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Blessed Sacrament

602 Sycamore Street • Owensboro, KY 42301 • 270-926-4741
www.blessedsacramentchapel.org or email at pa@blessedsacramentchapel.org

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



Sunday's Readings

First Reading:
 The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior he will rejoice over you with gladness. (Zep 3:17)

Psalm:
 Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel. (Is 12:6)

Second Reading:
 The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. (Phil 4:5-6)

Gospel:
 The crowds asked John the Baptist, "What should we do?" (Lk 3:10)

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

December 15, 2024 3rd Sunday of Advent
The King of Israel is in your midst; you have no further misfortune to fear. (Zep 3:15)



Dear Parishioners:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Let us pray.

I abandon myself into your hands

Do with me whatever you will.

Whatever you do, I thank you:

I am ready for all; I accept all.

Let only your will be done in me.

I wish no more than this.

Without reserve Boundless confidence. Amen.

This is the Prayer of Abandonment. I keep it before me almost always. But I have to say there are many, many times in my life when I have not PRAYED this prayer, but only READ it. This prayer makes me know what a spiritual infant I really am. I cannot think of prayer that is more “counter-cultural” than “The Prayer of Abandonment.” In our world, giving up control is for the weak and the lost. It certainly is not for people who know what they want in life. I mean, really, what kind of a person gives up his/her own ambitions so that someone else, even God can call the shots? What if he wants me to live as a homeless person? What if he wants me to give all of my possessions away? - - What if he takes away my livelihood? - - What if he wants ME to live an unnoticed, boring and mundane life? I am often ashamed to admit that I want to be popular and well-liked. So what if that gets in the way of my spiritual development. - - What if I pray this prayer and he takes away my health and I am called to suffer and die young - - and I’ve told him this was okay? What if he took away the people that I hold dear? My parents, my siblings, my friends? What if he asks me to stop watching television? - - What if he asked me to dig ditches or clean out piggens or change diapers at a nursing home for the rest of my life, all and only for his glory? - - What if he asked me to be a rejected prophet? Do I really love him that much? - - What if, what if, what if? And to do it with boundless confidence, and without reserve and to THANK HIM? I can’t pray this prayer! It is too scary! Sometimes all I can do is to pray for A DESIRE to accept abandonment. When you really think about spiritual abandonment, the passive acceptance of trials and sufferings that are aimed at drawing us closer to God, it is not for the faint of heart. You have to be rock solid in your faith. You have to be gutsy. I have seen some pretty gutsy people of faith in my life that walked away from all kinds of worldly successes to do the will of God in a spirit of abandonment. They are amazing people and amazing things happen because of them.

The Blessed Virgin Mary was that kind of person. Let it be done Angel, as you say. I’ll have this baby. Do we realize what kind of strength of spirit that had to be in her? Can you imagine the fears and questions that could have stopped the Blessed Mother from fulfilling her true destiny? What will people think? What will Joseph think? - - Will people believe me? Will they think I am crazy or demon possessed? - - Will they think that I am a “lose” woman trying to get out of a pinch and stone me? - - What will happen to my child? - - Will I live a normal life with the Son of God as my child? Will I be happy? Will he be happy? Will he be loved? - - Will people treat him fairly? - - What if, What if, What if? But Mary said “yes.” And of course, it was just a few month later that Simeon turned to her in the temple as Mary and Joseph presented the child Jesus to God and said, You realize, that because of him your heart will be broken - - your heart will be pierced through. She still didn’t run. She didn’t hide. She accepted, with ‘gratitude, boundless confidence, and without reserve.’”

During the Sundays of Advent, we are called to consider the MESSAGE of the angel and the EXAMPLE of Mary. When we see her total commitment and abandonment to the will of God, we realize the crisis of our modern day - - the refusal to be open to the will of God because He just might ask us to step out of our comfort zone. He just might ask us to release control. The question always has been and always will be - “What if?” - - What if the rug is pulled out from under me?

The question always has been and always will be - “What if?” - - What if the rug is pulled out from under us? Will we still be able to rejoice in God? What if God speaks to us - - and I believe he does - - and asks us to do radical things for Him? Have we spiritually prepared ourselves to accept not only the blessings but also the crosses for what He will teach us and others through our lives and our example? As we draw ever closer to the great day of Christmas, let us pray for the desire to abandon ourselves to God, not searching out pain, suffering and misfortune, but being open to accepting anything to further the Kingdom as Mary did. Let us pray for the strength to give ourselves totally to Him, so that he can work through us in whatever way he chooses. I abandon myself into your hand Do with me whatever you will. Father John

St. Nick's Visit



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

Mass Intentions

December 15--David Millay
 December 22--Jackie Jones
 December 24--Donald Moorman
 December 29--Sharlene Hatfield
 December 31--Jackie Jones

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: Larry Allen, Kathi Skidd, Ray Higgs, Mike Bogden, Kenneth Hunt, Gene Forsyth, Pam Wilson, Emma Latta, Phil Armendarez, Cindy Heckmann, Joe Washington, Judy Stinett, Shaun Winchell, China Dulin, Rachel Mattingly, Charlie Brown Sr, Steven Moorman, Philip Moorman, Jr., Ronnie Hollis, Chandra Hagan, Larry Clark, Ruth Coble, Carol Hatchett, Jordan Gertisen, Shelby Webster, Andy Evans, Gary Moorman. **If you know of anyone who is in need of prayer or visitation, please notify the office.**

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SERIOUSLY, JOHN, YOU NEED TO DITCH THAT CAMEL HAIR AND TRY SHEEP



GROWING FORWARD IN CHRIST

It has been two years since we began our Growing Forward in Christ campaign. Thanks to all of you who have pledged and faithfully have been fulfilling that pledge. Please continue to contribute; the three year pledge period is not over (and you can even continue after that!).

If for some reason you have not contributed, it is not too late. We will have a plaque board in the vestibule with the name of everyone who has contributed to the campaign. We would like to see the name of every parishioner on it. If you can make a contribution, please mark it "Capital Campaign" or use the envelope in your box of envelopes titled "Growing Forward. This is a separate donation from your tithing. Thank you for consideration. We will be making decisions about the contribution board soon.

Coming Events



Blessed Sacrament Happening

Dec. 15--Church decorating after Mass
Dec. 24--Christmas Eve Mass 7 pm
Dec. 31--Mass 6 pm
Jan. 11--1st Reconciliation 1 pm



Dec. 8--\$2317
 Budget--\$1,300
 MTD Collection--\$3904
 MTD Budget--\$2600
 YTD Collection--\$32,182.58
 YTD Budget--\$29,900

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

On a bright Spring morning, a passerby once saw St. Francis of Assisi hoeing a row of beans and asked him, "What would you be doing right now if you knew this was the last day of your earthly life?" The Saint responded, "I'd keep hoeing this row of beans." Preparing for this world to end — whether by our death or by Jesus' glorious coming — invites us to live not in the past or the present, but deeply in the present moment.

This same point is on display in the simple advice given by the wild and eccentric John the Baptist. He speaks of the one who is to come who will baptize "with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16). Despite the bizarre awesomeness of this announcement, he tells his listeners to engage in the present moment with simple acts of justice and love as their preparation for Jesus' coming, sharing their clothes and food, eliminating greedy and underhanded practices, being content with their wages. It's so undramatic. But how many actually did it? We don't know. How many of us will commit ourselves to these types of humble and demanding practices in our lives? That's what we should be doing now in our present moment, not worrying about the future.

Advent challenge: Name one way you are doing the bare minimum towards others in your daily life. Or name something you are doing because you are not content with your financial situation. Pray: "Jesus, if it is your will, help me to stop doing these things this week. Help me prepare for your coming." Then make the appropriate changes.
 — Father John Muir

MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Lectors

December 15: Layson Brooks, Katie Goins
December 22: Barbara Bisel, Jacques Williams
December 25: Greg Gough, Misty Sanford
December 29: Wayne Stephens, Katie Goins

Eucharistic Ministers

December 15: Greg Richardson, Cindy Clark, Rita Moorman
December 22: Holly Hollis, Barbara Bisel, Misty Sanford
December 25: Janet Clark, Rita Moorman

Collection & Gifts

December 15: Barbara Hammond, Wonet Taylor
December 22: Janet and Lila Clark
December 25:

Where is Jesus today?

A Sunday School teacher of preschoolers was concerned that his students might be a little confused about Jesus Christ because of the Christmas season emphasis on His birth. He wanted to make sure they understood that the birth of Jesus occurred a long time ago, that He grew up, etc. So he asked his class, "Where is Jesus today?" Johnny raised his hand and said, "He's in heaven. Mary was called on and answered, "He's in my heart." And Robert, waving his hand furiously, blurted out, "I know! I know! He's in our bathroom!!!" The whole class got very quiet, looked at the teacher, and waited for a response. The teacher was completely at a loss for a few very long seconds. He finally gathered his wits and asked Robert how he knew this. And Robert said, "Well.....every morning my father gets up, bangs on the bathroom door, and yells 'Jesus Christ, are you still in there?!'"

Asking the Question

I have found in my life that if I am certain of the answer to a big and complicated question — right away, no doubts or hesitations — there is a high likelihood that the answer is actually the wrong one.

Because most of the time the truth is buried beneath a thicket of pride, prejudice, and ignorance. To find our answers, we have to be ready to put the gardening gloves on and pick through the thorns. We have to pray. We have to reflect. We have to question ourselves and others. We have to examine our feelings. And then we have to pray some more.

See, I would be willing to bet that the tax collectors and soldiers knew. Deep in their hearts, they knew.

They knew when they approached John the Baptist and asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" that his reply was *not* going to be: "Keep doing exactly what you're doing."

They had heard this guy preach. They knew what he was about: repentance. They might not have known exactly what John the Baptist was going to tell them to do, but they knew whatever it was, it was going to be a challenge. It was going to turn their lives upside down.

I give them credit for asking the question. That's a hard thing to do, and I don't do it enough. Too often, I'm afraid to ask the question.

How do I love this person? How do I live out my baptismal call in this particular situation? How do I draw water from the fountain of salvation — and how do I do it with joy, as we are commanded by the Psalms?

Christmas is ten days away. Are we asking the question? ©LPI Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Readings for the Week

Monday: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17/Ps 25:4-9/
Mt 21:23-27
Tuesday: Gn 49:2, 8-10/Ps 72:1-4, 7-8,
17/Mt 1:1-17
Wednesday: Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13,
18-19/Mt 1:18-25
Thursday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25/Ps 71:3-6,
16-17/Lk 1:5-25
Friday: Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-6/
Lk 1:26-38
Saturday: Sg 2:8-14 /Ps 33:2-3, 11-12,
20-21/Lk 1:39-45

Observances for the week of December 15

Saturday: St. Peter Canisius, Priest and
Doctor of the Church
Next Sunday: 4th Sunday of Advent

REJOICE

Today has traditionally been called "Gaudete Sunday." The Latin tag is derived from Paul's appeal in the second reading to "rejoice always in the Lord," and the Latin Mass text based on that reading. The irony and paradox of this Christian joy is undermined by the fact that Paul wrote those words in prison. But from there he could see the progress of God's work.

Is it obvious to us? We feel that this is not the time for joy when there is so much suffering and moral evil. It is interesting, then, that the first reading is from the prophet Zephaniah, who is almost exclusively concerned with gloomy visions of Judgment Day. Today the Church selects the only optimistic text in Zephaniah, in which the prophet has been touched by the spirit of joy. This we are assured on all sides, is the "season of Joy." Let us recapture that feeling of joy in our lives.

With Christmas fast approaching, can you give me some practical tips to prepare myself and my family that will help us stay grounded in what this holiday is really about? With all the commercialism, it's easy to stray.

Happy times and events bring fond memories and a renewed sense of love and kinship with others. The anticipation is half the joy of the event itself. The coming of the Lord is that kind of event that people have been looking forward to for generations with fervent hope and desire. It gave them strength and courage as they waited for the coming of the Lord.

We know that Christmas is rushed. Sales begin in August and carols blare long before the season begins. Everyone laments the commercial aspects of the season, but as Advent begins, do something to help you be more mindful of the Lord's coming. Use an Advent wreath, or enthrone the Bible prominently, or read the readings from the Bible assigned to each day. Postpone the tree and decorations until closer to Christmas. Establish new family rituals, customs and prayers that help remind everyone that we are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Fasting, daily Mass, a special celebration of reconciliation, reaching out to those alienated from family or society, and visiting the homebound manifest the love of the Christ Child and the Holy Family. Resist the temptation to rush the season. In his own time and in his own way, God will come. Our task is simply to be watchful and ready. Copyright LPI

ADVENT CONFSSION SCHEDULE

Dec. 15--Blessed Mother 2 pm

Dec. 16--Immaculate 6 pm

Dec. 19 --St. Pius X 6 pm

Dec. 22 St. Stephen Cathedral 2 pm

St. Stephen Cathedral Sat. 9:30--11:30