



Important Notes from Mrs. Luzzo December 13, 2024

Don't forget to ROAR!

Happy Friday, HTCS families! Please see below for important information about school events and happenings. Have a wonderful weekend!

#iGiveCatholic Campaign - Thank you to those who donated to our annual #iGiveCatholic campaign! With the support of 24 donors, our school raised \$106,150, placing us third in the entire Diocese! Special prayers of thanksgiving have been offered up for those who donated.

Advent Confession - Catholic students, faculty, and staff who are eligible will have an opportunity to go to Confession during the Advent season on **Monday, 12/16**. Please practice the procedures with your child so he/she feels comfortable taking advantage of this beautiful sacrament.

Annual Christmas Show - Please join us in the multipurpose room (mpr) at **6 PM** on **Thursday, 12/19** for our annual Christmas show. Students should arrive between **5:30-5:45 PM** (*not before, please*) wearing black bottoms and white shirts. Families are asked to bring a plate of shareable (hand held) desserts that represents their family and/or culture. For example, a plate of biscotti, brownies, or cookies. They do not need to be individually wrapped. We just wanted to have some treats for families to enjoy after the show.

Dress Down Day for All - Students may wear their favorite Christmas attire on **Friday, 12/20**. Please be sure shoes are safe for play as students will be enjoying a PTO sponsored Christmas party that day.

Half Day and No School - In recognition of the Christmas and New Year holidays, the school will close at **noon** on **Friday, 12/20**, and will reopen at 7:35 AM on **Monday, 1/6**. There is no aftercare on Friday, 12/20 and all students must be picked up at noon that day.

2nd Annual PTO Snowball - Please see attached for information about the PTO's 2nd annual Snowball. This is a great opportunity to meet and socialize with other families in the Trinity community while supporting our amazing PTO at the same time.

Catholic Schools Week - The annual celebration of Catholic schools will be held January 26-February 1. Each day's theme highlights the things that make Catholic schools so special.

Sunday, 1/26 - Celebrating Your Parish - Join us for 10 AM Mass followed by an Open House

Monday, 1/27 - Celebrating Your Community

Tuesday, 1/28 - Celebrating Your Students

Wednesday, 1/29 - Celebrating the Nation

Thursday, 1/30 - Celebrating Vocations

Friday, 1/31 - Celebrating Faculty, Staff, and Volunteers

Saturday, 2/1 - Celebrating Families

More information will come soon about each day as we draw closer to CSW.

Not Your Average Joe - This year's production, *Not Your Average Joe*, will take place on **Friday, 1/31**, at **6 PM** and **Saturday, 2/1**, at **1 PM**. Tickets are \$20/adult and \$10/child 10 and under. Tickets are selling fast! Friday's opening night is 50% sold out and Saturday's matinee is 75% sold out. Contact Ms. Nicole (rnealey@charlestdiocese.org) to purchase your tickets.

13th Annual PTO Golf Tournament - Please see attached information about the PTO's annual golf tournament taking place at The Long Bay Golf Course on **Saturday, 2/22**. This is the PTO's largest fundraiser and your support is greatly needed to make it a success.

Catholic Faith Formation - *Advent* means "coming" or "arrival." It is the season preceding Christmas, encompassing at least the four Sundays prior to December 25. (I say "at least" because, as you may notice this year, the "Fourth Week" of Advent is actually only the Fourth Sunday of Advent, as Christmas falls on a Monday.) The "four weeks" of Advent allude to the four thousand years that were literally attributed to the interval between the fall of Adam and the birth of Jesus Christ. When most Catholics talk about Advent, they speak of it as "preparation for Christmas." That's not necessarily wrong, inasmuch as celebration of the commemoration of the Nativity of the Lord requires preparation. But let's recognize that, in commemorating Christ's Nativity, we are in fact remembering a past event. Jesus *was* born over two thousand years ago.

When we look at how Advent is structured, the truth is that the focus on Jesus' birth becomes predominant only in the season's last nine days—i.e., December 16-24. That's when the Gospels specifically center on the historical birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. That's when the Preface used for Mass speaks most directly to the historical nativity of Christ. The greater part of Advent—the 13-18 days (depending on when Advent starts) preceding December 16—is not focused on Jesus' first coming in Bethlehem. It is focused on his second coming at the end of time.

Advent opens with an eschatological focus. In that sense, it continues the eschatological focus of the last weeks of Ordinary Time. The Thirty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time and the First Sunday of Advent always have a judgment motif, either the Lord's return at the end of time (Ordinary Time) or the need for watchfulness and sober readiness for that coming (Advent). The Solemnity of Christ the King hinges them together: Jesus is King of the Universe. We need to be preparing not for a past event, but a future one. That's why, at every Mass, after the Our Father, the priest prays that we be delivered from evil to await Jesus' return in "joyful hope."

I've been asked whether Advent is still a "penitential season." At one time, it clearly was, though some people today are confused. Yes, the priest's vestments are purple, a penitential color. But some of the spiritual exercises of yesteryear—missions, retreats, extended confession hours—seem to have disappeared. And if you ask a canon lawyer, he'll tell you that the Church's penitential times are "every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent" (CIC 1250).

Well, solid Catholic spirituality starts with good Catholic theology, not canon law. Law exists to serve the faith and its appropriation by Catholics. So is Advent still a "penitential season"? It is, in the sense that all times are penitential times. The Catholic is called to constant conversion. Conversion is an ongoing aspect of the Christian life. There are times in our life when conversion may have a greater focus and others when it has a lesser focus, but *there is no time when attention to conversion can be absent*. Jesus calls us to "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48), a constant task. So, yes, to the degree that we are all affected by sin (and we all are to a greater or lesser degree), in that measure, we also are all called to conversion.

But the conversion we are called to in Advent has a distinctive character: one of "joyful hope." A Catholic living Advent today is in a better position than Messianic prophets like Isaiah and Micah: he knows how the story turned out in Jesus of Nazareth. At the same time, today's Catholic also knows how the story *will turn out*: the triumph of God and goodness, "when everything is subjected to him . . . so that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). We know that God, who will come to judge the living and the dead, will prevail. The only thing we do *not* know is on which side we will be in that judgment: among the sheep or the goats. That is why Advent is a time of preparation and conversion: it is a time to make myself ready "for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ," judge of the living and the dead, King of the Universe. The way I prepare myself is through conversion of heart, from turning from creatures to the Creator, from sin to grace. So pastors should restore some of the old Advent staples, like a parish mission, or at least extended hours for sacramental penance.

The liturgical calendar is not intended to be a re-enactment of the life of Christ. Rather, it is intended systematically, year after year, to lead us through the high points of the life of Christ, from his birth to his resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Holy Spirit. Obviously, Jesus is not born every December 25. The liturgical calendar is similar to the rosary. Throughout the year, meditating on the mysteries of the rosary leads us through the most important events of Jesus' life, death, and resurrected life. All those events retain a constant relevance for the Christian: that's why we commemorate the glorious mysteries in Lent and the sorrowful mysteries in Eastertide. There is one, integral life of Christ that remains the normative measure for every Christian. Whether we meditate on them in the rosary or observe them through the course of the liturgical year, the motif should be the same: how these elements of his life shape ours.

Advent reminds us of what Jesus did for us so that, "now" (that little word we repeat in every Hail Mary), we may, by the prayers of Mary and all the saints, turn from whatever separates us from God and to God himself. Advent reminds us that "now" is the only moment we actually have and are promised, as we have no guarantees of our future. So we seize the moment of grace, the *kairos* that is "now," to prepare for him who, by his past coming, made us aware he is coming back and that "my reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what he has done" (Rev. 22:12). What is our response, for which we prepare during Advent and our entire lives? The very last words of the Bible: "Come Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20). *Maranatha!*
[Advent: What Are We Preparing For? | Catholic Answers Magazine](#)

MISSION STATEMENT: *Holy Trinity Catholic School, a ministry of Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish, offers to early childhood and elementary school students of diverse ethnic, economic, and religious backgrounds a superior academic program based on Gospel values. Within a family atmosphere, the school strives to develop the spiritual, academic, personal, creative, and physical growth of each student.*

VISION STATEMENT: *Holy Trinity Catholic School students will be fully prepared to transition to middle school possessing critical thinking skills, an ability to work independently as well as collaboratively, and an awareness*

of what it means to actively live the Gospel values.