worm does in wood, sloth effects in the spiritual life. It is used very successfully by the devil to draw men into snares, particularly those [seeking] perfection.

Guard yourself, pray, and do good. Do not defer making your wedding garment until you are called upon to go forth and meet the Heavenly Bridegroom.

Reflect every day on the fact that He Who has granted you the morning has not promised the evening, and, should He grant this, He gives no assurance of the following morning. Spend each day, therefore, as if it were the last; cherish nothing but the will of God, for you will have to render a strict account for every moment.

God's Peace, 



Flower Offering
In Memory Of _____
Name _____ (Please Print)
Address _____
City and State _____
Env. No. _____
Amount \$ _____

Offering envelopes for our Christmas Flowers are available at the back of the church.

Offerings may be made in the memory or honor of a loved one.

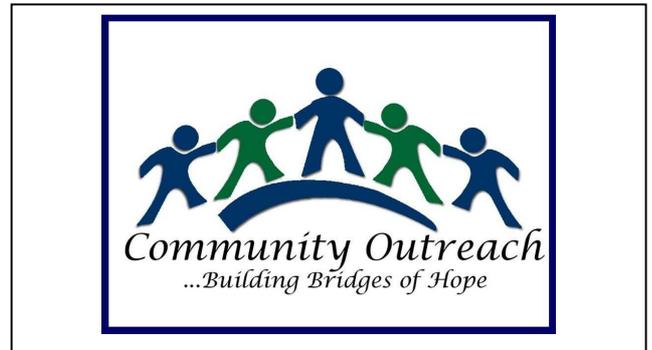
We are looking for a Christmas Tree

If you are interested in donating a *Christmas tree* to the Church, please let us know by calling Regina Moran at 252-3326.
Thank you!



The Ecumenical Food Pantry is holding an "Open Your Hearts" Toy Drive this Christmas season. Donation boxes will be located at the back of both St. Francis Xavier and Our Lady of the Lake Churches for your *new and unwrapped gifts*. You may also make monetary donations by using the already addressed envelopes provided at the back of the church, which can be dropped in the collection basket or mailed. Please make checks out to the Ecumenical Food Pantry and write "Toy Drive" on the memo line. The deadline for donations will be December 20th. For more information please call Joanne Letendre at 252-3971. Thank you for your generosity!

St. Francis Xavier Outreach Program



The holidays are quickly approaching and many families in our parish and community are in need.

Please prayerfully consider making a donation to our Outreach Program. Donations help to provide local families a joyous Christmas they may not otherwise have.

Donations can be sent to:
PO Box 8 Narrowsburg NY12764

Mass Schedule 12/3-12/8

Feast of the Immaculate Conception Of Mary

Tuesday, December 4th

8:30am @ SFX

Wednesday, December 5th

8:30am @ SFX

Thursday, December 6th

8:30am @ SFX

Friday, December 7th (Vigil Mass)

7:00pm @ SFX (NO 8:30am MASS)

Saturday, December 8th (Holyday of Obligation)

Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary

11:00am & 4:30pm @ SFX

Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 1st

4:30pm -Special Intentions
Requested by Robert & Rosemary Meyer

Sunday, December 2nd

8:30am -Our Parish Family

11:00am -Lewis Meckle

Requested by Narrowsburg High School Class of 1957

Tuesday, December 4th

8:30am -Our Parish Family

Wednesday, December 5th

8:30am -Dr. Robert Lucas
Requested by Patty Moser & Judy Stringer

Thursday, December 6th

8:30am -Our Parish Family

Friday, December 7th

Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary-Vigil Mass

7:00pm -Our Parish Family

Saturday, December 8th

Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary-Holiday

11:00am -Our Parish Family

4:30pm -Bob Wiggins

Requested by Lillian Russell

Sunday, December 9th

8:30am -Our Parish Family

11:00am -Dr. Robert Lucas

Requested by Patty Moser & Judy Stringer

First Sunday of Advent

Jeremiah 33:14-16
1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2
Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Collection

November 25, 2018

1st Collection

Our Lady of the Lake	\$317.00
St. Francis Xavier	\$854.00

Total
\$1,171.00
Thank you!

Reconciliation Monday

Confessions will be heard:

Monday, December 17

St. Francis Xavier Rectory Chapel

4:00pm-6:30pm

*Please come to the front door of the Rectory
151 Bridge St., Narrowsburg*

Sacrament of Baptism

Baptisms are regularly scheduled on available Sundays of each month after the 11:00am Mass. One Godparent is required and must be 14, confirmed, a practicing Catholic, and have obtained a sponsor certificate from their parish. Only one female and one male Godparent are permitted. Parents should be registered parishioners and must meet with the priest beforehand. Arrangements can be made by contacting the rectory.

Sacrament of Matrimony

The bride or the groom must be a practicing Catholic that is a registered parishioner or otherwise associated with the parish. A Pre-Cana wedding preparation course and a meeting with the priest is required. Arrangements should be made at least six months prior to the wedding date.

**The 2019 Mass Book is now
open for your Mass
Intentions.**

Please Pray for our Parish Family

For the Sick: Peggy Bayly Lohmann, Dennis Falk, Barbara Walter, Gloria Saures, Ed Brennan, Amy Ernano, Clayton Snow, Barnabas O'Driscoll, Sean Sweeney, Jose Mabama, Ron Burke, Charlotte Mills, Carol Mash, Mary Cauvaris, Barbara Smith, Janine Perry, Hilde Bielfeld, Rosemary Barile, Christine Mary Faggione, Tracy Larssen, Septemberr Totten, Helene Indelicato, Madeline Sheans, Peggy Lee Romano, Mary Weiden, Mary Tresh, Ida Alvarez, Mildred Meyer, Kenneth "Boomer" Meyer, and all those struggling with any kind of illness and suffering.

For the Deceased: Theresa Delaney, Helen Bunis, Maria Meyer, Pat Noble, Joseph Meyer, Gloria Ackermann, Eileen Dempsey, Martin Ferrick, Jacoba "Cobi" Campfield, George Johnson, Josephine Kelly, Joanne Barnes Brennan, Dr. Robert Lucas, Daniel Kelly, Fr. William Scully, Jean Salmeri, Barbara Smith, Mary Ann Janowsky, Helen Gutzzeit, William Ackerman, Lewis Meckle, Alix Fils-Aime, and all those who have gone before us.

For those Serving in the Military: SGT Vaughn Schlott USMC (TX)