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Blessed Sacrament

Mission Statement:

Established in the Spirit of Jesus Christ with an Afro-centric focus, Blessed Sacrament Chapel is committed to spreading the "Word" through fellowship and good works.

Sunday Mass: 10:00AM

St. Stephen Cathedral Parish Office: 270-683-6525

Rector: Fr. Jerry Riney, jerry.riney@pastoral.org

Parochial Vicar: Fr. Sinoj Pynadath, HGN
sinoj.pynadath@pastoral.org

Parish Life Coordinator: Sr Jeannette Fennewald,
 SSND pa@blessedsacramentchapel.org

TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading — As a garden makes its growth spring up, so will GOD make justice spring up before all the nations (Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11).

Psalm — My soul rejoices in my God (Luke 1:46-50, 53-54).

Second Reading — Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good (1 Thessalonians 5:16-24).

Gospel — I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord (John 1:6-8, 19-28).



Third Sunday of Advent Dec. 13, 2020

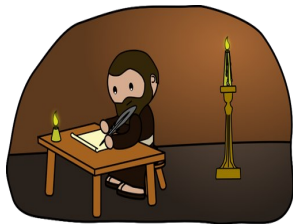
Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.

— 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17



My God is the joy of my soul.

From the desk of Father Sinoj



Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings of the Rejoice Sunday! Today, the Third Sunday of Advent is celebrated as *Gaudete Sunday* reminding us to be joyful in our preparation to receive Jesus. The coming of Jesus, past, present, and future is the reason for our rejoicing. May our hearts and lives be filled with the light of Christ to be rejoicing even in the midst of known and unknown darkness and trials!

In the Gospel today, John the Baptist witnesses to Jesus as the Light of the world. The Baptizer wants his hearers to rejoice because the long-expected Messiah, as the Light of the world, will remove the darkness of sin from the world. We rejoice at the humility of John the Baptizer. We also rejoice in the sincerity and commitment of John who spent himself completely in preparing people for the long-awaited Messiah.

John the Baptizer’s role as a joyful witness prepared the way for Jesus. We, the Church, are called to bear witness to Christ by word and deed, in good times and bad – when it is convenient and when it isn’t. Let us try in this Advent season to reflect upon and radiate Christ’s unconditional love and forgiveness everywhere and always!

(“..”) Always
\ („..”) Keep
(“..”), „” Smiling!
“..”

God Loves You!!

Fr. Sinoj Pynadath, HGN

December Birthdays

- 16--Yulanda Williams
- 18--Robert Johnson
- 20--Cathy Kramer
- 24--Susan Mutter



Confessions at St. Stephen

Sundays--5-6 PM

Saturdays--9:30--11:30

PROPER UNDERTAKING

Never undertake anything for which you wouldn’t have the courage to ask the blessings of heaven.

Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen

Mass Intentions

- December 7--Charles E. Thompson
- December 13--Mary Ann Calhoun
- December 20--Betty Clark
- December 24--Donald Moorman
- December 31--Ann Denise Ward

Let us remember to pray for those who have recently died or those in the process of dying. Remember to pray for the souls in purgatory, especially for those who have no one to pray for them.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the sick: Tyler Cruppi, Larry Conder, Mike Coakley, Andy Evans, Jason Pierce, Ruth Coble, Gary Moorman, Pam Wilson, Frank & Gloria Adams, Larry Allen, Shirley Schmidt, Carol Hatchett, Rachel Mattingly, Nancy Bumm, Camilla Greer, Louise Johnson, Phillip Moorman, Jr. If you know of anyone seriously ill who is in need of prayer or visitation, please notify the office.

Please remember our home-bound: Ruth Coble and Shirley Schmidt who are at Heritage Park. Georgia Holland lives in St.. Louis but stays active in BSC happenings. Please pray also for all who, because they are vulnerable, cannot attend Mass. A card or phone call can cheer them up.

St. Stephen Cathedral Christmas Mass Schedule

Dec. 24--4:00 PM Christmas Eve

11:00 PM “Midnight” Mass

Dec. 25--9 AM Christmas Day Mass

Coming Events CALENDAR



Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Dec. 20--Decorate Church after Mass

Dec. 24--7 PM Christmas Eve Mass

Dec. 31--Mass 6 PM Feast of Mary,
Mother of God.



December 6--\$1125

Weekly budget: \$952

MTD collections--\$1125

MTD budget--\$952

YTD collection--\$25,673

YTD budget-- \$21,673

Candles--\$3

*May each of us give
according to what
the Lord has blessed
us with.*



Pope Francis's Prayer to Mary During Coronavirus Pandemic

O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm. You know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee, we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus, who has taken upon himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection. Amen. Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

You are Important to Me

True joy does not come from things or from possessing, no! It is born from the encounter, from the relationship with others; it is born from feeling accepted, understood, and loved, and from accepting, from understanding and from loving; and this is not because of a passing fancy but because the other is a person.

Joy is born from the gratuitousness of an encounter! It is hearing someone say, but not necessarily with words: "You are important to me." This is beautiful...and it is these very words that God makes us understand. In calling you, God says to you: "You are important to me; I love you. I am counting on you." Jesus says that to each one of us! Joy is born from that!

----Pope Francis

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a/Ps 25:4-5, 6- 7 8-9 Mt 21:23-27

Tuesday: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13/Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19, 23 Mt 21:28-32

Wednesday: Is 45:6-8, 18, 21, 25/Ps 85:9 - 10, 11-12, 13-14, Lk 7:18-23

Thursday: Gn 49:2, 8-10/Ps 72:1-2, 3-4, 7-8, 17 ,Mt 1:1-17

Friday: Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-1, Mt 1:18-25

Saturday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Ps 71:3-4, 5-6, 16-17, Lk 1:5-25

Next Sunday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29 , Rom 16:25 -27/Lk 1:26-38

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCE

Sunday: 3rd Sunday of Advent

Monday: St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church

Next Sunday: 4th Sunday of Advent

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Did you ever stop and realize that there is no earthly gain that can ever really satisfy us? Think of winning the Lotto. On this side of the winning ticket, it's all about the money, the new car, house, vacations, bank accounts, and infinite pleasures. Then, one day we win! Our dreams are fulfilled, and happiness is on the horizon. Then one day, we wake up and realize that nothing has really changed, and I am not as satisfied as I thought I was or would be. I did not find joy.

Glimpses of joy are possible but not by material means. They are brought to us through incredible experiences of connection that bring us face to face with real and authentic faith, hope, and love. And, they are glimpses and do not last. To carry joy within us is to realize that it is not something I create, manufacture or even acquire. It is a gift. My need for joy mirrors my need for eternity. As C. S. Lewis discovered, joy is a surprise that speaks to my very soul and is given as gift by the God who loves me.

The beauty of Advent is found in discovering the beauty of the gift of joy. God has visited his people for no other reason than to show them where and how to find joy! All of our human and earthly joy experiences are always only glimpses. It is only God who is the joy of my soul. Real, Divine experiences of joy catch us off guard, bring a feeling of awe and rightness and have an eternal Otherness about them. We probably will not fully realize the truth of all of this until we actually meet God face to face in heaven one day. Intense gratitude will most surely follow.

Lectors	
December 13:	Barbara Bisel Jacques Williams
December 20:	Layson Brooks Sarah Malone
December 24:	Jacques Williams Barbara Bisel

Jesus Is Better Than Santa

Santa lives at the North Pole; Jesus is everywhere.
Santa rides in a sleigh; Jesus rides on the wind and walks on water.
Santa comes but once a year; Jesus is an ever present help.
Santa comes down your chimney uninvited; Jesus stands at your door and knocks.
Santa makes you stand in line to see him; Jesus is as close as the mention of His name.
Santa lets you sit on his lap; Jesus lets you rest in His arms.
Santa asks, “Little boy, little girl, what is your name?” Jesus knew our names before we did.
Santa has a belly like a bowl full of jelly; Jesus has a heart full of love.
Santa offers “Ho, ho, ho”; Jesus offers health, help, and hope.
Santa says “You better not cry”; Jesus says “Cast all your cares on me for I care for you.”
Santa’s little helpers make toys; Jesus makes new lives, mends hearts, repairs broken homes.
Santa may make you chuckle; Jesus gives you joy.
Santa puts gifts under the tree; Jesus became our gift and died on the tree.
There’s really no comparison. **Jesus is the reason for the season.**

Find and Practice Joy

The third Sunday in Advent, called Gaudete Sunday, offers a break from quiet contemplation and emphasizes joy as we wait for the coming of the Lord. The word “Gaudete” in fact means “rejoice” in Latin. Our Second Reading begins with, “*Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.*” In this challenging year, we can understand the command (and the need) to pray, but we may find it difficult to rejoice. Perhaps a way to look at this is to consider the difference between joy and happiness. Can you think of someone you know who remains hopeful and positive despite life’s difficulties? We may need to learn to practice joy by reflecting on the good that God has done for us, and to give thanks for the blessings we receive. As hard as seems, we can try to find joyful, positive aspects brought about by the pandemic. Finding joy can help dispel the ache of missing loved ones, the stress of constant challenges of school or work, or the worry for loved ones affected by COVID. There is joy in the generosity of all who work tirelessly for the sick, in the compassion of those who donate time or money to serve the less fortunate, in the extra time families have been able to spend with their children at home, and even joy in the technology that allows us to visit with loved ones virtually. There is also a sense of joy that comes from giving, whether of our time or treasure, to make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate. Take some time to find and practice joy and gratitude. “*Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks*”

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

Last week, we looked at a form of nativity scene called a *presipio*, characterized by framing the crèche of Jesus with a vast array of personalities and a rich geographical context. The tradition was carried to the New World, and finds very rich expression in Latin America today. While in Europe the *presepio* was reserved mostly to the homes of wealthy nobles and great churches, in Latin America it was claimed by the poor and expressed the skills of native artisans. In Mexico, you can still find clay figures in every village market. In a way, the native people took the religion of Spanish rule and baptized it with their Indian culture by surrounding the crib of Jesus with local geography and people. In Brazil, where Christmas falls in summer, the figure of the baby Jesus is wrapped in gold and gems, and set on a hillside surrounded by flowers and animals of all kinds. Sometimes there is a double *presepio*, presenting both Nativity and Crucifixion.

In some places in Latin America, even non-religious people take care to have a *presepio* in the home, sometimes dedicating one whole room in the house or apartment to the scene. Some cities have markets where people from the countryside sell plants and figurines. In Cuzco, churches and families provide hot chocolate for the children of the poor who come down to help create the nativity scenes. In Paraguay, the baby Jesus grows—the small infant who arrives on Christmas Eve is replaced at New Year with a toddler Jesus who holds in one hand the globe and in the other a cross. Few Christmas traditions have the vitality and variety of *presepios* and crèches honoring the Nativity.



No angel is able to count the blessings which even on a single day, God gives to a person

--Blessed Teresa Gerhardinger, SSND

John the Baptist called upon people to change their own hearts and to live according to God’s Commandment to love God and our neighbor as our self. This is how we “make straight the way of the Lord” to enter our hearts. For many this involves radical change. It involves a humble admission that *What We Are is God’s Gift to Us; What We Become is Our Gift to God.* Are you still struggling with a gift for Jesus? Here it is: “Make straight the way of the Lord” to enter your heart by a humble admission of who God is in our lives.