

# Saint Teresa of Avila Catholic Church

Advent 2017 Newsletter

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 2

## Advent New Beginnings: Mercy and Conversion

by Fr. Edward Smith

Advent starts the new Liturgical Year and can be seen as another opportunity to spiritually begin anew. Holy Mother Church knows how many times we need to start again, because we are all sinners making a pilgrim journey that hopefully will bring us to Christ in His Kingdom. Therefore, there are particular themes in the Liturgy throughout Advent: a spirit of waiting, of conversion and joyful hope. These liturgical themes should inspire what we do within our families during Advent.

The Year of Mercy may have ended at the end of 2016, but truthfully, it was just a beginning. The attitude of conversion within the heart of a disciple should continue to grow every day. The parable of the Loving Father to his Prodigal Son was used often during the Year of Mercy as an example of a spirit of conversion, which also applies to beginning again in Advent. St. Josemaría Escrivá sums up this Advent theme of conversion and mercy:

“Human life is in some way

a constant returning to our Father’s house. We return through contrition, through the conversion of heart which means a desire to change, a firm decision to improve our life and which, therefore, is expressed in sacrifice and self-giving. We return to our Father’s house by means of that sacrament of pardon in which, by confessing our sins, we put on Jesus Christ again and become his brothers, members of God’s family.

God is waiting for us, like the father in the parable, with open arms, even though we don’t deserve it. It doesn’t matter how great our debt is. Just like the prodigal son, all we have to do is open our heart, to be homesick for our Father’s house, to wonder at and rejoice in the gift which God makes us of being able to call ourselves his children, of really being his children, even though our response to him has been so poor.” (*Christ is Passing By*, no. 64)

My favorite quote from

St. Josemaría continues this thought (emphasis is mine):

“If you should stray from him for any reason, react with the humility that will lead you to begin again and again; **to play the role of the prodigal son every day**, and even repeatedly during the twenty-four hours of the same day...” (*Friends of God*, no. 214).



We are trying to live in Advent what we learned throughout the

Year of Mercy. “Playing the role of the prodigal son” means pushing the restart button not just for this new liturgical year but every day, maybe even multiple times a day. The Advent season helps us hone this daily habit of conversion to keep us working for the ultimate purpose of our lives: eternity in our Father’s Heavenly Kingdom.

**Rev. Edward J. Smith**

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*God withholds Himself from no one who perseveres.*

### Church Humor

A rabbi, a priest and a minister walk into a bar.

The bartender looks up and says, “What is this, a joke?”

## Legacy Giving—Gifts from the Heart

Part of our responsibility as stewards of God's gifts includes what is sometimes referred to as our "final act of stewardship" - the creation of our estate plan. Our estate plan is part of our legacy, enabling us to use those gifts that have been given to us to provide for our loved ones in the future. We also have the opportunity to give witness to the importance of our faith and express our gratitude to God by making a gift to the Church that

strengthens our parish for future generations.



Often, these gifts come as a surprise. If you have already made plans to include St. Teresa of Avila Parish in your Will, we would love to have the chance to thank you now. Please let us know.

If you would like more information about leaving a legacy gift, please call the Rectory at 440-934-4227.

## This Advent—Be the Prodigal Son

**Advent means**— the coming of Christ at Christmas— and is a time of preparation. The First Sunday of Advent 2017 is December 3.

### Practical Ways to Give Ourselves Over to God

**Prayer:** As St. Teresa of Avila put it, "Prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God." Talk to your Father in heaven and to your Savior Jesus in quiet. Light your Advent candle and ask Jesus how to serve Him *today*.

**Reading Scripture:** Read one chapter from the Gospel of Luke each day. Especially read and pray over the Birth of Jesus narrative (Chapter 2) and the Prodigal Son (Chapter 15) as Fr. Smith suggested.

**Fasting:** Jesus told His disciples in the Gospel of John (Chapter 4:34) that "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me.." Say no to feeding our bodies and yes to feeding our souls!

**Repent:** Confession is called the "sacrament of conversion" because it makes Sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin.

**The Word Among Us** Advent booklets are available in the rear of the church. Please take one home.

### Advent Prayer of Preparation

**O** my God, Word of the Father, Word made flesh. For the love of us, You assumed a mortal body in order to suffer and be immolated for us. I wish to prepare for Your coming with the burning desires of the prophets and the just who in the Old Testament sighed after You, the one Savior and Redeemer....O Lord, send Him whom You are going to send... As you have promised, come and deliver us! I want to keep Advent in my soul, that is, a continual longing and waiting for this great Mystery wherein You, O Word, become flesh to show me the abyss of Your redeeming, sanctifying mercy.



*St. Teresa of Avila (The Way of Perfection)*

**Saints of Advent**—During the time of Advent we celebrate the lives of many saints.

To learn more about these saints, visit:

[www.catholicexchange.com/top-ten-saints-for-advent](http://www.catholicexchange.com/top-ten-saints-for-advent)

## Feast Day 2017 Highlights

We celebrated the feast day of St. Teresa of Avila the weekend of October 14 & 15, 2017.

At each Mass that weekend we remembered the gift of grace that God gave in a special way to our Patron Saint. After the 4:30 p.m. Mass on Saturday, the Altar & Rosary Society prayed the rosary at our outdoor shrine, led by Pat Durica. Our shrine, built in 2015, St. Teresa's 500th birthday, was decorated with white bunting and beautiful red roses. The six stone benches were not enough to



hold all those who joined in the rosary. Many folks stood as the prayers were said, and not even the noise of the passing motorcycles or ambulance drowned out the spirit of the prayers.

The Parish Life Center doors opened at 6:00 p.m. that night for the Cabbage Roll Dinner. Fr. Edward Smith, Pastor, and a small group of helpers hand-made each cabbage roll using a traditional recipe from a local



restaurant. The dinner, complete with mashed potatoes, green beans, roll, salad and dessert, was enjoyed by everyone. "Delicious" was the most frequently used word to describe the experience.

### Raffle Winners

1st Prize—Peggy Long

2nd Prize—Jack Hart

3rd Prize—Rich Raynak

*Congratulations!*

*Many thanks go out to all those who helped in any way to make this weekend a success.*

## Save These Dates—2018

### Parish Christmas Dinner

Sponsored by the Altar & Rosary Society

**Saturday, December 9, 2017**

This dinner is a special tradition for our parish. Not only is an elegant meal served but the fellowship enjoyed is very special.

This dinner is for all parishioners.

*Welcome, Child Jesus, Our Savior*

### Women's Retreat

Sponsored by the Altar & Rosary Society

**Saturday, January 27, 2018**

Sister Mary Berigan, SND will be speaking to us regarding how to serve God in the midst of change. This should be a thought provoking retreat day that inspires women for the upcoming Lenten season.

### "The Man In The Shroud"

A presentation by David Onysko

**Sunday, February 18, 2018**

David has traveled the world studying and giving this presentation on **The Shroud of Turin**. This presentation amazes those who hear it.

## Support Through Prayer

**F**ather in Heaven, this time of year can be a struggle for many people. Please bless our families, our Parish family of St. Teresa of Avila, those who are ill, homebound, in nursing homes, the homeless, those in need of work and food, those mourning the loss of a loved one, those separated from their families, Fr. Smith, and our Holy Father, Pope Francis. Bless all those who work on Christmas, especially our military, doctors and nurses, and first responders. May the Liturgical celebration of Christ's coming as a Child touch our hearts, minds, souls and renew our strength. *In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*



*Watch the bulletin for details on all these events!*

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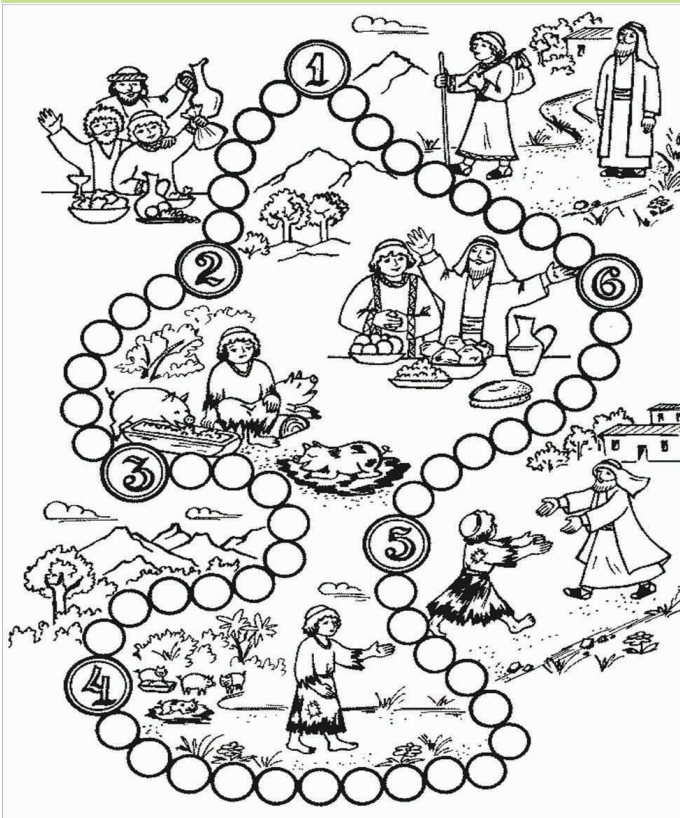
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## Lead the Prodigal Son Home! Read Luke 15:11-32



## Up Coming Parish Events!

### Bible Study

The 1st and 3rd Thursday of each Month—God's Word feeds our hearts and minds!

### Religious Formation

**PSR:** Tuesdays from 6–7:15 p.m. If Sheffield Schools are closed due to bad weather on Tuesdays, PSR will be cancelled as well.

**Confirmation:** Begins on Sunday, January 7, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. with Mass at St. Teresa Church. To register call the office.

### Eucharistic Adoration

Wednesdays from 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

*The spiritual lives of our families are strengthened through our Holy Hour.* St Pope John Paul II

### Volunteer at Food Pantry

2nd, 3rd & 4th Saturday/month

Are you looking for ways to support and become more involved in our Parish Community?

The Social Concerns Committee is always in need of a helping hand in outreach to our Parish family and the community.

The Altar & Rosary Society supports the parish in many ways and leads the rosary before Mass the 2nd Sunday of each month. All women of the Parish are welcome to join or just help.



### Parish Life Center is for Rent

For information visit our website at [stteresaparish.com](http://stteresaparish.com) or call our office at 440-934-4227.

For monthly Parish Committee meeting dates, visit our website at [www.stteresaparish.com](http://www.stteresaparish.com) or watch the bulletin for current dates/times.