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

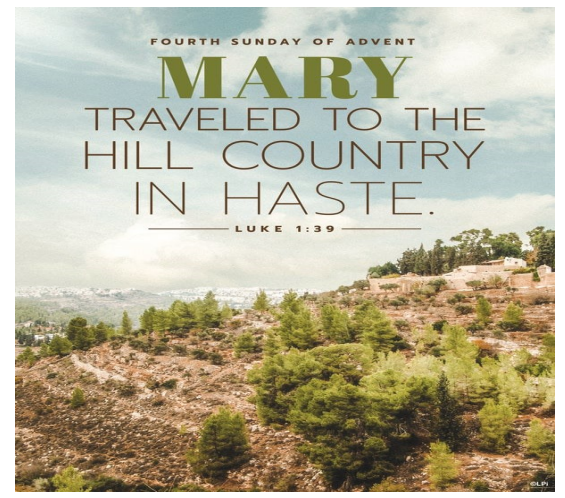


Sunday's Readings

First Reading:
 You, Bethlehem-Ephrathah too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel. (Mi 5:1)
Psalm:
 Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved. (Ps 80)
Second Reading:
 "Then I said, 'As is written of me in the scroll, behold, I come to do your will, O God. (Heb 10:7)
Gospel:
 "And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (Lk 1:43)

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

December 22, 2024 4th Sunday of Advent
Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Luke 1:42



Dear Parishioners:

As we now move into the Fourth Week of Advent and the final Sunday of this great season, we hear a very familiar Scripture story of the Angel Gabriel and the words delivered to Mary. How many times have we heard this Scripture read? If it is very familiar to us, we should make the effort to hear it now with fresh ears.

First, we need a word about Mary. Pope Benedict XVI once described her as a woman deeply imbued with the Word of God in Holy Scripture. Reflecting on her Magnificat, he wrote: “Here we see how completely at home Mary is with the Word of God, with what ease she moves in and out of it. She speaks and thinks with the Word of God; the Word of God becomes her word, and her word issues from the Word of God” (Deus Caritas Est, 41). She knew the Old Testament inside and out!

I am humbled at Mary’s response: “May it be done to me according to your word.” Here she chooses to submit to God’s plan for her life with Him, letting go of her own. In doing so, she had to embrace the possibility of misunderstanding and even shame associated with seemingly breaking her vow of virginity. In Eden, Eve listened to the fallen angel’s lie about God, as he made her feel weak and duped if she believed God’s Word. Not wanting the shame that he suggested comes with dependency on God, she chose to disobey. Mary’s “yes” opened her to a world of complications! However, when she chose God’s way over her own, on the spot she became the new Eve—“the woman” whose “seed” would crush the head of the serpent, once for all.

When Mary first appears in the pages of Scripture, she is in the presence of a magnificent angel. Four times in Scripture, the angel Gabriel leaves the heavenly presence of God to come to men and women uniquely chosen and blessed by God — and he always brings a message of hope! He came twice to the prophet Daniel to assure him in the dark days of Israel’s captivity that the Lord God had not forgotten his people or his promises to bless them (Daniel 8:15-16; 9:21). Five hundred years later Gabriel appeared to an old priest as he served in the temple (Luke 1:19). The angel told Zechariah that God had not forgotten his people. God’s plan was right on schedule. Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, would have a son who would prepare the way for the Messiah, the Lord himself. Now six months after the announcement to Zechariah, Gabriel is sent by God again to a little town in Palestine. He comes to announce to a teenage girl that she has been chosen by God to bear in her body the holy Son of God. God is coming to earth.

Think about this amazing scene. How much it fulfills and foretells! Yet all of it reminds us of this one great fact: God keeps His promises. What good news to people like us, who are waiting in Advent to see the Lord, Who has promised to come to us and not leave us orphans. He will not disappoint.

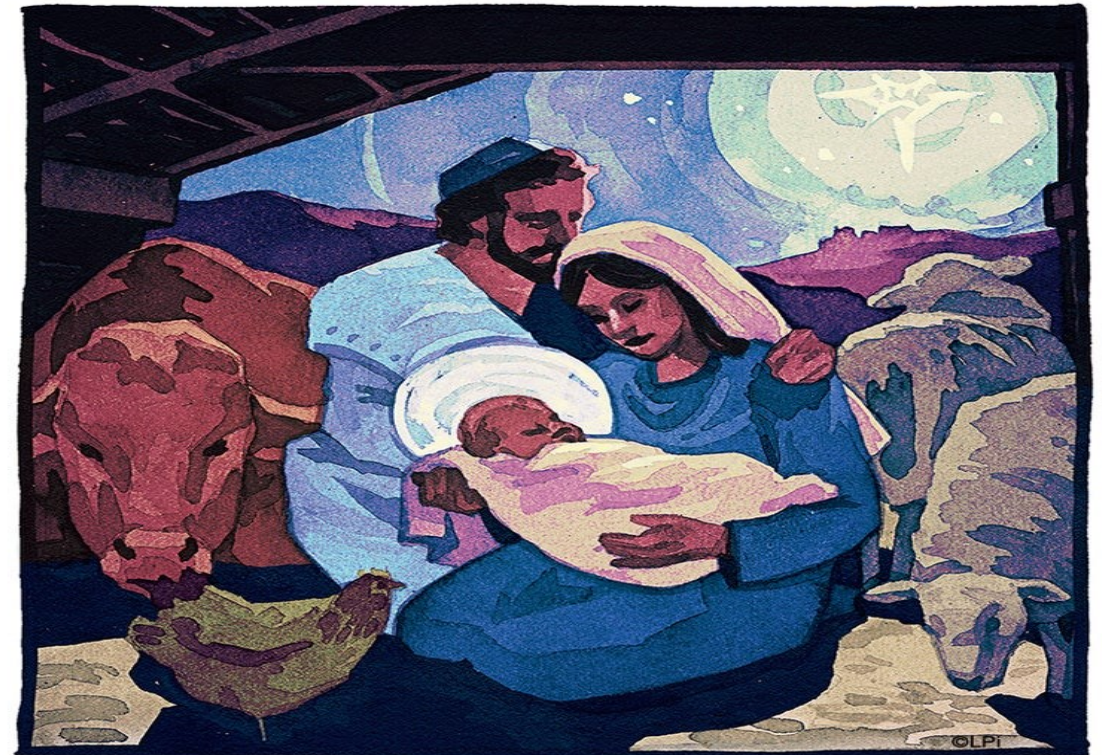
This, above all, is a season of hope and a season of fulfillment. God will have his way. So as we move from shopping, cooking, wrapping, eating, visiting, planning, and celebrating, let us not forget God and the gift of his Son through the Most Blessed Virgin, Mary, our Mother

Everything we do in preparation for Christmas is truly to remind us of who we are and who we hope to become.

Happy Advent! Fr. John

**MAY THE TRUE SPIRIT OF
CHRISTMAS FILL YOUR HEART
WITH JOY TODAY AND EVERY DAY
THROUGHOUT THE NEW YEAR.**

**FATHER JOHN THOMAS,
FATHER SHIBU, MOC
SISTER JEANNETTE, SSND**



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

Mass Intentions

December 22--Jackie Jones
 December 24--Donald Moorman
 December 29--Sharlene Hatfield
 December 31--Jackie Jones
 January 5--Clyde Coble

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, Gene Forsyth, Pam Wilson, Donna Fennewald, 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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HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU ... HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU ... HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEAR JESUS ... HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU



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



Dec. 15--\$2297.50
 Budget--\$1,300
 MTD Collection--\$5,451.50
 MTD Budget--\$3,900
 YTD Collection--\$33,730.08
 YTD Budget--\$31,200

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

The Blessed Virgin teaches us the secret to being blessed, happy, and full of joy. When Elizabeth, her cousin, greets her, she calls Mary "blessed" for two reasons, her motherhood of Jesus, and Our Lady's belief that **"there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord"** (Luke 1:45). Mary is "blessed" entirely because of her relationship to the Incarnation of God in Jesus, and for no other. This of course makes perfect sense, because as the Lord, as God-in-the-flesh, her son is the source of all blessedness, life, and joy. Mary is blessed because of her contact with Jesus, and by her faith in him.

So, it is with us, too. We become blessed by our "motherly" contact with Christ in our souls through baptism. He lives in us and grows to maturity within us. We bear him to the world. This requires unshakeable faith that his promises to us will be fulfilled, despite all the problems and difficulties that plague us. We become blessed, happy, and joyful in the measure that we are in contact with Jesus and trust in him.

Advent challenges: 1.) This week go to someone who has borne the love of Jesus to you and tell her or him how they have been a blessing to you. 2.) Name someone in your life now to whom God has sent you to bring Jesus' presence. Pray: "Lord, thank you for the blessing of sending me to bring your presence to this person. Help me bear you faithfully to him/her."

— Father John Muir

MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Lectors

December 22: Barbara Bisel, Jacques Williams
December 25: Greg Gough, Misty Sanford
December 29: Wayne Stephens, Katie Goins
January 5: Leland Herzog, Barbara Bisel

Eucharistic Ministers

December 22: Holly Hollis, Greg Richardson, Misty Sanford
December 25: Denise Richardson, Rita Moorman
December 29: Cindy Clark, Greg Gough, Janet Clark
January 5: Katie Goins, Holly Hollis, Misty Sanford

Collection & Gifts

December 22: Janet and Lila Clark
December 25: Michelle Jones & Family
December 29: Kelly, Holly, Samuel Hollis

GOD IS JOYFUL

God is joyful. This is interesting: God is joyful! And what is the joy of God? The joy of God is forgiving, the joy of God is forgiving! The joy of a shepherd who finds his little lamb; the joy of a woman who finds her coin; it is the joy of a father welcoming home the son who was lost, who was as though dead and has come back to life, who has come home. Here is the whole Gospel. Christianity is here

But make sure that it is not a sentiment; it is not being a “do-gooder”! On the contrary, mercy is the true force that can save man and the world from the “cancer” that is sin, moral evil, spiritual evil. Only love fills the void, the negative chasms that evil opens in hearts and in history. Only love can do this and this is God’s joy. Pope Francis

The Hidden Truth

If you have ever been visibly pregnant, chances are that someone, somewhere, whom you do *not* know, has reached out to touch your stomach.

I’ve had this happen to me, and sure, it’s a little strange. Generally, I prefer people to ask before they touch me. But it’s also very sweet, this great mystical excitement inspired by a pregnant belly. We know that belly is special. We know enclosed within it is hope and potential — the very future of our world. Hidden, but real. How can we help but venerate it?

It’s why the pregnant Madonna is my favorite devotional image. I even prefer it over the depictions of the Madonna and Child because I find in the sight of Mary’s swollen belly more to meditate upon than I find in the unveiled face of the Christ Child. Salvation and redemption, enclosed in flesh, moving, and growing and breathing, but I cannot see it. It’s real and it’s true and it’s *there*. And it is hidden.

There is much about God that we know with certainty. But there is so much that remains beyond our sight, beyond our comprehension. Questions of evil and sorrow. Pain and tragedy. Life and death. Why don’t we have all the answers? We grow very impatient about this. We’re like teenagers who want to be trusted with all the family secrets. We hate feeling left out of the loop.

But truth, like life, does not come to us showing its face. Perhaps this is because we could not bear its terrible beauty. Perhaps it’s because we would not recognize it if it was laid bare for us to see. But it’s there, right in front of us. We can reach out and touch it. We may not see it. We may not understand it. But we can know it.

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Readings for the Week

Monday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5, 8-10 and 14/Lk 1:57-66
Tuesday: *Morning:* 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8-12, /Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29/Lk 1:67-79
Night: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96:1-3, 11-(Lk 2:11)/ Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14
Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20
Thursday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3-4, 6, 8, 16-17/Mt 10:17-22
Friday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97: 1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Saturday: 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-5, 7-8/ Mt 2:13-18

Observances for the week of December 22

Monday: St. John of Kanty, Priest
Tuesday: Christmas Eve
Wednesday: The Nativity of the Lord
Thursday: St. Stephen, First Martyr
Friday: St. John, Apostle, Evangelist
Saturday: The Holy Innocents, martyrs

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



ADVENT CONFSSION SCHEDULE

Dec. 22 St. Stephen Cathedral 2 pm
St. Stephen Cathedral Sat. 9:30--11:30



MEMORIES AND DREAMS

Throughout our lives, we retain the language and habits of our native region and family of origin. Should we return to our home after a long absence, we quickly revert to its familiar speech and practices. Our deep memory is reflected in old stories and words and speech patterns. This familiarity runs like an underground river and accompanies us wherever we go.

Not only do we remember, we’re incorporated into and made part of a greater memory. In remembering and recollecting, we are in turn gathered up and re-collected.

Today we remember Mary, a small figure travelling the country roads to visit Elizabeth. All the great pronouncements and dreams of the prophets point to this time when the Lord’s words to Mary would be gathered and fulfilled. The memories of her people are alive in her, and memories of her nourish our own living faith. copyright@J.S. Paluch, Co