



# St. Rita News

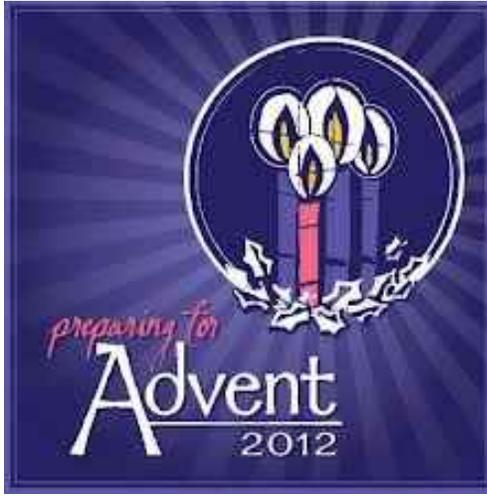
The new monthly newsletter serving Saint Rita Parish

NOVEMBER 2012 ■ VOLUME I, ISSUE 5

## Happy New (Liturgical) Year!

Did you know that First Sunday of Advent (December 2nd, this year) marks the beginning of the Church's Liturgical Year? During this season (which always begins on the fourth Sunday before December 25th), the Church asks us to prepare ourselves to celebrate Christmas, the feast on which we commemorate the birth of Christ, the Incarnate Word. During this time of anticipation (the Latin "adventus" means "coming"), the liturgical color is purple, to reflect (among other things) our solemn contemplation of the world waiting in darkness for the light of Christ. And, in addition to allowing us to participate in the longing felt for the Messiah in ancient times, Advent also allows us to contemplate and prepare for the Second Coming of Christ.

The Church has many devotions specific to Advent, to aid in this preparation. The most well-known is the advent wreath, a circle of four candles (three purple, one rose) which are lit to mark each week of Advent. The lighting of the candles, done both in the sanctuary of the church and in the home, is usually accompanied by prayers and hymns. The rose candle is lit for the third week of Advent, which begins with Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete Sunday (from the Latin "Rejoice") is so called because of the entrance antiphon for that Sunday, which is "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Let your



forbearance be known to all, for the Lord is near at hand; have no anxiety about anything, but in all things, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God. Lord, you have blessed your land; you have turned away the captivity of Jacob." (Philippians 4:4-6; Psalm 85 (84):1). Gaudete Sunday is a time of hope as the feast of Christmas draws near!

While Christmas carols, decorations and treats are all around us from the minute Thanksgiving is over (and sometimes sooner!), the Church's

tradition is to anticipate Christmas not by celebrating it early, but by preparing for it with Advent hymns (like "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"), prayers, and penance, including fasting, sacrifice and acts of charity. This solemn preparation, this waiting and longing, helps us to focus on the spiritual (rather than the practical preparations for the holiday, like shopping!), and to grasp more fully the tremendous awe and joy felt by those who saw the light of Christ come into the world on that first Christmas. When we prepare well, and wait to truly celebrate Christmas (which lasts a full Twelve Days, beginning December 25th!), we can savor its celebrations that much more!

### ■ EVENTS IN OUR DIOCESE

**Mens Retreat:** Nov 16-18 at the San Damiano Spirituality Life Center in White Post, VA. For more information, contact Tom O'Neill at [toneill@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:toneill@arlingtondiocese.org) in the Office for Family Life.

**Advent Morning of Recollection:** Join young adults in spiritual preparation for the anniversary of the Birth of Our Lord at 9:30am on Sat., Dec. 1 at St. Leo the Great Catholic Church in Fairfax. There will be breakfast, Exposition, a reflection, Adoration, Confession, and praise and worship.

**Credo: I Believe in God the Father,** a two-part series

presented by Rev. Paul Scalia, will take place on Tuesdays, November 27 and December 4 @ 7:30pm at St. James Catholic Church - Heller Hall, 905 Park Avenue in Falls Church.

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church and Ignatius Press invite you to attend a very special theatrical screening of **RESTLESS HEART: The Confessions of St. Augustine** on Jan. 21, 2013 at 6pm at the Rave Cinema Centreville 12. Tickets will be on sale the first weekend in December; contact Karen Dixon at 703-638-0753 or [dixon.karen57@gmail.com](mailto:dixon.karen57@gmail.com) for ticket information.

# History of St. Rita Church

From our parish website, [saintritaaparish.com](http://saintritaaparish.com)

In 1912, a group of involved, dedicated women, the "Ladies Seminarian Society," gathered the children of Catholic families living in the area then known as Saint Elmo-Abington-Del Ray and proceeded to instruct them in the Catholic faith in a cobbler's shop. This was the beginning of the rich history of Saint Rita parish in Alexandria.

By 1914 permission had been secured from Bishop O'Connell to build a church and a name was chosen, placing the project under the care of Saint Rita of Cascia, the patroness of "impossible causes." Ground was broken for the original Saint Rita Church on Hickory Street in Mt. Ida in March of 1914. Dedicated in October of the same year, Masses were said by priests from Saint Mary's until the "Mission" became a parish in 1924 with its own pastor, Father Leonard Koster. Dominican Sisters and Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart began religious education for children in the parish, traveling from Washington and Baltimore by train and streetcar. Capuchin Fathers also helped out at Saint Rita and became an important part of the church community.

By 1940 the parish had grown to 1,000 and a new church was needed. Father Koster secured three acres on Russell Road from the Beall and Conlon families. After Father Koster's transfer in 1947, the new pastor, Father Gallagher, embarked on a program of construction which would give Saint Rita a complete plant including church, school, rectory, convent and annex. Even with the difficulty of securing materials during the Korean War, Saint Rita Church was dedicated on December 18, 1949, with Bishop Ireton laying the cornerstone. Described as a beautiful example of Gothic architecture, the church was constructed of Virginia fieldstone and Indiana limestone.



The Cobbler's Shop where Sunday School classes were held.



Original St. Rita's Church on Hickory Street, Mt. Ida

*Saint Rita, come to my aid! Beautiful rose born from the Savior's thorns, Lead me far from anger and hate; Guide my heart on peaceful paths with charity to all.*



## Baptisms at St. Rita

- + John Paul Snyder III, Oct. 6
  - + Harper Engel Knight, Oct. 7
  - + Alexander Davis Clark, Oct. 12
  - + Thompson Andrew Maier, Oct. 20
  - + Samuel James Nordlund, Oct. 26
  - + Alexandra Maria Rivera, Oct. 26
- + Cristel Espersansa Rivera, Oct. 26  
+ Ana Leticia Garcia, Oct. 26  
+ Dariela Michell Randaes, Oct. 26  
Alan Asmar Aldana, Oct. 26

## Funerals at St. Rita

- + Nina Bacani, Funeral Mass Oct. 26
- + Patricia O'Donnell, Funeral Mass Oct. 29



## Weddings at St. Rita

- + Jeffrey Edwin Cameron & Kathryn Elizabeth Gounghans, Oct. 6
- + Davin Michael Lundin & Diane Elizabeth Bedilla, Oct. 20

*Do you know of a parishioner who is ill, and in need of prayers? Or a parishioner who is serving in the armed forces, overseas? We will be happy to publish their names so that fellow parishioners can pray for them.*

*Please contact Catherine Feil ([catherine.feil@gmail.com](mailto:catherine.feil@gmail.com), or 703.671.0402) or Erin Church ([erinmchurch@gmail.com](mailto:erinmchurch@gmail.com)).*

Do you have ideas for future items in the parish newsletter, or would you like to submit a feature for publication? Is there an upcoming event of interest to St. Rita's parishioners that we should know about? All submissions can be directed to our editors: Catherine Feil ([catherine.feil@gmail.com](mailto:catherine.feil@gmail.com), or 703.671.0402) or Erin Church ([erinmchurch@gmail.com](mailto:erinmchurch@gmail.com)). *Thank you!*