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Blessed Sacrament

602 Sycamore Street • Owensboro, KY 42301 • 270-926-4741
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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

Pastor: Father John Thomas
jthomas@sscobo.org
Parochial Vicar: Father Shibu Cheriakunnel
moc_scheriyankunnel@sscobo.org
Parish Life Coordinator: Sr Jeannette Fennewald,
SSND pa@blessedsacramentchapel.org



Sunday's Readings:

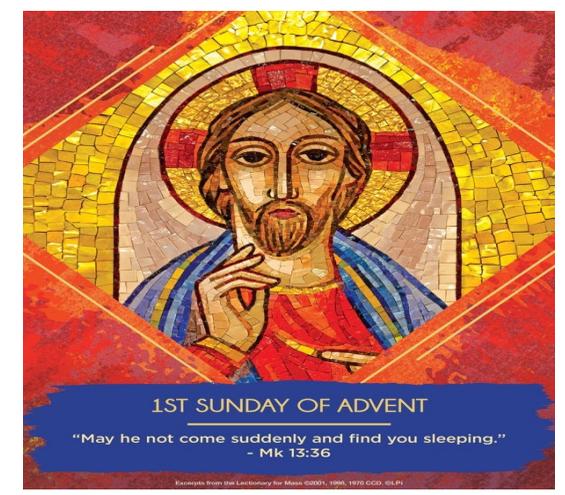
First Reading:
 Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before you. (Is 63:19)

Psalm:
 Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved. (Ps 80)

Second Reading:
 The testimony to Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 1:6-7)

Gospel:
 "Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming." (Mk 13:35)
 Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001,

December 3, 2023 1st Sunday of Advent
We are all the work of your house. Is. 64:7



My Dear Parishioners:

It's Advent, a time of expectancy along with waiting in hope. In Advent we enter into the hopes and expectations of those Hebrews who ages ago were waiting for the coming of the promised Messiah. Advent is forward looking. It's different from Lent, which is a time of reflection, examination, and penance.

During this Advent season, we have our own sets of expectations, longing for a better world in which we can live out our lives. While it is true that the reign of God has, in Jesus Christ, been established among us, it is likewise true that we humans have not responded as we should. We long for peace. We cry out for justice. Security remains elusive. In our anxieties we fear for our future and the future of our children. Dishonesty, corruption and greed still oppress us. We lament the fact that the world in which we must live is in the condition it is.

Lamentations are a part of our Old Testament heritage. There is an entire Old Testament book devoted to them – the Book of Lamentations. It was written in the time when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed and the Hebrews had been carried off in captivity to Babylon. Their prayers were laments, living as they were in exile and we, in our own time, have our own laments.

In recent years we have seen televised pictures of Arab and Jewish women crying out their laments with their heads and hands raised to the Almighty, calling for His intervention to make things right, to execute His divine judgment against those who have inflicted terrible injuries upon them. Rather than a complaint at what God has not done, a lament is a plea for what God could do. Laments are not cries of despair; they are cries cry of hope.

Our children cry out in complaint, pouring out their laments to us when they feel they have been unfairly treated. In their laments they hope we will make things right for them. Without hope they wouldn't lament. Only stoics don't lament; stoics have abandoned hope.

We, too, cry out to God, wanting to know where He has been when calamities, injustices, and injuries have come upon us. We cry out to God and lament the fact that unscrupulous chisellers and oppressors have held their sway over us. Where was God when this earthquake, this hurricane hit, we ask? Where is God's wrath and justice when the poor continue to be oppressed by the rich and the powerful in so many parts of our world. And why shouldn't we complain? To whom else should we turn while the world around us continues in its self-destructive path? All around us people ravish, over-consume, and use up nature's precious resources as if we owned them. At the same time people slaughter babies, kill the dying, and exercise God's powers over human life as if they were God himself. No one seems to listen to our cries. Who, then, better than God, can care for the afflicted, the marginalized, and the oppressed little ones in our world? We have a right to expect Him to exercise justice when our own systems of justice seem to have been bribed and bought out by Washington's lobbyists. Who listens to our voice and hears our cries?

Advent is also a time to see the world for what it is, to acknowledge the mess things are in, and to recognize our own failings generated by our own indifference and apathy. Advent is a time to see, to clearly see, that we need a Savior. We need God to come among us and set us back on the right path for living on this planet among each other as we should. And, of course, Christmas is the celebration that God has done exactly that. The sufferings of God's Son share in ours... and ours in His.

In St. Luke's gospel we hear Jesus' parable telling us about the unscrupulous judge and the widow who kept banging on his door asking for justice against him, this in the face of his indifference and lack of concern for her. The judge complained about her pestering and about her nagging persistence. "And the Lord said," reports Luke, "did you notice what the unjust judge has to say? Now will not God see justice done to his chosen who cry out to him day and night even when he delays to help them? I promise you, he will see justice done to them, and done speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?"

We have so many questions we put to God. We have all of these lamentations and cries for Him to act. But notice that Jesus has a question for us! He has an expectation of us. He asks: "Where is your faith? Do you in fact have any faith?" And when He comes again in glory on the Last Day, will He find any faith on earth? Again and again we hear about all we must do for the poor, the oppressed, and those less fortunate than we are. It is right that we should be constantly reminded of our Christian duties in following Christ's example in caring for the poor, the sick, and the oppressed. But what about the one duty upon which all of our social services are based, namely our duty to honor God, to believe in His love, and to live in faith, to pray, and give Him worship?

Faith gives us the power of hope. If we see hopelessness we see faithlessness. Faith empowers us to act – to engage our surrounding world because we hope for better things. If there was one quality that stood out in Pope John Paul II it was that. He was a living embodiment of courage and hope, those powers that flowed forth from his deep faith. Despair is always just outside our doors waiting to creep into our hearts and souls. Doubt, depression, disillusionment, discouragement, defeat, and despair are the chief weapons of the devil. They lead to denial of God and eventually to spiritual death. And Lucifer, who lives in an eternal hell of despair, wants us to live likewise in his misery.

Love lives in hope. Love thrives on expectations. Love waits. Love is patient and kind; it is never self-centered, never puffed up about all that it does. Love is never conceited. It does not focus on other people's sins. It is always patient, kind, and generously believes in the good intentions of others. Love is filled with forbearance, it is willing to suffer, and is able to set aside the demands and expectations we place on others. Love lives in hope of what can be.

We need a Lover with a love that is more powerful than our own. We need a power that is greater than all of our powers combined and massed together. Jesus Christ comes to us with that power. Christ Jesus, in His birth, life, death, and resurrection is God's total gift to us of His power. It is all ours, if only we have faith. So Jesus asks us: "...when the Son of Man comes, will He find any faith on earth?"

Advent is God's gift to us – the gift of time in which we can reflect upon and answer His question. God's answer has come to us. When He arrives, will He find faith? For each of us the answer is a resounding YES! Blessings! Father John

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 16--Yulanda Williams
- 18--Robert Johnson
- 22--Yvette Tarver
- 23--Greg Richardson
- 24--Susan Mutter
- 25--Father Shibu
- 30--Sloane Campbell



Laugh of the Week

A rabbi, a priest and a pastor were all in a boat together fishing. The pastor said to the others, "I think I'm going to go over to the shore and sit down." So, he gets out of the boat, walks across the water and sits down on the shore. Then, the priest says to the rabbi, "I think I'll go over to there and join him." So, he does the same as the pastor and sits next to him on the shore. The rabbi thinks to himself, "Well if they can do it, so can I!" So he climbs out of the boat and falls into the water. The pastor says to the priest, "Do you think we should have told him where the rocks were?"

Mass Intentions

- December 3--Emma Lou Marrett
- December 7--Mike Whitfield
- December 10--Bern Tooley
- December 17--Sandra Brown
- December 24 (10 am)--Donald Moorman

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: Charlie Brown Sr, Jim Fennwald, Steven Moorman, Rachel Mattingly, Gina Kirby, Philip Moorman, Jr., Yuri Phen, Larry Clark, Ruth Coble, Shaun Winchell, Jeeriah Cruite, Carol Hatchett, Teresa Woods, Larry Allen, Jordan Gertisen, Buddy Adcock, Debbie Moseley, Donna Kaelin, Janice Taul, Pam Wilson, Frank & Gloria Adams, Shelby Webster, Larry Conder, Andy Evans, Gary Moorman, Wynter Keller, If you know of anyone who is in need of prayer or visitation, please notify the office.

IMP—Kroger

Thank you to everyone who has designated Blessed Sacrament as your community reward partner. We have 39 households that designate Blessed Sacrament as their community partner. Our last donation was \$152.22. If you do not have a community reward partner, please designate Blessed Sacrament. Blessed Sacrament's # is WX799. Go to krogercommunityrewards.com to register. Thanks to each of you for your support.

Coming Events



Blessed Sacrament Chapel

- December 7--Immaculate Conception
6 pm Mass
- December 17--Decorate Church after
10 am Mass
- December 24-- 10 am Mass
4th Sunday of Advent
- 7 pm--Christmas Vigil Mass



Nov. 26--\$655.50

Budget--\$1094

MTD Collection--\$5,474.50

MTD Budget--\$4376

YTD Collection--\$26,527.31

YTD Budget--\$24,038

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

Thanks to everyone who practices stewardship on a regular basis. An active parishioner attends Mass regularly and practices stewardship (time, talent, treasure).

GOSPEL MEDITATION

Lately I've been listening to a science-based podcast on healthy daily living. The host frequently discusses the wide range of health benefits of sleep. So, each night I'm trying to get more, and better, slumber, and it's helping me feel energized. So, why in the world should we follow Christ's advice this week? **"Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house will come ... lest he find you asleep."** Isn't sleep, especially at midnight and cockcrow, a good thing?

Of course, it is. But the wakefulness the Lord calls us to is a deep, personal orientation to Him. A nightly vigil is therefore a metaphor for this, but it's not just that. We should give up real sleep in order to pray, too. This difficult practice is a time-tested way to foster wakefulness of heart. When we give up sleep to pray, it focuses us. We learn that life is not an endless series of days. You and I belong to the Lord — awake or asleep, in life and in death. Sooner or later, even our need for our physical sleep will pass away. And our attentiveness to God — that is, whether we are awaiting Him to meet us — will be all that matters.

May I challenge us this week and this Advent to intentionally give up at least one hour of sleep each week for prayer? Stay up later, wake up in the middle of the night, or an hour earlier, and pray. Will we be a bit more tired the next day? Yes. But we'll be amazed at the spiritual wakefulness that results, too.

— Father John Muir LPi

**MINISTRY SCHEDULE
LECTORS**

December 3: Layson Brooks, Katie Goins
December 10: Jacques Williams, Sarah Malone

December 17: Greg Gough, Barbara Bisel

Eucharistic Ministers

December 3: Barbara Bisel, Greg Gough, Lori Robinson

December 10: Janet Clark, Holly Hollis, Greg Richardson

December 17: Charlene Meadows, Misty Sanford, Cindy Clark

Collection & Gifts

December 3: Steven, Meredith, Hank & Quinn Fain

December 10: Alexis & Alizabeth Hatchett

December 17: Burnell Hamilton, Steven Coble

ADVENT PENANCE SERVICES

- Dec. 3 Blessed Mother 2 pm
- Dec. 4 Our Lady of Lourdes 6 pm
- Dec. 5 St. Martin, Rome 6 pm
- Dec. 6 St. Mary Magdalene, Sorgho 5 pm
- Dec. 11 Immaculate 6 pm
- Dec. 13 Sts. Joseph and Paul 6 pm
- Dec. 17 St. Pius X 2 pm
- **Dec. 17 St. Stephen 2 pm**
- Dec. 19 Precious Blood 6 pm

YOU ARE IMPORTANT TO ME

True joy does not come from things or from possessing. It is born from the encounter, from the relationship with others; it is born from feeling accepted, understood, and loved, and from accepting, understanding, and from loving. This is because the other is a person. "You are important to me; I love you; I am counting on you." Jesus says this to each one of us. ---Pope Francis

Memento Mori

Just this week, my husband and I signed our wills, and the lawyer was careful to couch our transaction in gentle, abstract language: "When we lose you" she kept saying, instead of "When you die."

It's very uncomfortable to dwell on our death. But the Christian life does not just encourage us to do so: it demands that we do.

I once came upon a prayer consecrating the last two hours of life to the Blessed Mother. I have since found variations of the prayer online with different phrasing, but the sentiment of them all is the same: let me not be caught sleeping. Let me be ready.

"You can't do all your homework at the end," a deacon who ministers to the dying once told me. "Good Friday is waiting in the wings for all of us."

I think of that a lot when I don't particularly feel like praying, when I think I'm too busy to go to confession or when feelings of resentment fester inside me on Sunday mornings as I pack my family off to church. *All our good deeds are like polluted rags,* says the prophet. *We have all withered like leaves.*

You can't do all your homework at the end. God is faithful. Are we?

"May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.

What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'"

◇ *Mark 13:36*

By Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Prayer for Advent 1

Dear Lord,
In this season of bustle, help us to stay watchful and alert to the spaces and places you are calling us to bring Your love and light. Amen.

Readings for the Week

- Monday: Is 2:1-5/Ps 122:1-2, 3--9/
Mt 8:5-11
- Tuesday: Is 11:1-10/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17/Lk 10:21-24
- Wednesday: Is 25:6-10/Ps 23:1-6/
Mt 15:29-37
- Thursday: Is 26:1-6/Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27/Mt 7:21, 24-27
- Friday: Gn 3:9-15, 20/Ps 98:1, 2--4/
Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38
- Saturday: Is 30:19-21, 23-26/Ps 147:1-6/Mt 9:35--10:1, 5-8

Observances for the Week of December 3

- Monday: St. John Damascene, Priest
- Wednesday: St. Nicholas, Bishop
- Thursday: St. Ambrose, Bishop
- Friday: The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Saturday: St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatatzin

GOD HAS A DIFFERENT PLAN

We begin the season of Advent with a heartfelt call for our own repentance. We remember God's faithful love for us, and call upon God to help us to turn back. For "behold you are angry, and we are sinful" (Isaiah 64:4). In the first reading and in the psalm, we recall God's promises and lament our unfaithfulness and our guilt. We call upon God's might and power in order to save us. With Isaiah, we ask God to "rend the heavens and come down,/with the mountains quaking before you. (Isaiah 63:19).

Yes, God is faithful to us, because we are the work of God's hands. God is the potter; we are the clay. And yet, our concept of how God will come to save us is rooted in our own expectations of a warrior God who crushes mountains and thunders into our lives with great noise and glory. But God has a different plan: the Incarnation. Copyright J.S. Paluch

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

Long ago in northern Europe, the growing dark and winter weather in Advent forced people to remove the wheels from their carts and replace them with snow runners. The wheels were hung high in the rafters of the house, fitted out with lanterns, and wound tightly with evergreen boughs. The first wreaths were windows into heaven, a source of light, a comforting sign of the victory of the light of Christ over our world's dark wildernesses, its mountainous obstacles, its valleys of need.

The Advent wreath started in the home, and only later appeared in church. Its four candles represent the four Sundays of our journey: typically three purple, one rose. Why not set a wreath in your own home as a place for Advent prayer? Don't let a shortage of purple candles discourage you: some use a deep blue, others have white candles and weave blue and purple flowers, seashells, and pine cones into the green. When the sun sets tonight, light a single candle, sing a verse of a well-loved Advent hymn, and name a mountain to be leveled, a valley to be filled.

