



December 2<sup>nd</sup> is the first Sunday of Advent, a season of waiting with hope. It is a still and quiet time of year; the winter chill sets in and the periods of daylight grow shorter as those of darkness grow longer. We feel the year drawing to a close and long for the hope and new beginnings this season promises. For people of faith, we are called to embrace this season and *live* it; not passively waiting, but rather, making ready as though an expected guest is on the way— *the* long-expected Guest — and we must prepare a place in our hearts, our homes, our lives. We'll never do this perfectly, there will always be some dusty corner we overlook, but year after year, Jesus comes to us, unfinished and imperfect as we are, and rejoices with us in the changes and growth we *have* accomplished, and that have been accomplished in us through God's grace. And from there He calls us to more.

As we anticipate His coming, we count our blessings, give thanks, take stock of failures and sin, and take steps to clean up our lives and make the changes we can. Recall the Gospel account of Zacchaeus in Luke Ch. 19: The wealthy chief tax collector heard that Jesus was going to be passing through Jericho and was "seeking to see who Jesus was." He was short, and because of the crowd, he wasn't able to see Jesus coming. Determined not to let the moment pass him by, Zacchaeus ran on ahead and climbed a tree. Just imagine seeing

this powerful, wealthy man, scrambling up a tree to see over the crowd! In making that effort, and risking looking more than a little foolish, Zacchaeus got what he longed for *and more*: as Jesus passed by, He looked up at Zacchaeus and told him to hurry and come down, "for today I must stay at your house." We are told that Zacchaeus came down and "received him with joy." He certainly wasn't entirely prepared for all that, but in making the effort to wait for Jesus as he did, Jesus came to him and invited him to more, to a deeper encounter, and to be changed by the experience. Others in the crowd grumbled that Jesus had gone to stay "at the house of a sinner." Rather than being crushed by this accusation and letting it impede his welcoming Jesus, he received the encounter as an invitation to change: "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house...For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost."



We may not be perfect or feel worthy to receive Jesus when He comes, but this Advent, let us remember that as we wait and prepare, longing for His coming, Jesus comes to meet us where we are, to help us change. Let us wait with hope and trust in our God who so loves us that He came to dwell among us, a humble baby in a manger.

## Advent & Christmas at Matulaitis Home

**Daily** – Holy Mass, 10:30am Chapel

**Every Wednesday** –  
Spirituality Group, 1:30-2pm D-Lounge

**Nov. 21 & 29, Dec. 13, 19, & 27<sup>th</sup>** –  
Sensory Spirit Group, 3:30-4:15pm D-Lounge

**11.25.18 Solemnity of Christ the King**

**12.2.18 First Sunday of Advent**

**12.5.18 Advent Hymns & Prayers**  
3:30pm D-Lounge  
*\*replaces Spirituality Groups\**

**12.7.18 First Friday**  
Adoration & Benediction  
Chapel 4pm

**12.8.18 Solemnity of the  
Immaculate Conception  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary**  
Adoration & Benediction  
Chapel 4pm

**12.13.18 Support Group for  
Caregivers & Families**  
Auditorium, 6-7:30pm

**12.19.18 Communal Preparation for  
Reconciliation Service**  
Chapel 1:30pm

**12.24.18 Christmas Eve**  
Protestant Christian Service  
2pm A-Lounge  
Kūčios for Lithuanian residents 5pm

**12.25.18 Christmas Day**  
Christmas Holy Hour &  
Benediction Chapel 4pm

**12.30.18 Solemnity of the Holy Family**

**1.1.19 Solemnity of Mary,  
Mother of God**

## A Story about Prayer

by Christina Bourquin

One day, a resident was wheeling herself to the Chapel quite early before Mass. When asked why, she happily replied:

"I have a date with Jesus."

I continue to hear those words in my mind: "I have a date with Jesus!" Have you ever thought of prayer that way? I haven't. I wish I did though. Wouldn't it be nice if more of us were anxious to spend time with God in prayer?

St. Mother Teresa said, "God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil."

And E.M. Bounds, who wrote extensively about prayer, said, "Prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty."

I'm going to try and get more excited about reaching out to God in prayer; how about you?



*Our chapel is open to all for quiet prayer and reflection – come have your own date with Jesus!*

*Congratulations to the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception  
on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of their Congregation!*



**“Good Conquers!”**

The Sisters’ religious community was founded in Marijampolė, Lithuania by Blessed George Matulaitis on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1918. Their ministry in the USA continues today here at Matulaitis Home, the Immaculate Conception Spiritual Renewal Center in Putnam, Camp Nergina in VT, and Bl. George Matulaitis Parish in the Chicago area.

The Sisters strive toward perfect love of God and all people, to spread the Kingdom of God, and work wherever Church needs are greatest, with special attention to the spiritually and materially poor. In the USA and in Lithuania, besides caring for the elderly, sick, and dying, they work in religious education of children, parish ministry, and coordinate a spiritual renewal center for adults. In Lithuania, the Sisters are also involved in various social services such as working with at-risk children, orphans, families who have adopted or provide foster care, and programs for people who are homeless.

Matulaitis Home celebrated the Sisters’ centenary anniversary with a solemn Mass, followed by a ceremony at Center Court during which the above photograph was presented to the Sisters – our residents and staff holding up paper hearts in the shape of “100.” In the afternoon, a special program was held for residents during which Sr. Bernadette and our Director of Mission Integration, Dainora Kupcinskas, shared the history of the Sisters from their beginnings til today in words and pictures, after which everyone enjoyed a specially decorated cake and traditional Lithuanian music. October 15<sup>th</sup> was a day of great joy at Matulaitis Home!

Thanks be to God for Blessed George Matulaitis and the founding of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, and may their good works continue with God’s blessing for another 100 years!



***We remember to give thanks...this season & always!***

“Be at peace among yourselves... cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all. See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good both for each other and for all. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. ***In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.***” 1 Thessalonians 5:13-18

**Our Holiday Traditions**

Every year on December 13<sup>th</sup>, twelve days before Christmas, staff and residents gather at Center Court to sing Christmas carols and decorate our Christmas tree with traditional Lithuanian ornaments. These ornaments are handmade with straw, reminding us that Jesus was placed on a bed of hay in the manger.

Another of our special traditions is Kūčios on Christmas Eve, one of the most important celebrations for Lithuanians. Kūčios is a symbolic meal reflective of two events: the birth of Jesus and the Last Supper. The meal features the sharing of the Christmas Eve wafer of unleavened bread known as plotkelė, and twelve special dishes, symbolizing the twelve Apostles of Jesus. The table is adorned with candles and sprigs from evergreen trees, and hay is placed under the tablecloth symbolizing the hay in the manger where Jesus was born.

What are some of the special traditions that are meaningful to you and your family during Advent and Christmas? Is there something new you would like to incorporate? What helps you to remember the true reason we celebrate?



*Merry Christmas!*

*We pray that you enjoy a blessed and happy Christmas, that God fill your hearts with His peace and joy. May God’s blessings be ever with you, and may this New Year be filled with promise and hope. We thank God for you always!*

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!  
From all of us on the Spiritual Care Team:  
Olivia, Father Sadauskas, Sister Bernadette, and Christina*



Check out our website:  
[www.matulaitisnh.org](http://www.matulaitisnh.org)



**Matulaitis Home**  
10 Thurber Road  
Putnam, CT 06260  
Phone.....860-928-7976  
Fax.....860-963-1920