

*3rd Sunday of Advent
Gaudete Sunday
December 14, 2025*



*Jubilee Year 2025
December 24, 2024—January 6, 2026
We are Pilgrims of Hope*

LIGHT *in the midst of* DARKNESS

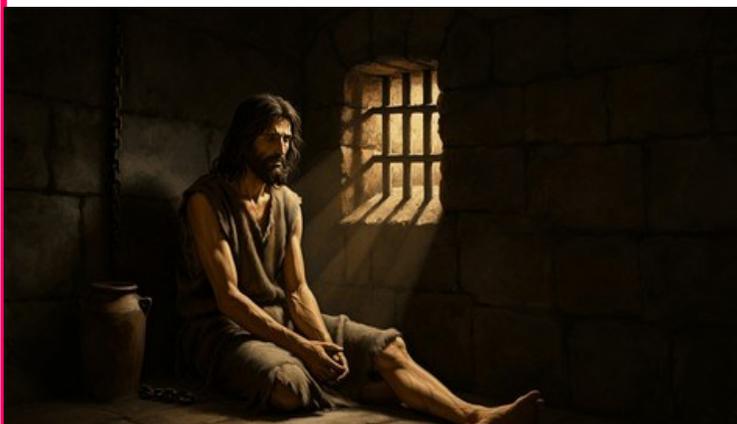
From the Gusset

The Gospel for *Gaudete Sunday* is one of *darkness*, doubt, *fear*, and loneliness; and I *love* it, because it is so ironic that this is the Sunday that **the Catholic Church** calls us to “*Rejoice!*” That is what *Gaudete Sunday* is – **It is Rejoice Sunday!** **The Church** calls us to *rejoice* and leap for *joy* (very much like the Lord’s **Beatitudes** on the Mount –

why should we leap for *joy* on the day that we are poor, **mournful**, meek...), because our Savior is near! **John the Baptist** is in prison and soon to be **executed**. **The Baptizer** is chained in a **dark cell** – he has doubts that Jesus is *the Messiah* – people hate John so much he **fears** he will lose his **life** – and **the Baptist** is all alone. **John the Baptist** is struggling with *the puzzle* of **sin** and **evil**, and you and I struggle with this same *puzzle* (every *human being*, who examines his **life**, does). What is the source of **darkness** in our world, in our **life**? Why do people not like us? **John** asks these questions, **St. Augustine** asked these questions, **St. Robert Southwell** asked these questions – all the great men and women up and down the centuries ask these same questions. Now the answer to the question: What is the source of **darkness**? – the answer is: **Satan!** You see, **Angels** – whether they are good or fallen – **Angels** cannot create anything, but **Satan** in wanting to be “like God” – **Satan** goes ahead and makes things. The product of what **the Evil** one makes then is **insubstantial** – it does not have any **substance** to it. For example, what is “*darkness*?” *Darkness* is nothing – *darkness* is the absence of light. What is **evil**? *Evil* is the absence of “*the good*.” When **John the Baptist** finally gets around to asking Jesus, “*Lord, why do I sit in the dark, why do I have doubts, why am I terribly afraid – Lord, why am I lonely?*” Jesus does not give **John** answers to **his** questions – Jesus gives **John** the answer of all the **miraculous deeds** Jesus has done! See, you can argue with words, but you cannot argue with **Miracles!** **The Catholic Church** cannot allay our **fears**. She cannot tell us why people don’t like us. No, **the Catholic Church** rather says, “**Rejoice!** God is coming **to rescue** you. God **loves** you so much, He gave up His **life** for you; and our Lord is returning to give you the “*new Life*” that He won for you on **Calvary!**”

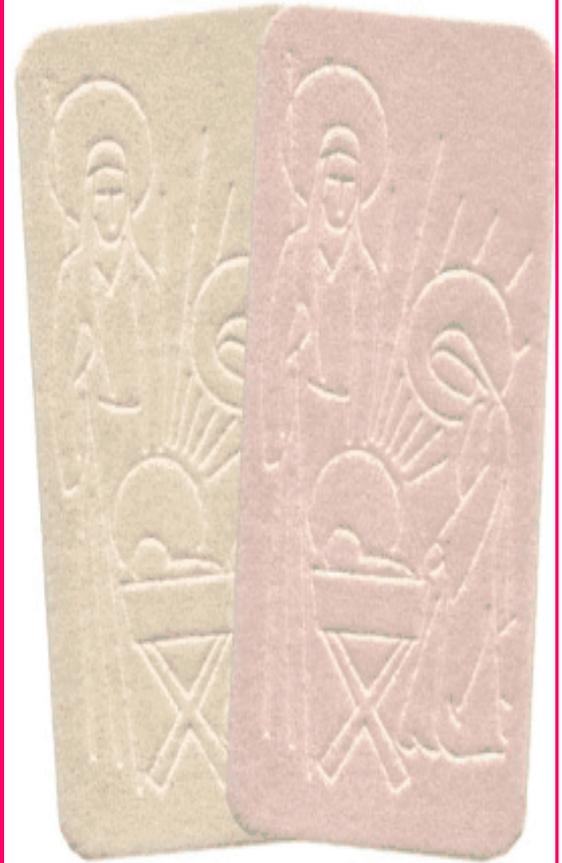
Yours on the Path

Fr. Randy



**Here is a Short Liturgy for
the Oplatky Distribution,
so the food does not get cold!**

1. Make **the Sign of the Cross** (the greatest **sacramental**).
2. **The Head of the Family** breaks the **Wafer** and distributes **it, a piece** to each one at the table, and he retains **a piece** for any absent family members, who are **deceased** or out of town.
3. Each person wishes the Savior's **love** and their own **love** to all present!
4. **The Wafer** is **consumed**. Some folks like to put a little **honey** on **the Wafer**—the **honey** becomes a symbol of **the sweetness** of God's kiss of His **love**.



ADVENT—CHRISTMAS SACRAMENTAL:

THE OPLATKY WAFER

One of **the Seasons** most popular **Sacramentals** is the **Oplatky wafer**. A thin **wafer** of bread that looks and tastes very much like **the Eucharist**, but remains just bread; that is, the **wafer** gives **no grace**. A **priestly blessing** is given to **the Oplatky wafer** – it is the equivalent of inviting **Fr. Randy** to your **house** to pray your **Grace** before meals. You then take the blessed **wafers** home, and either at the **Christmas** meal or the meal nearest **Christmas** where most of the **family** is present – the **wafer** is consumed. You break your **wafer** into pieces and offer it to a **family member** with your **love** and **the hope** that they will **forgive** you any and all of **the sins** you committed against them in the past year. Since your **priest** blessed the **wafers** for your **family** – you must know that, if you take the **wafers** home – your **family** is also **forgiving Fr. Randy** any of **his sins** against you! Remember **the Catholic Churches** unwritten **credo**: you can never say, **“I love you,”** and **“I am sorry”** – too many times. **The Oplatky wafer** is one of the easiest ways to say both. **Merry Christmas!**

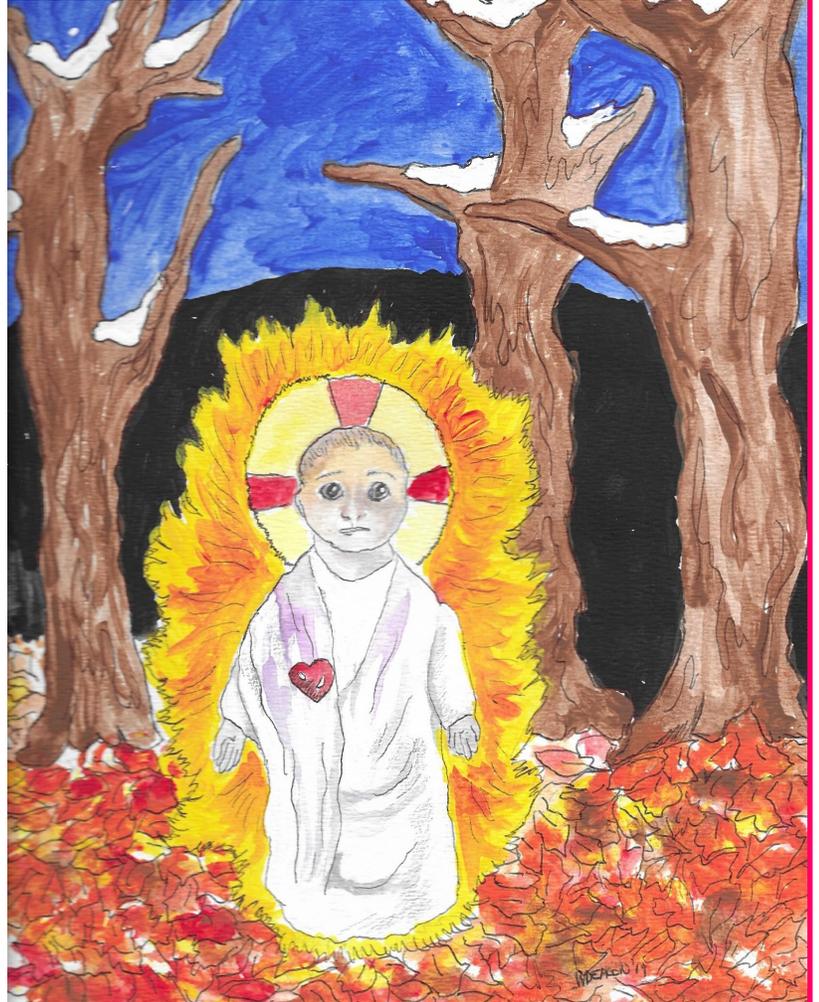
The Mass and the Saints



It would be harder to come up with a Mass part that is more **joyful** than the **Alleluia!** Bishop **Amalarius (780-850)** said that the **Alleluia** refers to the gladness of **heart** that the Apostles felt at the promises Christ made to them and at the **Miracles** that they saw our Lord do. As in our Gospel this Sunday for **Gaudete Sunday—John the Baptist**—in prison, cannot see the **Miracles** Jesus is performing, so our Lord tells **John's messengers** to go and

report to **John** all the **Miracles** Jesus has worked, so that **John** may **rejoice!** – even though **he** is in prison. We sing the **Alleluia** at **Mass**, not so much to express **the joy** of the **Miracles** God has worked for us – but we sing the **Alleluia** at **the joy** we are to feel that God has worked **Miracles** for others!! When **Fr. Randy** thinks of the lonely **St. John** in prison, I cannot help but think of the great **Jesuit** martyr: **St. Robert Southwell**. The year was 1594, and **Southwell** was shut up in the **darkness** of **the Tower of London** awaiting his execution – **he** prayed that Holy Spirit would tell **him** only when it was **Christmas** day, so **he** could **rejoice**. **St. Robert** did not ask to be set free nor that **his life** be spared. No! Because the Queen wanted **Southwell** to suffer the torture of not knowing when one day had passed into another (in the hopes that **the Jesuit** would tattle on who were the **Catholics** in England that **he** had

celebrated **the Mass** for), **Robert** asked God for the **Miracle** of just knowing when the day of **December 25th** **dawned**. God gave the **Miracle** **he** asked for, and **his** poem (**the Burning Babe**) is the product of the **rejoicing** of this great **Saint**.



THE BURNING BABE

As I in hoary winter's night stood shivering in the snow,
Surpris'd I was with sudden heat which made my heart to glow;
And lifting up a fearful eye to view what fire was near,
A pretty Babe all burning bright did in the air appear;
Who, scorched with excessive heat, such floods of tears did shed
As though his floods should quench his flames which with his tears were fed.
"Alas!" quoth he, "but newly born, in fiery heats I fry,
Yet none approach to warm their hearts or feel my fire but I!
My faultless breast the furnace is, the fuel wounding thorns,
Love is the fire, and sighs the smoke, the ashes shame and scorns;
The fuel Justice layeth on, and Mercy blows the coals,
The metal in this furnace wrought are men's defiled souls,
For which, as now on fire I am to work them to their good,
So will I melt into a bath to wash them in my blood."
With this he vanish'd out of sight and swiftly shrunk away,
And straight I called unto mind that it was Christmas day.

Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 13th Feast of St. Lucy

(+) James & (+) Geraldine Froncek / Mr. & Mrs. Robert Mixa

11:00 am, **St. Thomas Aquinas, Freeport Jubilee Pilgrimage Mass**

4:00 pm, **OLPH** (+) Jean Ritola/ Family

5:30 pm, **SMA** Pro Populo/ Fr. Randy

Sunday, December 14th 3rd Sunday of Advent/ Gaudete Sunday

8:00 am, **St. Patrick** (+) Jack Weeks/ Marilyn Weeks &
(+) LeRoy Klein/ Fr. Randy

10:30 am, **OLPH** (+) Cletus & (+) Betty Henkel/ Joan Henkel

Monday, December 15th

(+) Thomas Berry/ Joni Walker

(+) Howard McInnis & (+) Robert Bulfer/ Fr. Randy

Tuesday, December 16th

7:30 am, **SMA** (+) Julie Malach/ Mr. & Mrs. Mike Burkardt

Wednesday, December 17th

8:00 am, **OLPH** (+) Donna Vaessen & (+) Ronald Vaessen/ Ruth Ann Vaessen

Thursday, December 18th

7:30 am, **SMA** (+) Howard McInnis/ Hollie Schlesinger

8:30 am, **OLPH** (+) June Jones/ Mr. & Mrs. Butch Jones

Friday, December 19th

8:00 am, **St. Patrick** (+) Mildred Schneider/ Larry Schneider

Saturday, December 20th

(+) Joseph Schauer/ Mr. & Mrs. Robert Mixa

4:00 pm, **OLPH** (+) James Meznarich 40th Wedding Anniversary/ Betty Meznarich

5:30 pm, **SMA** (+) John Gehant/ Ron Haefner

Sunday, December 21st 4th Sunday of Advent

8:00 am, **St. Patrick** (+) Leo Buhman/ Mr. & Mrs. Marty Bickett

10:30 am, **OLPH** Pro Populo/ Fr. Randy

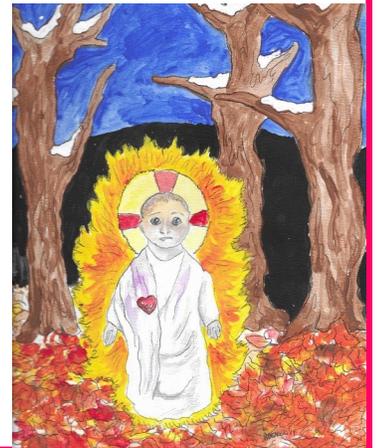
Living Intentions for this Week's Masses:

OLPH: Arlene Miller, Lola Burkhardt, Cheryl Whitaker,

Pauline Bulfer

SMA: Darlene Gehant, Msgr. Hermes, Wanda Deacon

St. Patrick: Diane Blaine, Fr. Kramer



You have worked many Plenary Indulgences during this Jubilee Year—why not honor some of the recipients of your Indulgences with a Christmas flower—a physical presence in our Sanctuary of their Spiritual presence in Heaven!

