



Dear Parishioners,

In Ireland, families often place lit candles in the windows of their homes. The Christmas Eve tradition is said to have started years ago, when under English rule, Irish Catholics were not allowed to celebrate Mass; and most especially Christmas Mass. This was a great deprivation of a people, who at that time, were steadfast in the faith. It has always been said that the strongest is to be found among persecuted people, who had to fight for their faith. You too, have to fight for your Christmas faith as you stand out in the cold for Mass. In those days, a lit candle in the window told a Catholic priest, on the run, that the celebrations of Christmas Mass were welcome in that home. Word would go out to neighbors that they were welcome to attend. You can be sure that there was a toast of Christmas cheer.

As I was growing up, the postman was invited in, by my father, who did not imbibe, but he made sure to invite him in for a glass of cheer. At the end of his mail route on a bicycle, he returned to the post office, as a merry old soul following his visitations. As children, we understood that the light in the window was to give a warm welcome to Mary & Joseph, as they searched for a place for the Christ Child to be born. Tradition had it that the youngest child lit the candle – a grand tradition. So too, for the lighting of the battery light in the family crib, and then kneeling before it, prayed the Christmas rosary.... Hail Mary full of Grace.

As I write in early Advent, how shall we celebrate our Christmas Mass in 2020? We will be outside with strings of lights and live streaming for families at home. "I'll be home for Christmas", is music to the ears of family life and our faith community. We encourage those that are sick, elderly, or have underlying conditions, to join us from their home, but we hope that all others will come "home" for Christmas Mass in person. If you are going to attend the 6:00PM or 9:00PM Christmas Eve Mass, we invite you to bring a stand-alone, glass encased candle (found in any grocery store) to welcome the Christ Child (please bring your own matches).

"She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger". (Luke 2: 7) The tradition of midnight Mass developed early from the belief that the Christ Child was born at midnight. The origins of a midnight birth rely on the Book of Wisdom, "For when peaceful stillness encompassed everything and the night in its swift course was half spent, your all- powerful word from heaven's royal throne leapt" down to Bethlehem. (Wisdom 18: 14-16)

Coming to the end of the year, I wish to say I am most grateful for your great generosity in Offertory support. It has been outstanding during the Pandemic. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the parish staff, school staff, and liturgy committees for their flexibility in organizing Masses and religious education due to the ever-changing pandemic mandates. These changes often came with little more than a day's notice, and often had to be implemented without enough volunteers. Together we beseech Mary's intercession with the Christ Child for safety and protection in our families from the virus. On behalf of Msgr. Gallagher, Fr. Rafferty, Deacon Ron Diem and Deacon Doug Pingel, the staff and myself we wish you a safe and Merry Christmas.

God bless you all.

Very Rev. Nicholas Clavin, Pastor

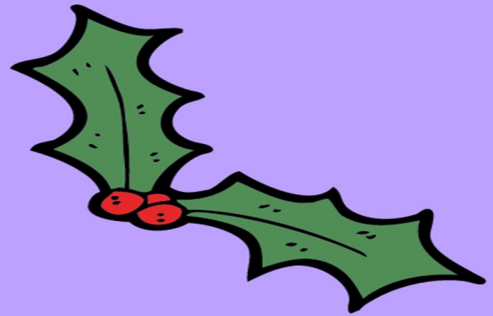
St. Gregory The Great

Catholic Community

We are a vibrant, faithful, Eucharistic, Catholic Community  
who bring people to Christ  
and send them out to transform the world.

**MAY THIS  
SEASON REMIND  
YOU OF THE  
HOPE, JOY,  
LOVE, AND  
PEACE FOUND IN  
CHRIST**

*Romans 15:13*



Join Us For Mass As We Welcome The New Born King!

Christmas Eve: 2:00pm, \*4:00pm, 6:00pm, \*9:00pm

Christmas Day: 7:30am, 9:00am, 11:00am

\*4:00pm and 9:00pm Masses to be live-streamed

## FROM THE DESK OF DEACON RON: Christmas Lights

As I write this letter, Advent 2020 has been born as has a new liturgical year. Both the communal Church and the domestic churches have begun the external preparation for the season. In the neighborhood where my wife, Tina and I live, many homes are decorating with lights. Some multicolored, some white, some steady, some flashing and some with all the above. Many homes that are decorated are filled with characters ranging from dear old Santa to assorted Disney characters to Darth Vader, which is now a Disney character. Many neighborhoods seem to compete with one another to be the biggest and the brightest. And there are less nativity scenes to be found.

Using outside lights stems back to before Christ when the Scandinavian and Germanic pagan cultures used fire during their midwinter festivals. Pagan rituals such as Yule logs, bonfires and candles symbolized the rebirth of the sun, turning night into day and the dawn of the New Year. As Christianity spread, many pagan traditions took on new meaning for the Christian Church. The celebration of the sun became the celebration of the Son that dispelled the darkness of sin to a new light, Christ the light of the world. This year with all that is going on, whether it be Covid, politics, demonstrations and protests, the world, our country, our Church and even we the individual person need to see a light of hope and renewal. We are not only called to receive the light, but we are summoned to be the light. When we as Catholic Christians set out our Christmas décor let us keep in mind why we light our homes. For my wife and me there is a need, a desire to express to the world or at least those that walk or drive by that we celebrate the hope and light that came to us out of darkness. We decorate to draw attention to this unique event that happened just over 2,000 years ago and remains with us today. We want to be a symbol for those whose hope may be dimmed, whose desire to celebrate has diminished. We want to appeal to the little child, “From 1 to 92”, as sung by Nat King Cole in, “The Christmas song”. We strive to catch the eye of all with light, decorations, animated deer and a welcoming snowman that draws us to a nativity stable with Mary and Joseph with the Christ child, the reason for hope, the source of all light.

As we finished decorating, Tina noticed a father and daughter walking by. The daughter stopped to say something to her dad then smiled and waved at Tina. Tina’s eyes welled up with tears, it was a moment of Grace. Despite life’s struggles, a simple smile and wave from a young child broke through the darkness. Many ask, where is God in all this uncertainty? I would ask you to open your bible to 1 Kings 19:9-13. This is an event in the life of Elijah as he searched for God during a time of trial. God did not speak to him in wind, earthquake or fire- it was in a tiny whisper sound. We tend to desire God to reveal Himself in BIG ways. Yet, it is in the smile and wave of a small child. This Christmas celebrate the simple, the tiny whisper of a smile and wave to a neighbor, or a stranger. God’s greatest gift came as a child, see that child in others, be that child for others.

**Pull down your mask and smile.**

**Merry Christmas!**



# St. Gregory the Great's

## UPDATED COVID-19 Procedures for Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals

### BAPTISM

Baptism seminars are currently taking place outdoors at the homes of two of our parishioner families. Please refer to the Baptism seminar calendar found on the parish website.

<https://www.stgg.org/home/calendars/baptism-seminars>

If Masses are permitted indoors, Baptisms will take place inside the church. The Baptismal Font has been drained., however, the portable font used prior to the building of the current parish site is being set up and drained after each use. A maximum number of two infants can be scheduled at a given time.

If Masses are being held outdoors, Baptisms will be held outdoors on the parish grounds at a spot selected based on weather conditions. The portable font will be used and maximum of two infants can be scheduled at a given time.

If the church is closed at the direction of the Bishop for the health and safety of all, Baptisms will not take place.

### WEDDINGS

Weddings continue to be scheduled, however, during this time, most of the wedding preparation programs are taking place online.

If Masses are permitted indoors, weddings will be inside the church. All will observe the safe distancing and mask requirements. The number of people allowed in the church will be restricted as defined by the tier. For instance, while in the red tier the capacity was limited to 100 people.

If Masses are being held outdoors, weddings will be held outdoors on the parish grounds. Site is chosen based on the area needed to safely seat the number in attendance. Masks and safe distancing are required.

If the church is closed at the direction of the Bishop for the health and safety of all, weddings will not take place.

### FUNERALS

Funerals and graveside services are being scheduled. It should be noted that cemeteries have their own guidelines which will be followed.

If Masses are permitted indoors, funerals will be inside the church. All will observe the safe distancing and mask requirements. The number of people allowed in the church will be restricted as defined by the tier. For instance, while in the red tier the capacity was limited to 100 people.

If Masses are being held outdoors, the Mass will take place in the gathering plaza as is done at weekday Masses.

If the church is closed at the direction of the Bishop for the health and safety of all, funeral Masses will not be held. A Memorial Mass can be scheduled for a future date. Graveside services can take place as permitted by the cemetery.

If you have any questions, please contact Judy Roitz

[judy@stgg.org](mailto:judy@stgg.org) 858-653-3584.





# Happy Advent From The Faith Formation and Youth Offices

## Faith Formation Update

*Warm Advent Greetings from the Faith Formation office of St. Gregory the Great!*

*We are moving along successfully, despite the ever-evolving challenges presented to us by these turbulent times.*

*Classes are continuing on a virtual platform, and we are overjoyed at the strides the children of St. Gregory the Great are making. We had our first set of Assessment Appointments with our 170 students last month and were filled with pride at the blossoming relationships with our Creator and Savior that not only the children are cultivating, but so are their families!*

*We are also steadily approaching the season for First Reconciliation that will occur during the first week of February. Please keep the 40 students preparing for this beautiful sacrament in your thoughts and prayers as they venture onward this special day.*

*Our continued prayer is that you and your families will feel the joy and peace of this sacred season while staying safe and knowing you are deeply loved and belong at St. Gregory the Great!*

*Erica Rossio & Maddie Tobin*

*Faith Formation Office [ff@stgg.org](mailto:ff@stgg.org)*

## Youth Update

*I hope you and your family are continuing to remain safe and healthy! I want to express great gratitude to all of our Core Team members who have led our Confirmation small groups over zoom this past semester. We ask for continued prayers for all the teens preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation. We are now offering Youth Group on Thursdays from 6:30pm-7:30pm! Youth Group is open to all High Schoolers. During Advent, we are diving into the season by discussing preparing for the Lord while sharing in the festive season! We ask all students who attend to continue to wear their masks to ensure we can continue to meet. Please visit the website for access to the Youth Calendar and all upcoming Confirmation Classes and Youth Groups.*

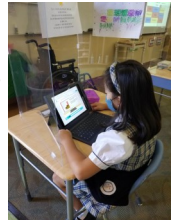
*Blessings,*

*Julia Toole [jtoole@stgg.org](mailto:jtoole@stgg.org)*



## St. Gregory the Great Catholic School News

Advent greetings from St. Gregory the Great Catholic School! We are so thankful our students are in school every day, and that we get to see them thrive spiritually, academically, socially, and emotionally. We commend our students who chose distance learning...their commitment to learning from home is excellent.



Guided by the San Diego County Health & Human Services Agency and the CDC we are able to follow safety rules which include, face masks, frequent hand washing/sanitizing, social distancing, and rigorous sanitizing and disinfecting of our school and preschool facility. We are most grateful to All State Security Services (school parent) who has provided temperature screening technology which enhances our health and safety protocol. It certainly takes a village...

Our teachers are superheroes, providing an exemplary learning experience for students, whether in-person or in the virtual world. God has blessed us abundantly and we pray for his continued grace to persevere and overcome during this pandemic. Thank you to our families for their level of support, diligence, and cooperation during this first trimester of school.



During this season of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love we prepare our hearts for the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Student's families have been gifted with items to make a prayer space in their homes, and now with Advent, they have received a gift bag with Advent items to enhance their prayer space.

Celebrating Mass is the cornerstone of our Catholic parish school. We are very grateful to Fr. Nick for presiding at our bi-weekly, in-person, outdoor liturgies on the school campus. Students can also "attend" Mass virtually using the streaming option on our parish website.



Although COVID-19 has challenged us to be creative in maintaining school traditions, we have adapted, and in October, the Great Quarter Race had students donating 8,766 quarters-this provides 8,766 meals to hungry children around the world. In



November, we partnered with Sister Parish Outreach Ministry and donated half of the food collected for their Thanksgiving Feast. Our December stewardship outreach is a Toy Drive in partnership with Nick's Gift, an organization that provides toys to families of cancer patients. This year's student-led



fundraiser, Reindeer Run, will collect money to help fund the tri-fold plexiglass shields that are on each student's desk. This event will be modified to encompass social distancing. May God continue to bless administrators, teachers, staff, students, and parents everywhere as we trust in His mercy to adapt and overcome during these challenging times.



**St. Gregory the Great Catholic School & Preschool wish you a joyous Advent and Christmas season.**

## Young Adult Ministry Update

During Advent, we are called to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord. While that is different this year, we are committed to making the church and the sacraments available to all young adults who seek them. Even though Mass is outside, we are still streaming the daily Mass and the Sunday Mass at 9:00am. We were so grateful for the opportunity to seek more community and depth in this time of Advent through a series at the Pastoral Center called Beauty that Saves. It taught us about God's plan of salvation as shown through notable artists such as Michelangelo and Caravaggio. We thank all who came and hope that you were enriched in your spiritual life! I wish you all a very fruitful season of Advent and look forward to the eventual coming of Christmas and the gift that is Christ Jesus!

Peace, Matthew Tobin

Young Adult Ministry Coordinator

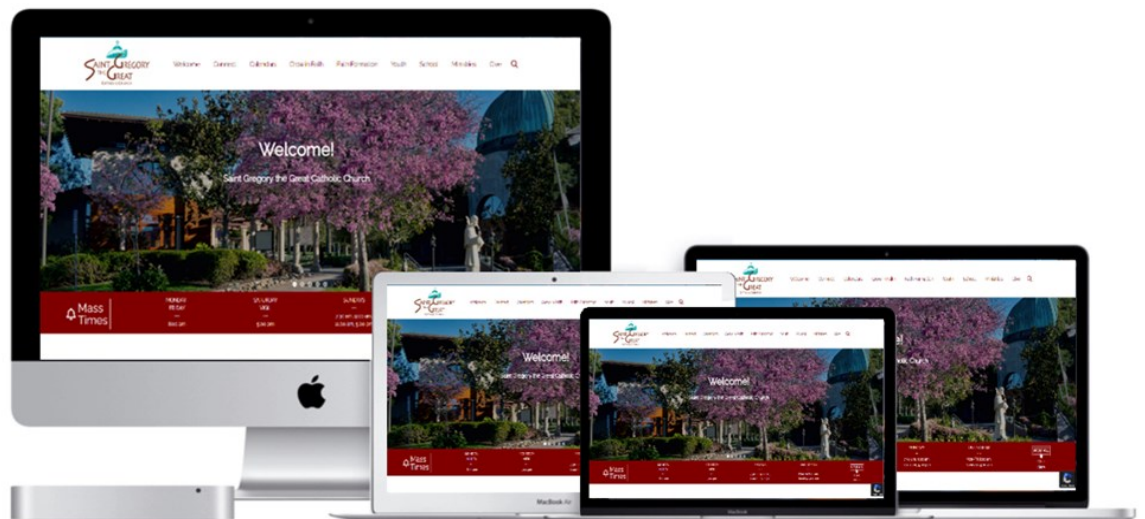


## Announcing Our New Church Website!

We are excited to announce the release of our new church website! The official launch date is December 31, 2020. We have a new web host and have upgraded our web platform. The website domain name and layout will remain similar, so navigating the new site should be intuitive and straight-forward. Much gratitude to God for making this website possible. Secondly, thank you to the team at Diocesan who provided products and services that have helped us better communicate and connect with the community of St. Gregory the Great. As we progress throughout the new year, we will continually be adding and building upon our website. For any questions or comments, please connect with us at [webmaster@stgg.org](mailto:webmaster@stgg.org). We would love to hear your thoughts. Thank you for your patience as we work to provide the parish community with a better online experience.

Nichol Swift

[www.stgg.org](http://www.stgg.org)



# A YEAR OF STEWARDSHIP GIVING

*Your gifts continue to touch others! The 2020 Pandemic can't stop us!*



Joe Kloberdanz, our parishioner who collects the donated food each weekend sent this picture reporting, "This weekend, we had the largest food collection ever for the weekly STGG Food Share! This despite lower Mass attendance due to the COVID virus. We truly have a most generous parish, and the clients of Catholic Charities are most grateful!"

## Sister Parish Outreach Ministry Update

This year's summer drive for backpacks and school supplies was very successful! The students and staff were overjoyed to receive the new items...it really made a big difference in the start of their school year!



"A very grateful thank you to the St. Greg's" was the message from Our Lady of Angels after receiving 180 filled grocery bags with gift cards. Thanks to both the school and parish for giving during this time.



## Sweet Christmas for Casa De Los Pobres

Thank you to all who donated candy and toothbrushes to help support the Sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Queen of Peace. At Christmas, the collection is given to members of Casa De Los Pobres, where about 1,700 families receive a special meal of chicken, rice, beans, canned vegetables, fruit and candy which makes their Christmas even sweeter!

