

 **AnITConsultant** LLC

Whaylon Coleman
Chief Technology Officer

Office : PO BOX 22998
Owensboro, KY 42304-2998

Phone : 270-883-1450
Email : it@anitconsultant.com

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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 Cheriankunnel
moc_scheriyankunnel@sscobo.org

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



Sunday's Readings

First Reading:

For God will show all the earth your splendor: you will be named by God forever the peace of justice, the glory of God's worship. (Bar 5:3)

Psalm:

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy. (Ps 126)

Second Reading:

So that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ. (Phil 1:10-11)

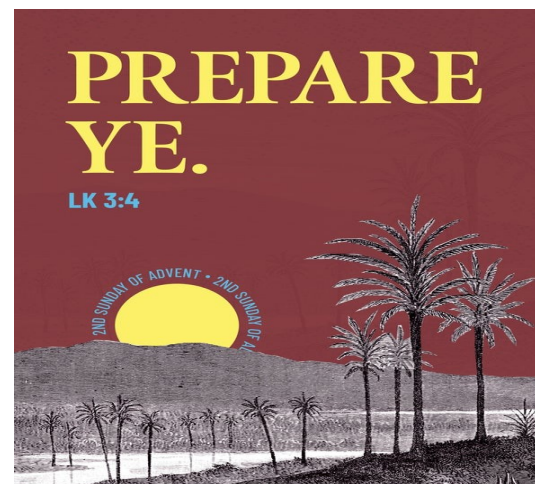
Gospel:

"The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." (Lk 3:5-6)

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001

December 8, 2024 2nd Sunday of Advent

God has commanded that every lofty mountain be made low. Baruch 5:7



Dear Parishioners:

THERE ARE MANY STRANGE NAMES in today's Gospel. They are the names of people and places most of us have never heard of. Why does Luke mention these people and places? First of all, because he is simply following the custom of his day both for Jewish and Greek writing. But, more importantly, he is saying that the story of John the Baptist and of Jesus is really historical. This story really happened in this world at a particular time and a particular place. It is not a mere myth in the sense of a story which has meaning but no basis in fact. Luke is preparing us for the announcement of God coming among us as a human being. He is preparing the stage for this great drama. And so he gives: - the exact time this is going to happen - the political situation (Palestine was a colony of the Roman Empire) - the religious situation (Annas and Caiaphas were high priests) - the place (a small province in the eastern part of the Empire). Any modern history of those times will corroborate the facts that Luke gives. The story about Jesus Christ which is about to unfold (and also the accompanying story of John the Baptist) is not just a tale like the many fables about the gods of Greece and Rome and Babylon. Jesus was a real person. Jesus lived in a particular place and at a particular moment in history. The place can be pointed out to this day and there are still people making it their home. The times in which he lived are well within the records of written history. Jesus spoke a particular language, called Aramaic. And presumably he spoke it with the accent of the people of Galilee. He did not know English (a language which in its present form did not yet exist) and almost certainly would not have known any Latin. He probably knew Hebrew (he read the Scripture publicly in the synagogue [Luke 4:16]) and may have had some colloquial Greek. His face, eyes, teeth, mouth, color of his hair and the sound of his voice (tenor or bass?) were all distinctive and unique to him as they are to each one of us. Whether he looked anything like the traditional pictures of artists down the centuries is something we cannot be certain about, although in the Shroud of Turin he is represented as bearded and having long hair. At the same time, there is a universal quality in Jesus' life and message which makes him relevant for peoples of all times and all places. That is what the "mystery" of the Gospel is about. We should have no difficulty seeing Jesus represented as a Chinese, a Japanese, a Filipino, a Nigerian, or a Jamaican. The Creed does not say that the Son of God was made a man, but homo, a human being, inclusive of all genders and ethnic origins. (See pictures below) Today's Gospel, however, speaks of John the Baptist. He – an equally historical figure – was chosen to announce the coming of Jesus: the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior King. "Prepare a way for the Lord," he calls out and his words are equally meant for us as for the people he directly spoke to. He comes "proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins," says Luke. There are three words there, which are closely linked – baptism, repentance, and forgiveness. Baptism, of course, is not here the Sacrament of Baptism by which people are incorporated into the Christian community. But it was a sacramental or symbolic action through which people expressed by their immersion in the waters of the River Jordan their desire to have their evil past totally washed away.

This washing away would not be effected automatically or magically but only by their repentance. In fact, the term Luke uses is "baptism of repentance" (baptisma metanoias). 'Repentance' is the common translation for the Greek word metanoia, which means not just sorrow for past sins but also a total and radical change of outlook in our relationship with God and other people. It calls for a radical and genuine renewal and conversion of heart. This metanoia or conversion in turn will bring about the forgiveness of sin. The word here for forgiveness is a release, a letting go, a liberation from the chains of sin and evil. Forgiveness is seen as the dropping off of heavy baggage or burdens (like the space capsule dropping off its booster tanks and soaring off on its own into space). Forgiveness, too, involves a total reconciliation with our God and with all those whom we have hurt or with whom we have come in conflict. It is a healing, a making whole. This was how people were to "prepare a way for the Lord". This was how, as Luke says, echoing the First Reading from the prophet Baruch, valleys were to be filled in, mountains and hills laid low, winding ways straightened and rough roads made smooth. This was how each one was to have the personal experience in their own heart of the saving power of God. That is how we are to open ourselves for that saving power. It will come through Jesus who will heal the sick, who will help the weak, who will forgive the sinner, who will give hope to the hopeless, who will give life, real life, to all who open their hearts to him. This is what we are preparing to celebrate during this Advent time. After the coming of Jesus, the world will not be the same.

Today we are still under the influence of that coming. Today, 2,000 years later, people still ask to be baptized and come under his influence. They wish to become his disciples, to walk his way and to experience in themselves the saving power of God. What is all this saying to us? There can be two responses on our part. Firstly, each year as the Advent season comes round and we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we need once more to hear the challenging call of John the Baptist to baptism, metanoia and forgiveness. Although our own Baptism was something which may have taken place a long time ago, as an infant or as an adult, what happened then has constantly to be renewed. We need to re-affirm our commitment to the Christian community, to the Body of Christ, through which we go to God and through which our God comes to us. We need to open ourselves to further conversion, to an ever deeper change of heart, to a deeper listening to what Jesus is asking of us, "Lord, what do you want me to do, to be?" And, thirdly, we need, because of our commitment to the Body of Christ, to find total reconciliation with God and with all those people who come into our lives. Our second response is a realization that our own role is not unlike that of John the Baptist. Like him, each one of us has a mission to communicate the Spirit of Christ and his message of hope, love, freedom and peace to others. To help people fill their valleys and make their rough paths smoother. A word of affirmation and encouragement can work wonders. To have a naturally cheerful disposition can be a real witness of Christian Joy.

Father John

Thanksgiving Dinner--Guests and servers



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

19--Ron Moorman, Barbara Bisel
22--Trey Hatchett
25--Payton Sanford

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

16--Yulanda Williams
18--Robert Johnson
23--Greg Richardson



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!).

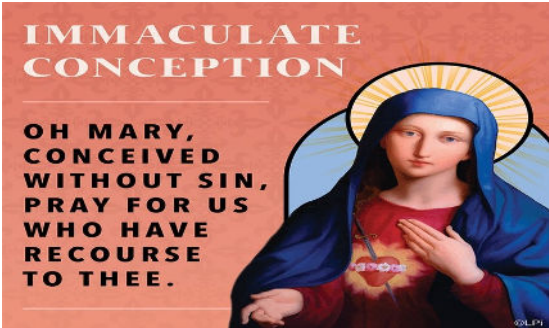
If for some reason you have not contributed, it is not too late. We will have a plaque board in the vestibule with the name of everyone who has contributed to the campaign. We would like to see the name of every parishioner on it. If you can make a contribution, please mark it “Capital Campaign” or use 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.

Mass Intentions

December 8--Sharlene Hatfield
December 15--David Millay
December 22--Jackie Jones
December 24--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: Kathi Skidd, Mike Bogden, Ray Higgs, Kenneth Hunt, Gene Forsyth, Pam Wilson, Emma Latta, Phil Armendarez, Cindy Heckmann, Joe Washington, Judy Stinett, Shaun Winchell, China Dulin, Rachel Mattingly, Larry Allen, 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.



Please attend Mass at one of the neighboring parishes to celebrate this Holyday feast.



Blessed Sacrament Happening

Dec. 1--1st Sunday of Advent
Dec. 24--Christmas Eve Mass 7 pm
Jan. 11--1st Reconciliation 1 pm
Feb. 22--Italian Dinner



Dec. 1--\$1587
Budget--\$1,300
MTD Collection--\$1587
MTD Budget--\$1300
YTD Collection--\$29,865.58
YTD Budget--\$28,600

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

In the year 1995, in the seventeenth year of my life, when Fife Symington was governor of Arizona, Bill Clinton was president of the United States, Chuck Keiffer was pastor of St. Theresa parish in Phoenix, Arizona, and Ron and Mary were my parents, the word of God came to my youth minister Eric and through him I started to see the salvation of God. Soon, Christ came into my life never to leave. I’m thankful beyond words.

Why am I being so specific, you ask? Because in the Gospel this week we hear the specific names of people holding civic and religious authority in first century Palestine when **“the word of God came to John the Baptist:”** Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate, Herod, Philip, Lysanias, Annas, Caiaphas, and Zechariah. All this is meant to help us see that God breaks into our *history*, into real human events. Jesus is no mere myth. He is the Word-which-breaks-in, in concrete moments, you might say. And now we anticipate his coming once again in our specific situations.

Advent challenge: Name as many civic and religious leaders who are in authority currently in your life. Now, name who the potential John the Baptists may be. A spouse? A friend? A podcaster? A work colleague who brings God’s word to you? Spend a moment considering that this comprises the concrete, historical setting into which Christ wishes to come. Then, with these specifics in mind, pray: “Come, Lord Jesus. Come.”

— Father John Muir

MINISTRY SCHEDULE	
	Lectors
<u>December 8:</u>	Leland Herzog, Wayne Stephens
<u>December 15:</u>	Layson Brooks, Katie Goins
<u>December 22:</u>	Barbara Bisel, Greg Gough
	Eucharistic Ministers
<u>December 8:</u>	Barbara Bisel, Janet Clark, Greg Gough
<u>December 15:</u>	Greg Richardson, Cindy Clark, Rita Moorman
<u>December 22:</u>	Holly Hollis, Barbara Bisel, Misty Sanford
	Collection & Gifts
<u>December 8:</u>	Jacques and Whitney Williams Family
<u>December 15:</u>	Barbara Hammond, Wonet Taylor
<u>December 22:</u>	Janet and Lila Clark

LAUGH OF THE WEEK :
◇
Molly, the church gossip and self-appointed arbiter of the church's morals, kept sticking her nose into other people's business. Several residents were unappreciative of her activities, but feared her enough to maintain their silence. She made a mistake, however, when she accused George, a new member, of being an alcoholic, after she saw his pickup truck parked in front of the town's only bar one afternoon. She commented to George and others that everyone seeing it there would know what he was doing. George, a man of few words, stared at her for a moment and then just walked away. He didn't explain, defend, or deny. He said nothing. Later that evening, George quietly parked his pickup in front of Mildred's house.....and left it there all night.

The Straight Path

Ten to fifteen years ago the Department of Transportation decided that it would be fun to give everyone in my zip code something to complain about and replaced most of our major intersections with roundabouts.

This wouldn't be so irksome, I suppose, if I understood how to navigate a roundabout. In theory I do, I've read all the rules and I've watched those cute little YouTube videos where they show you which car is supposed to go at what time. But theory and practice are rather different. And the bottom line is, I never approach a roundabout without taking a deep, anxious breath and tightening my grip on the steering wheel, not entirely sure what my next move should be.

I think of roundabouts every time I hear today's Gospel reading, where John the Baptist echoes Isaiah in beseeching us to make straight the paths of the Lord. See, I always think I've made a straight path between me and God. I go to Mass. I go to Confession. I say my prayers.

He can get to me if He wants, I tell myself.

But without realizing it, I put up roundabouts. I make rules. *You go here, God, and then I go here. I'll do this, God, but first You do this. You stay in your lane, and I stay in mine.* Eventually I find myself taking a different route altogether; the road that stretches between me and Him is too daunting. I start avoiding it.

Sometimes I think God wants the path to be straight not for Himself but for us. He can handle a roundabout. But He knows that when we must run to Him, we have to do it without thinking. In the dark. In fear, in anxiety.

So, this Advent, beware the roundabouts. Make straight the path.

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Readings for the Week	
Monday:	Gn 3:9-15, 20/Ps 98:1-4/Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38
Tuesday:	Is 40:1-11/Ps 96:1-3,10-, 13/Mt 18:12-14
Wednesday:	Is 40:25-31/Ps 103:1-4, 8, 10/Mt 11:28-30
Thursday:	Zec 2:14-17, Jdt:13:18-18 Lk 1:26-38
Friday:	Is 48:17-19/Ps 1:1-4 and 6/Mt 11:16-19
Saturday:	Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19/Mt 17:9a, 10-13

Observances for the week of December 8	
Monday:	The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Tuesday:	Our Lady of Loreto
Wednesday:	St. Damasus I, Pope
Thursday:	Our Lady of Guadalupe
Friday:	St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr
Saturday:	St. John of the Cross, Priest

Traditionally, each of the four Advent candles have a deeper meaning which is depicted in the lovely [Four Weeks of Advent Pewter Wreath](#):

- The **1st Sunday of Advent** symbolizes Hope with the "Prophet's Candle" reminding us that Jesus is coming.
The **2nd Sunday of Advent** symbolizes Faith with the "Bethlehem Candle" reminding us of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.
The **3rd Sunday of Advent** symbolizes Joy with the "Shepherd's Candle" reminding us of the Joy the world experienced at the coming birth of Jesus.
The **4th Sunday of Advent** symbolizes Peace with the "Angel's Candle" reminding us of the message of the angels: "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men."

ADVENT CONFESSION SCHEDULE	
◇ Dec. 11--St. Martin, Rome 6 pm	Dec. 16--Immaculate 6 pm
◇ Dec. 18--Precious Blood 6 pm	Dec. 22 St. Stephen Cathedral 2 pm

AWAITING THE SALVATION OF GOD

The world does not seem big enough to contain the jubilation of the first reading. In the Gospel reading, the Roman empire isn't big enough, either. The great powers of Rome are named and made to stand waiting for the arrival of God's salvation. And we find Paul meditating joyfully on what really matters.

According to Baruch, the city of Jerusalem is like a person standing on tiptoe looking for God's salvation,, which is coming from the east. Those who were led away on foot, heads down, now come back, a proud people. Why, the very way is smoothed out. The path is lined with fragrant, lush trees.

It can't get any better than this, can it? Well, yes, it can. For a voice calls out in the desert. Here is the beginning of the salvation of God.

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YET TO DO One never notices what has been done; one can only see what remains to be done. --Marie Curie