



Advent

PREPARING THE WAY
Bridging the Past, Present & Future

Advent Reflections 2024

St. Michael Parish

Advent marks a time of new beginning for it is the beginning of the Church's liturgical year. Like the outdoors, the church also darkens, except for the gentle glow of the candles from the Advent wreath. We wait patiently in joyful hope for Jesus, the true Light of the world.

The scriptures speak to us about the promises of salvation, while there is an urgent message to turn away from sin. Before we arrive at the peaceful manger, we have to pass through the fire of John the Baptist.

Advent is not simply a time of preparation for Christmas. Advent should find us watching and waiting to see the presence of Jesus in our midst. We are aware that God's Kingdom is not fully here. There are threats to God's Kingdom everywhere; it seems as if nations, neighborhoods and families are wounded, broken, and in need of healing. If we seek peace, we can help build the Kingdom of God among us.

Our Advent theme this year is Advent is a bridge between the past, present, and future.

Advent allows us to look back and see our ancestors' hopeful longing for the Savior.

Advent allows us to renew the joy of His presence among us in the Church.

Advent helps us prepare ourselves for His return in glory.

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS:

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God wants to draw close to us, but he will not impose himself; it is up to us to keep saying to him: 'Come!'

This is our Advent prayer: 'Come!'
Advent reminds us that Jesus came among us and will come again at the end of time. Yet we can ask what those two comings mean, if he does not also come into our lives today? So let us invite him!
Let us make our own the traditional Advent prayer: 'Come, Lord Jesus!'

Pope Francis

I invite you to take a few moments each day to read the day's reading and the reflections prepared for you by your fellow parishioners at St. Michael. Open your mind and heart to the gentle whisper of God's voice in the midst of this busy time of year. God is speaking – let us take the time to listen, reflect, and be filled with joyful hope.

Wishing you a peaceful and blessed Advent,

Fr. Frank A. Kurucz

Pastor



December 1, 2024

1st Sunday of Advent

Jeremiah 33:14-16 1 Thessalonians 3:12 - 4:2

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

May the love of the Father, the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always. We have already entered the time of preparation for the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, a time that we know as Advent, which means coming. Specifically, we talk about the coming of Jesus to the world and at the same time we also reflect on His second coming.

The word of God is clear regarding what will happen in the world. First, the prophets prophesied specifically about the coming of a Savior, a Messiah, the Lord who would come to rescue the world from sin. At the right time Jesus began to preach His message of salvation, inviting 12 disciples whom He personally called to participate in His plan of salvation. The apostles did not understand many of the teachings at the time, but after they received the Holy Spirit they clearly understood what their mission was.

We have also received this message of salvation through the teachings of the church, but like the apostles, sometimes we do not understand what is expected of us. In the gospels Jesus tells us about a specific day, referring to His second coming, where there will be signs that must be taken as the signs that the day of the Lord is already here. He invites us to be prepared remaining faithful to His teachings and asks us to pray to stay strong in faith. The Lord is near! Let us spend this Advent preparing our hearts to receive Him.

Deacon Abel Trujillo

The Gospel according to St. John

☩n the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.

He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him.

But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God.

And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.'"

From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.

The Word of the Lord.

December 25, 2023

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Mass during the Day

Isaiah 52: 7-10 Hebrews 1: 1-6 John 1: 1-18

All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Calm and Bright; I always associate these words with Christmas, especially with the song O, Holy Night. Christmas is my favorite time of the year! Seeing the bright lights on the tree and Jesus in the manger transforms my mood to a still, peaceful, calm state.

I have learned early on that Calm is not based on the circumstances that surround you; Calm comes from the faith that we have in God and turning our problems over to him; understanding that no matter how big our problems are, we have a bigger God.

In 2002 my daughter Natalia was 10 years old when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, I was devastated as my child asked “Will I be home for Christmas?” As time passed, Natalia’s condition turned from bad to worse and I could not see myself having a calm and bright Christmas.

Now, my daughter Isabella has been diagnosed with Arteriovenous Malformation (AVM) and she will need several procedures to help her. Even though I understand the seriousness of her condition and consequences of the delays in her treatment; I also notice the CALMNESS in my heart. As my family deals with many different health challenges this year, the prayers from everyone along with my steadfast faith in God are keeping me at peace. Even under these difficult circumstances, I look forward to a CALM & Bright Christmas and wish each of you the same!

Yolanda Ochoa
Deacon’s Wife

December 2, 2024

Monday of the 1st Week of Advent

Isaiah 2: 1-5

Matthew 8: 5-11

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.



Isaiah and Matthew both show me that seeking God’s will, going up the mountain, and trusting in Jesus to have authority over my life is the path for peace in my life. I pray for the faith and humility of the Centurion!

Rob Allison
Parish Council

December 3, 2024

Memorial of Saint Francis Xavier, Priest

Isaiah 11: 1-10

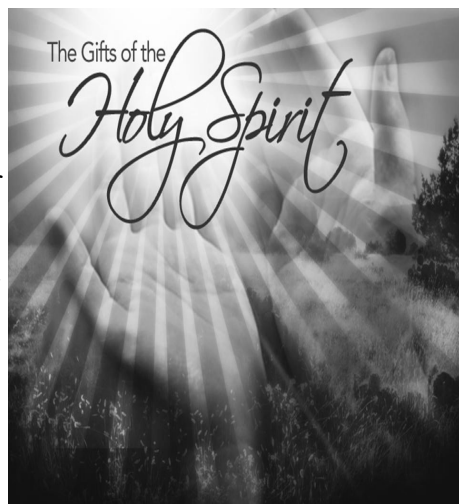
Luke 10: 21-24

Justice shall flourish in His time, and fullness of peace for ever.

The first reading on this day reminds us of three things. The first of these is the power of the spirit. The Holy Spirit has the ability to give us counsel, understanding, knowledge, delight, strength, and so much more. When things aren't going our way, or we feel as if we are alone, it's a good reminder to pray and ask for the Holy Spirit to guide us along the way.

The second thing to remember is a reminder of how each of us is created in His image. We were all put on this earth to live as brothers and sisters in harmony. In today's day and age, we are all quick to forget but need to slow down and remind ourselves to be Christ-like no matter how others are behaving. We are called to live as He would so that we may encourage others to do the same.

Lastly, we are reminded to fill the earth with the Knowledge of the Lord. We must share our experiences of how God has played a role in our life so that people can hear about how good He is.



**Abel & Nina Defala
Parishioner**

December 24, 2024

Tuesday of the 4th Week of Advent

Micah 5: 1-4a Hebrews 10: 5-10 Luke 1: 39-45

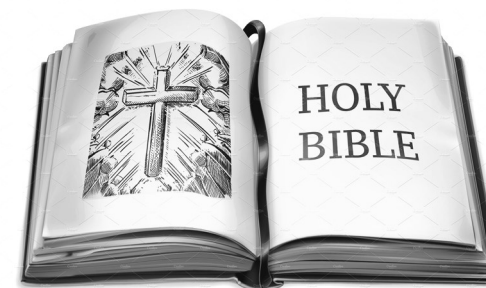
Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

As I was reflecting on the readings they were both foretelling the coming of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

It was obvious to me that David, through the words of the prophet Nathan, was humbled and grateful that God would establish His kingdom on earth through his heir, thereby announcing God's throne would be established forever. Zechariah on the other hand was disbelieving in Gabriel's announcement that he and his wife Elizabeth would bear a son who would prepare the way of the Lord. That is why Zechariah was unable to speak until his son was born and named John. At this point, Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesized that John would indeed go before the Lord to prepare His Way.

Because I am deaf and people sometimes have trouble understanding me, I often ask for a piece of paper to write down what I am saying. Because of the Bible, we have words from God written down that will never fail and will always be available to us.

**Jeff Minarcik
Knights of Columbus**



December 23, 2024

Monday of the 4th Week of Advent

Malachi 3: 1-4, 23-24

Luke 1: 57-66

Lift up your heads and see; your redemption is near at hand.

Many people don't know that the Angel Gabriel appeared to a priest named Zechariah. Zechariah was terrified and full of fear upon seeing the angel. The angel told him, "Do not be afraid for your prayers were heard." His wife Elizabeth would give birth to a son and he was to be named John. "He will bring joy and gladness. He must never drink wine or strong drink for he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will prepare many people for the Lord." Zechariah doubted Angel Gabriel's good news and therefore, was unable to speak until John was born.

Every day we can see good news that is brought to our lives in different ways. Yet just like Zechariah, we might refuse to see it or believe it; we tend to turn a blind eye. We all need a word of hope and God is telling us today, "Do not be afraid, your prayers have been heard." I don't know what you are going through, but this Advent I invite you to claim this message in your life.



**Anita Tracy
Sacristan**

December 4, 2024

Wednesday of the 1st Week of Advent

Isaiah 25: 6-10a

Matthew 15: 29-37

I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Help!... I need somebody!

Help!... Not just anybody!

Help!... I need Jesus in my life every minute of every day!

In our reading today Jesus cures the lame, blind, deformed, mute and others, tells His disciples His deep concern for the hungry crowd, and multiplies the loaves and fish to nourish their bodies. Jesus cares all the more to nourish our souls. I feel Jesus' nourishment to my soul everyday. I'm constantly talking to Jesus and find myself thanking Him for just about everything during the course of my day. From the silliest and simplest of things such as finding the sale items at the grocery store to be available, or making most of the green lights when traveling around town, or not falling off my bike after hitting a bump, to finding something I had misplaced, to the more prayerful things such as keeping us safe on a daily travel, or a normal/negative test result from the doctor, to the unconditional love I feel from my family and friends, I'm forever thanking Him. There are days that I'm talking with Jesus more than I speak with anyone else. That's how I'm feeling nourished and can't imagine not having Jesus in my life every minute of every day!

**Caryn Jachimiec
Parishioner**

December 5, 2024

Thursday of the 1st Week of Advent

Isaiah 26: 1-6

Matthew 7: 21, 24-27

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Have Faith!

Today the Lord tells us to be faithful to Him because only He can save us. Unfortunately, we are living in a time when war seems to have no end, violence continues to abound and the separation of groups grows even more. However, God tells us that even when there is war, we must remain united in HIM. We must have faith in Him, not only in word but in deed as well.

In the Gospel, He tells us "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father, who is in heaven." Prayer with faith has power, and when we speak to God, He listens to us. Yet He asks us to be partakers of that faith, so that when turbulence comes we are faithful to His love and that turbulence does not destroy us easily. Lord, we pray that we always remain faithful to You in word and deed!

Brenda Gonzalez
Eucharistic Minister

December 22, 2024

4th Sunday of Advent

Micah 5: 1-4a Hebrews 10: 5-10 Luke 1: 39-45

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Each year at this time we try to remind ourselves that "Christmas is not about the gifts..." Admittedly, we often cast those words aside and get caught up in finding the right gift or preparing the perfect table.

Today's readings remind us that God chose the humblest of human beings to give birth to and raise his Son. We cannot imagine that either Mary or Joseph believed they were worthy of being parents to Jesus and we often wonder if they knew what they were getting into by saying yes to God. How overwhelming to be traveling to Bethlehem then suddenly going into labor with no preparation. There was no fancy crib, no newborn clothes! Despite all of the challenges, both of them accepted God's plan and by doing so, Christ was born and we have been afforded His Salvation.

As this Advent season draws to its culmination, we are reminded that we have already received the only gift we need, Christ's love. We don't need to do anything to earn that gift either – no sacrifice or offerings are required. Jesus is the perfect gift and the sacrifice He made for us is worth more than all of the world's wealth. We do not need to add Him to any wish list or put aside financial resources to "buy" Him. We can freely choose to accept Him into our lives each day as Mary and Joseph did all those years ago and in doing so become more like Him.

Lisa Raimondi & Aaron Molenda
Husband and Wife Parishioners

December 21, 2024

Saturday of the 3rd Week of Advent

Song of Solomon 2: 8-14

Luke 1: 39-45

Exult, you just, in the Lord! Sing to Him a new song.

Today's scripture holds many messages about God and His love. Prior to today's scripture an angel had come to Elizabeth and let her know that she would bear a child. Elizabeth was considered barren and therefore unable to have a child. However, she believed in God's message and kept her faith in Him. When Mary came to visit, Elizabeth felt the baby in her womb leap. Her faith had allowed her prayers to be answered as she trusted in God.

Oftentimes we find ourselves in predicaments where we feel that there is no hope. We must keep the faith in the good times and bad. I know I myself am guilty of praying and asking for things when life gets tough. However, I do not find myself praying as equally when life is good. Having a relationship with the Lord is not a take and leave relationship, it is a take and give. We must share the talents and blessings God has bestowed on us with others and spread the love.

Another important message is to make time for one another. Mary was also pregnant when she went to visit Elizabeth and did not use that as an excuse to not visit. It is understandable that we all have things going on in our individual lives but seeing one another and showing we care for each other strengthens our community as the Body of Christ.

Alejandro Javier Trujillo
Parishioner

December 6, 2024

Friday of the 1st Week of Advent

Isaiah 29:17-24

Matthew 9:27-31

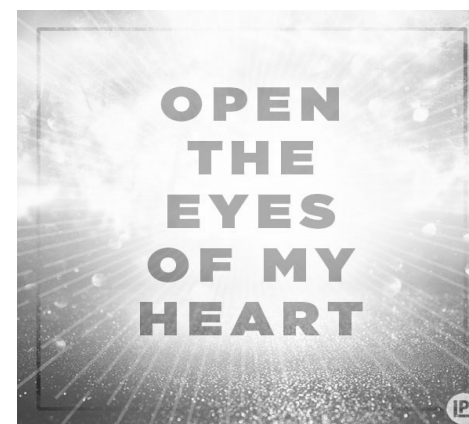
The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The first reading in Isaiah brings us hope with the blind able to see again, the lowly and poor filled with joy, and tyrants cut off along with the emptiness in this world. The world was saved from sin with the birth of our Lord, His life, passion, death, and resurrection. There is hope in Jesus! Believing in and following Jesus will render an eye-opening insight into the love, mercy, and forgiveness of God.

In Matthew's Gospel reading today, two blind men ask Jesus to open their eyes. Jesus asks the men if they believe that He can truly open their eyes, and they wholeheartedly reply yes! He performs a miracle so they can see.

This Advent and Christmas season I ask Jesus to open my eyes to see not a world of hatred and enemies but a world of love and peace! Our Savior was born to bring us eternal hope, love, and joy!

Tim Finucane
Greeter



December 7, 2024

**Memorial of St. Ambrose,
Bishop and Doctor of the Church**

Isaiah 30: 19-21, 23-26 Matthew 9: 35-10:1, 5a, 6-8

Blessed are all who wait for the Lord.

Sometimes we just have to be more aware, open our hearts and our senses, because although times are difficult, full of doubts and emptiness, God is always attentive to our needs. In the reading from Isaiah, God gives us a response to the promise He made, a promise of mercy and comfort for His people in a time full of anguish, pain and sadness. He hears the cry of His people through their prayers.

Dear brothers and sisters, put yourselves in the hands of God, because He is waiting for you to do it, to show your trust and your faith in Him. God is full of love and mercy. He is the blessed balm, full of the comfort and relief that we all need every day in our lives.

“Great is our God, he can do everything; His wisdom has no limits.” (Psalm 147:5)

Jesus came to teach by example. He guided us and entrusted us with a task: to share the Good News with our actions. God trusts us and wants us to respond to the vocation of becoming apostles to our world. Just as Jesus reached out to the desperate crowds, we must also reach out to the directionless crowds, especially our young who are disoriented, dejected, without hope, and filled with many doubts. Jesus calls us to follow His example and be His messengers of love and hope to all who desperately cry out.

**Connie Carrillo
Lector**

December 20, 2024

Friday of the 3rd Week of Advent

Isaiah 7: 10-14

Luke 1: 26-38

Let the Lord enter; He is the king of glory.

At work, I have a little wooden block that sits on my desk. It reads, “Hold on! I need to overthink this.” I am often guilty of overthinking a simple situation, going through various possible scenarios in my head before committing to a final decision. While I’d like to think that this personality trait helps me avoid making mistakes, I know that this is also a character flaw that causes me to unnecessarily complicate things.

Perhaps this is why I am always so struck by Mary’s response of, “...may it be done to me according to your word.” When talking about life-changing events, it seems like it would be difficult to top Gabriel’s message to Mary! I cannot even imagine the mixture of emotions she must have felt. However, Mary demonstrated her steadfast faith in the Lord by not overthinking, not worrying, but by simply placing her trust in Him.

My grandmother, one of the most devout Catholics I have ever known, passed away a few years ago. During our final conversation, she told me, “Lisa, the greatest gift that we have is our faith.” As always, Grandma knew best.

During this season, we can get so busy with the preparations, celebrations, and exchanging of presents. It’s important for us to remember that Mary’s faith—and all that transpired because of her faith—is the ultimate gift.

**Lisa Jandacek
Parishioner**

December 19, 2024

Thursday of the 3rd Week of Advent

Judges 13: 2-7, 24-25a Luke 1: 5-25

My mouth shall be filled with your praise, and I will sing your glory!

In the first reading, as in the gospel, we can see God acting in two women who could not have children. In the reading from Judges, an angel announces to Manoah's wife, "You will conceive and give birth to a son. The child will be consecrated to God, and he will begin to save Israel from the hands of the Philistines." This child was Samson.

In the Gospel the angel appeared to Zechariah and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, your plea has been heard. Elizabeth your wife will give you a son whom you will name John. He will be great in the eyes of the Lord... he will be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Like Samson and John, we all have a mission in life given to us by God. Just as God speaks about His plans for Samson and John even before they are born, He has also had plans for each of us and for our children from the beginning of time.

This Advent, let us purposely take time to guide our children, and listen for ourselves as well, to discover the mission that God has for each of us. Perhaps we can invite others to serve in a ministry in our parish or in our community. We can all teach others to believe and not doubt the word of God.

Irma López Almanza
Eucharistic Minister

December 8, 2024

2nd Sunday of Advent

Baruch 5:1-9 Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11 Luke 3:1-6

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.



As a cantor, I cannot think about the scripture readings without connecting it to music. This week, the readings made me think about the musical *Godspell*, specifically the song "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord". That was one of my favorite musicals growing up, and the first song is about preparing the way of the Lord, much like the main concept of the readings.

In preparing the way of the Lord we need to grow in love "Day by Day". We need to pray for ourselves and for others as "All Good Gifts" will come from God. You can "Learn Your Lessons Well" by growing in love and growing in knowledge every time we go to mass and listen to the readings and hear the songs.

Kiera Vizza –Milligan
Cantor

December 9, 2024

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Genesis 3:9-15, 20 Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12 Luke 1: 26-38

Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous deeds.

I believe these are all very powerful readings this week. The story of Adam and Eve is very controversial in my eyes because although God is the Almighty and knows what we're going to do before we do it, He still gives us the power of free will to make our own choices. In life every choice we make is foreseen by God but left up to us, similar to how our parents are with us. They know how things will turn out sometimes but they let us fail so we can experience for ourselves, learn, and overcome our mistakes.

The second reading is also beautiful because it speaks about the love and sacrifices that God gave for us by sending us His only son. He did this to show that we are a living testament to what He would do for us. All He wants in return is our undivided attention and unconditional love.

In the Gospel, we see how having faith in what God's true purpose for us is can be the most valuable lesson we can learn. Having TRUE faith is the only way we can see what God has prepared for our life. Although He has His divine plan that we often neglect, sometimes we submit to His will and, in the end, realize that everything is much easier when we put our trust entirely in HIM.

Elias Ochoa
Parishioner

December 18, 2024

Wednesday of the 3rd Week of Advent

Jeremiah 23: 5-8

Matthew 1: 18-25

Justice shall flourish in His time, and fullness of peace forever.

Reflecting on Jeremiah 23:5-8, I find it deeply relatable to our own experiences of seeking guidance in uncertain times. In a world where we often feel scattered and lost, it's incredibly reassuring to know that Jesus is here to restore us. The imagery of God bringing His people back from exile reminds me that, no matter how challenging circumstances may be, there is always a path to wholeness with the Lord. After reading this passage, I feel a renewed sense of hope and trust in God's plan.

In the story from Matthew we witness the miraculous conception of Jesus and Joseph's feelings of uncertainty. I can relate to those feelings as my busy schedule with work and school often leaves me feeling overwhelmed. What I love about this story is Joseph's obedience to God. When he takes a quiet moment to seek God, he receives clarity about His plan. I often feel too busy to pause and reflect, but this passage reminds me that God speaks to us in our quietest moments and guides us when we least expect it. Joseph's response to God's message reassures me that, in a world filled with isolation and fear, the knowledge that God is with us provides profound comfort and strength.

Moira Joyce
Families Sharing Faith Parent

December 17, 2024

Tuesday of the 3rd Week of Advent

Genesis 49: 2, 8-10

Matthew 1: 1-17

Justice shall flourish in His time, and fullness of peace forever.

Today's Gospel tells us about the genealogy of Jesus.

Matthew reveals to us the lineage of Jesus as son of Abraham, heir of David and, therefore, king of Israel and the universe. The mention of 5 women is very interesting: Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law; Rahab, a prostitute from Jericho; Ruth, who convinced Boaz to marry her; Bathsheba, who was forced into an adulterous relationship by King David; and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Among these women, Mary was the only Jewish woman, yet each emerged from inappropriate situations and played an essential part of Salvation History. God did His work through them! Even the most immoral life can be redeemed by God. Matthew reveals to us a tender and merciful God who works for the salvation of human beings even when we live an immoral life.

Human life can be full of suffering, humiliation, pain, scandal, and much more. But do we trust that God accompanies us throughout our lives? Will we have the courage to let God transform our pain and suffering and also our sin into something beautiful and glorious? We will have the confidence to respond as Mary did, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; May it be done to me according to your word."

Maria Godinez
Eucharistic Minister

December 10, 2024

Tuesday of the 2nd Week of Advent

Isaiah 40: 1-11

Matthew 18: 12-14

The Lord our God comes with power.

Hi there! How is your day today?

Mine was good until I got a text from my cousin Jo. Her sister passed away. Jo is a very religious person, devoted to her family and the Virgin Mary. Jo prayed so hard for her sister to win the cancer battle....and she didn't. Jo confides that she is angry with God. Why bother with religion?

"A voice says 'Cry out!'" Will she?

The Good Shepherd goes in search of the one stray lost lamb. The Good Shepherd is always there. Bereavement is a difficult state of mind. It takes time to reorient to the new reality, especially if the lost relationship was a close one. My heart aches for Jo.

As we prepare for this joyous arrival of the Babe at Christmas, my hope is that Jo will be gathering at the manger to welcome Him just like the wee lambs who sheltered in the stable with Him, all those centuries ago.

"He rejoices more over the one than over
the ninety-nine that did not stray."

Things take time....as did the world's wait for The Child. We must be patient - with God, with ourselves, and with others— especially during the holiday season. But we wait in confident hope because we know the Good Shepherd is with us.

Sharon Carlson
Adult Choir

December 11, 2024

Wednesday of the 2nd Week of Advent

Isaiah 40: 25-31 Mathew 11: 28-30

O bless the Lord, my soul!

How great is our God! When we are tired, what do we desire most of all? REST! We desire rest! In today's readings God offers us that rest.

When our eyes are fixed on Jesus, with our hope in the Lord, it doesn't matter what circumstances or situations we are encountering. Today's first reading from the book of Isaiah tells us that those who hope in the Lord will receive renewed strength. It also tells us that God knows the stars and calls them by name. If God knows and calls each star by name, how much more does He call us by our name, "My child" and "My beloved"! He knows and delights in each and every one of us! God loves us so intimately that He sent His only son to this earth to be born of a woman, to become human, and to save and redeem us.

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

Four years ago, I was going through a difficult time in my life. I engraved this promise in my heart and this promise has filled me with peace and tranquility, even in the middle of turmoil. I have cried out to God, time and time again, "It is I Lord! I am tired and weary! I need your rest Lord!" And time and time again, I find rest in HIM! He stays true to His promise!

As I await anxiously for the coming of Baby Jesus this Christmas, renewed in strength and filled with hope in God's promises, I can say, "Bless the Lord, Oh my soul."

Imelda Cervantes
Parishioner

December 16, 2024

Monday of the 3rd Week of Advent

Numbers 24: 2-7, 15-17a

Matthew 21: 23-27

Teach me your ways, O Lord.

"Eyes uncovered" is a phrase used twice in the first reading that we think perfectly emphasizes our need to open our eyes to God's Kingdom in order to one day truly see it. We don't know when the final judgement will come and the exact moment when we will see Him face to face, but why waste time wandering around with "closed eyes?" We need to keep our eyes open and our hearts patient, awaiting the Lord's coming. If we trust and listen to God, just as the faithful Israelites did on their journey to the Promised Land, we will be spiritually blessed and well brought up in the faith.

In the Gospel Jesus is questioned by the Chief Priests as to where His authority comes from. Jesus will not tell them directly because they are not ready to understand all that God wants to reveal. We believe this means that we should not question Jesus' or God's authority but rather we should maintain strong faith in Him. It is so much harder, yet nobler, to trust in God in the midst of a world that is filled with fear and doubt, but it is something we have to strive to do. Trusting in God's plan for us can be difficult, but doing so gives us an everlasting peace. Trusting God, awaiting Him with open eyes, and allowing Him to reveal His plan to us is a necessary step in fulfilling our faith and helps us as we await the fullness of God's kingdom.

Estelle and Jonah Brownlee
Teen siblings of the parish

December 15, 2024

3rd Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3: 14-18a Philippians 4: 4-7 Luke 3: 10-18

Cry out with joy and gladness:

for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

Has it happened to you that sometimes you think that you are NOT doing the right thing in your life? It happens to many of us that we want to discover what we have to do to please God. As time passes, we live many experiences that can sometimes be pleasant or unpleasant and, in the confusion, we do not recognize if we are actually doing the right thing or not. Times change and with it customs. Sometimes we have habits that make us think we are doing well, but it may be that we are just following the customs of the world. Therefore, it is necessary to meet God again, talk to Him, and discover through His word and through the teachings of others, such as priests, what we should do. We can also discover in the depths of our being when God speaks to us in prayer and in silence.

Today's gospel talks about John the Baptist, who told people to do good, to share with those who lacked or needed something. People asked him what they should do to change. John stressed to them to avoid sin, do the right thing, and believe in the one who came after Him (Jesus) who would baptize them with the fire of the spirit.

We anxiously await for Him to give us that spirit that will light the flame of true love in us. Let us prepare to wait for the true God who gives us everything good, so that we too can be good to others and live a life full of love, reflecting Him, who is the God of love and goodness.

Rosy Maya
Lector

December 12, 2024

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Zechariah 2: 14-17 Luke 1:26-38

You are the highest honor of our race.

In this week's readings, I found myself more in awe of Our Lady, our Queen of Heaven, our Mother of God for being such a strong and faith-filled young woman. It is only fitting that we thank her on this Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe for being the sacred ark and for bringing our Lord Jesus into the world.

In my heart I know I can ask Our Lady to intercede and help me in my sad times. We should allow Our Lady to hold us in her arms like the loving mother she is. She comforts, she intercedes, and she gives us strength to do what we have to do to please God.



Gloria Alvarez
Parishioner

December 13, 2024

Memorial of Saint Lucy, Virgin and Martyr

Isaiah 48: 17-19

Matthew 11: 16-19

Those who follow you, Lord, will have the light of life.

In the first reading Isaiah tells us that "God instructs us in what is beneficial to us" and "guides us along the path we should follow" if we listen to Him and obey Him. Our peace would be like a river and our justice would be like the waves of the sea.

We often ignore this advice. We take the easy path. We distance ourselves from Him and then we realize that we greatly need God in our lives.

We live in a world full of ambition, of wars, of lack of morals. We put God aside and our rulers wage wars to take over the natural assets of other countries.

We need to pray for all the victims and also for the rulers so that God touches their hearts and they turn to Him and thus have the peace that we all desire.

This Advent, I invite you to join me in praying and begging God to make us more human and to respect the rights and property of our brothers.

Martha Perez
Lector

December 14, 2024

Memorial of Saint John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church

Sirach 48: 1-4, 9-11

Matthew 17: 9a, 10-13

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

John the Baptist came first to make ready the coming of the Messiah and to proclaim a baptism for the forgiveness of sins to the people. He baptized Jesus in the River Jordan. Thank you, Lord, for my Baptism that I received sanctifying and sacramental grace. I feel grace and healing when I go to confession. I feel grace every time I receive Jesus in my soul and heart in the Eucharist.

Jesus gives us encouragement when we make a visit to an adoration chapel, read a spiritual book, pray a rosary, or say morning and night prayers. I can always talk to Jesus because He is always by my side.

So why did John come first? To make people ready for the Lord. I am working everyday to make my soul ready for you, Lord! It's a work in progress.



Barbara Milcarek
Lector