

From the Pastor's Desk

*This week has been another exciting week here at Visitation Parish. On the First Sunday of Advent, I was so pleased to welcome **John Fontana, our diaconal candidate**, to our parish family. I am certain that he will be a welcome addition to our faith community, and I am truly looking forward to working with him as his formator and a partner in ministry. In addition to his liturgical ministry, John will be bringing his gifts and talents for service to our ministry to the sick and the homebound, as well as to our ministry of Christian Initiation. In fact, I believe that John will be present to us in as many ways as the Holy Spirit reveals to us. I thank you for welcoming him in a spirit of Grace and kindness.*

Also, on Thursday, we had a combined council meeting where I established a jubilee planning committee which will be in charge of planning and implementing events organized to celebrate the Jubilee Year 2025 here in our parish. We will be having our first meeting on Thursday, December 12th at 1:00 PM in the rectory meeting room. All are invited to attend. Please note that by attending this meeting, you do not commit yourself to being part of every Jubilee activity throughout the year.

The second Sunday of Advent is celebrated by the lighting of a second purple candle which symbolizes peace. This is a time to reflect upon the peace that is offered to us by the coming Christ of Advent. Peace, we must first realize is not merely the absence of war, conflict or turmoil. Moreso, peace is a state of wholeness and completeness. It is a sense of well-being and harmony that comes from being in right relationship with God and others. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for peace is "shalom," which means completeness, soundness, and welfare. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul writes, "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). This verse reminds us that true peace comes from God and is beyond our human understanding. It is a peace that surpasses all circumstances and situations, and it is a peace that guards our hearts and minds in Christ. It is my Advent hope that all members of our parish community and that our entire world may come to know peace in this way.

ANGEL TREE 2024: *I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who is participating in our Angel Tree project this year. A number of angels remain on the tree in the main vestibule of the Church waiting to be taken by us, who through our generous donations, will bless children who live in families who struggle financially, with a JOYFUL AND MERRY CHRISTMAS! When returning your gifts to the Church please remember to attach the angel tag to each gift. Please be certain to place your gift in the Church under the number which corresponds with the number on the tag. Birthright gifts can be placed in the section marked "All Other Gifts." All gifts must be returned by next week, the weekend of December 14th & 15th.*





Jumpstarting Jubilee 2025 - Advent Peace: The second Advent candle symbolizes peace. The Jubilee Year is meant to be a time of Sabbath rest, reconciliation, and peace. Pope Francis encourages us during this time to be reconciled to God and one another. The Jubilee Year allows us to do this through opportunities for sacramental confession and the gaining of indulgences ("eased purgation from sin") offered throughout the year. May you come to know the Jubilee "Prince of Peace."

SAINT BENEDICT FOREIGN MISSION PROGRAM

DECEMBER IS THE GIFT OF SIGHT MONTH

Each December is designated as the "Gift of Sight Month." We have provided vision surgery for over 200 children and adults in Pakistan. Each eye surgery only costs \$500 and is completed in one day. Please consider a contribution to help this very worthy cause. Contact Deacon Michael for additional information: (814) 241-0576 or michael.russo@atlanticbb.net.

SAINT BENEDICT FOREIGN MISSION PROGRAM

HELP US CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

Each year we try to raise funds so that we can provide food, clothing, and medical needs to our needy friends overseas. In addition, we try to send a little extra so that the children can have a Christmas celebration. Please help us continue this tradition. These children and their families have suffered tremendous religious persecution. About 800 Christian homes and 40 Christian churches have been destroyed by radical Islamic Terrorists. Many escaped their homes with just the clothes on their backs. Contact Deacon Michael for additional information: (814) 241-0576 or michael.russo@atlanticbb.net.