

Sacred Heart

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Corner of E. First Avenue
& Hamlet Street

Church Mailing Address:
168 E. Lincoln Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Parish Office
(614) 294-5319

Msgr. Frank Lane, Administrator

(Territorial Parish ~ Est. 1875)

MASSES:

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.; **Sunday:** 11:00 a.m.

WEEKDAYS & HOLY DAYS:

See Mass Schedule inside the Bulletin.

PARISH OFFICE/STAFF:

Administration is done through the office of Saint John the Baptist, 168 Lincoln Street. Requests for copies of sacramental records, scheduling of Masses and other sacramental celebrations, and non-emergency needs should be made during regular office hours or email info@sjbitaliana.org.

Please notify the Parish Office of any changes such as address or telephone number, etc., by calling during regular office Hours.

MUSIC MINISTRY:

Gina M. Bishop, Music Director
John C. Huffman, Organist

PARISH MEMBERSHIP:

We welcome you into our Parish Families.
Membership in the parish consists of two parts:

Registration: Please complete the parish registration and return to Parish Office.

OFFICE STAFF

Aggie Howard, Executive Assistant, ahoward@sjbitaliana.org
Victoria Scruggs, Secretary & Bulletin Editor, vgammell@sjbitaliana.org
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

RECONCILIATION:

Saturday: 3:30 p.m.; **Sunday:** 10:30 a.m.

BAPTISM:

Preparation is required for the reception of the sacrament.
Parents are encouraged to call the office
and set up an appointment before the birth of their child.

MATRIMONY:

Arrangements should be made at least six or more months in advance.
A marriage preparation program is required.

SACRAMENT OF THE SICK:

In cases of emergencies, please call anytime.
Please notify the Parish Office for Communion calls to the sick, shut-ins.

Due to privacy laws, if parishioners wish to be visited in the hospital,
they should contact the Parish Office directly
and give the information regarding the hospitalization.

If you are scheduled for surgeries or other medical procedures,
please contact the Parish Office in advance so that a priest can administer
Anointing of the Sick prior to the procedure.

BULLETIN DEADLINE:

Announcements must be submitted in writing by Tuesday at noon.

www.sacredheartchurchcolumbus.org

SACRED HEART

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you to all who helped make the **100th Anniversary** celebration a great success. We had well over **two hundred people** at the event. Thank you again.

Also, we have received a grant of **\$40,000.00** from the **Catholic Foundation** for beginning the work of preserving our stained-glass windows. It would cost over **\$300,000.00** to fully repair and restore the stained glass at **Sacred Heart** but this grant helps us to stabilize them and prevent further deterioration. The cost for full restoration of the windows in the church is between **20 and 30 thousand dollars each!** The windows were made a hundred years ago in **Chicago** by the **German Stained-Glass** manufacturer, which is no longer in business.

The windows in the main body of the church and in the chapel were based on the windows of the famous cathedral of **Chartres in France**. They have a very high replacement value and are a local art treasure, well worth preserving. We are grateful to the **Catholic Foundation** for helping us to begin a long-term project.

Many Blessings for the week!
Fr. Lane

*Confession Time for Saturdays
will be from 3:00-3:45 p.m.*

If you are interested in becoming Catholic, receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, or Baptism, please contact Sacred Heart Office at 614-294-5319 for more information.

For Weddings and Funerals, please contact Aggie Howard at ahoward@sjbitaliana.org or call the office at 614-294-5319.

MASSES AT SACRED HEART

Saturday 11/25	4:00 p.m.	+ Madge Browning by John & Nancy Pawlowski
Sunday 11/26	11:00 a.m.	+ Florendo Sinang by Jim & Gloria Merckling
Thursday 11/30	6:30 p.m.	+ Chuck (Charles) Sutphen Sr. by Mary Hardgrove Sutphen
Saturday 12/2	4:00 p.m.	+ Jim Neymeyer by the Thurn Family
Sunday 12/3	11:00 a.m.	+ Helen B.
Thursday 12/7	6:30 p.m.	+ Ralph Guggenbiller by Carla Guggenbiller
Friday 12/8	10:30 a.m.	+ Robert Stefanov by Joe & Debbie Stefanov

DONATION QR CODE AND WEBSITE INFORMATION



Please help Sacred Heart maintain this beautiful 100-year-old building with a donation by using the QR code. Thank you!



Mass Time Change: Mass times at Sacred Heart are Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. and St. John the Baptist are Mondays, Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. and Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. followed by RCIA at 7:00 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Parish Library on the second floor.

WEEKLY STEWARDSHIP AT SACRED HEART

November 19, 2023

Number of Envelopes used Sunday – 15

In Env:	\$ 1,321.00
Loose:	\$ 759.00
Total	\$ 2,080.00
Less Diocesan 8% Assessment	\$ -(166.40)
	\$ 1,913.60
Capital Repair	\$ 20.00
Christmas Flowers	\$ 100.00
Total	\$ 120.00

?? ?? HOW IS SACRED HEART DOING? ?? ??

Budgeted Offertory for Fiscal Year (7/1/23-6/30/24)

	Budgeted	Actual	Difference (\$)
This Wk.:	\$ 2,800.00	\$ 2,080.00	-\$ 720.00
FYTD:	\$ 51,800.00	\$ 39,502.25	-\$ 12,297.75

Income and Expenses from September 1, through September 30, 2023.

Income:	\$ 15,440.20
Expense:	\$ 25,023.45
Difference:	-\$ 9,583.25

SH Collection Counters for Monday, November 27, 2023

Rita Ward and Aggie Howard

SH Collection Counters for Monday, December 4, 2023

Donna Bowers and Mike Padovan

Feast of the Immaculate Conception is December 8, a Holy Day of Obligation. Mass at Sacred Heart will be at 10:30 a.m. and 12:00 noon at St. John.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S MASS SCHEDULE 2023

Christmas Vigil	Church	Mass Time
December 24	Sacred Heart	9:00 p.m.
	St. John	4:00 p.m.
Christmas Day	Church	Mass Time
December 25	Sacred Heart	10:30 a.m.
	St. John	No Mass
New Year's Eve	Church	Mass Time
December 31	Sacred Heart	11:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.
	St. John	9:30 a.m.
New Year's Day	Church	Mass Time
January 1	Sacred Heart	No Mass
	St. John	11:00 a.m.

RCIA: Classes are now being offered for both **Sacred Heart** and **St. John the Baptist** parishes on **Wednesday** evenings right after the **6:00 p.m. Mass** at **St. John**. **RCIA class** starts at **7:00 p.m.** in the Parish Library located on the **second** floor. This class is required for anyone who wants to enter the **Catholic Church**, for those baptized **Catholic** but did not complete the Initiation **Sacraments**, as well as those who simply desire to deepen their understanding of **Catholicism**. **Questions?** Contact **Sharon Curtin** at **614-563-8405**, or SCurtin@sibitaliana.org.



Office Hours: Parish office hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION: PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION:

After careful consideration, **Monsignor Lane** has decided we no longer will offer religious education, Grades 1-8, at **St. John the Baptist** or **Sacred Heart Parishes**. After five weeks of trying to engage children and parents into the program, it was decided there was not enough interest at this time. Granted, it has been many years since religious education was offered here, and many of the parishioners are older; however, this area is growing, and there will be new folks interested in joining this parish. They will want to have an active, religious education program. We will try again in **March 2024** to begin registration for the **Fall**. It is our hope there will be a few children who will join the program, as well as parents willing to assist. We will continue to invite grandchildren of parishioners, as well as non-Catholic children. If you have any questions, please call **Sharon Curtin** at 614-563-8405 or SCurtin@sjbitaliana.org.

During this time of giving thanks, we wish to offer thanks to everyone who helped to organize the wonderful **100-year celebration at Sacred Heart**. To all who brought food to share, helped to set up, helped to clean up, or in any way worked to make the celebration such a success. Special thanks to the volunteers on the planning committee: **Rita Ward, Aggie Howard, Donna Bowers, Jim Merckling, Susan Rorris, and Mary Rykowski**.



AROUND US

Liturgical Year: The entire month of **November** falls during the liturgical season known as **Ordinary Time**, which is represented by the liturgical color green. The month is dedicated to the **Holy Souls in Purgatory** whose feast is celebrated on **November 2**.

The Holy Father's Intentions for the Month of November 2023: *We pray for the Holy Father; as he fulfills his mission, may he continue to accompany the flock entrusted to him, with the help of the Holy Spirit.*

CHARITY NEWSIES PAPER SALE AND PRESIDENT'S CHURCH SERVICE: Since 1907, **Charity Newsies** have provided warm, new clothing to school-age children in **Franklin County**. Over **800,000 children** have been clothed by the **Newsies**. On **Saturday, December 9, 300 Newsies** will take to the streets and sell a special edition of the **Dispatch** for "whatever your heart tells you to give" with **100%** going to clothe children. **Newsies** is excited to announce again this year, the **President's Church Service** will be held at **St. John The Baptist Church** on **Sunday, December 3, 9:30 a.m.** **Charity Newsie** members will be notified of this **Mass**. Please keep the **Newsies** in your prayers for a safe and successful paper sale.

Women to Women: On the third **Wednesday** of each month from **6:00-8:00 p.m.**, the **Martin de Porres Center** offers a listening ministry that provides opportunities for women to share their stories in a safe, nonjudgmental place. This is one of six listening circles in **Central Ohio**, which includes a free meal at the start of the meeting. For more information, contact **Linda Bryant** at lbryant12703@att.net. **MARTIN DE PORRES CENTER, 2330 Airport Drive, Columbus, OH 43219/614-416-1910** | martindeporres@oppeace.org.

It is my hope and prayer that each of you can joyfully say: "With Jesus, I too am a king." I too reign: as a living sign of the love of God, of his compassion and his tenderness. @Pontifex



Bottoms Up

DIAPER BANK

Did You Know? – Clean, Dry, and Healthy

Some mothers scrape out a diaper and re-use it when they cannot afford enough diapers to keep their baby clean, dry, and healthy. The physical, psychological, and emotional toll of this practice on baby and mother can be significant. For more information, and ways you can help, visit www.bottomsup.life.

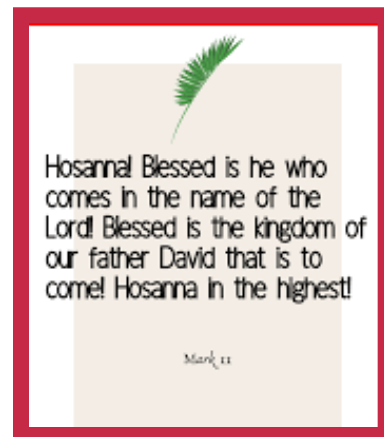
CATHOLIC MEN'S LUNCHEON – FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2023

– SPEAKER BISHOP EARL FERNANDES. Join us **Friday, December 1** at **St. Patrick Church** in downtown **Columbus** for a luncheon featuring his **Excellency Bishop Earl Fernandes, Bishop of the Columbus Diocese**, who will present his annual address to the luncheon club. The **December** luncheon is sponsored by **The Catholic Foundation**. Started in **1984**, the **Catholic Foundation** has provided over **\$200 million** in funding for organizations throughout the **Columbus Diocese** and beyond. More information about the **Catholic Foundation** is available at <https://catholic-foundation.org/>. If you are interested in sponsoring a luncheon, please contact **Pat Foley** at foleyp513@gmail.com. **Holy Mass** (optional) begins at **11:45 a.m.** followed by lunch at **12:10 p.m.** and **Bishop Fernandes'** presentation. No reservations are necessary. **\$12.00** covers the lunch and meeting. Bring a friend! **There is no luncheon in January, but plan to attend our luncheon on Friday, February 2, 2024, when Bishop Fernandes will return to present the Catholic Man of the Year Award.**

Today's Gospel: The **Gospel** is from **Matthew 25:31-36**, with **Jesus** describing His second coming as that of a king arriving in all His majesty and sitting on His kingly throne to judge all mankind. **Christ** Himself in this description of the last judgement, describes His role as that of a king. This Gospel reading, therefore, reminds us of the **Kingship of Christ**. On this Feast of **Christ our King**, let us renew our pledge of loyalty to Him, and so that this pledge will not be an empty formula, let each one of us resolve to study, once more, the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and see how well we put them into practice. If we have failed in the past, let us resolve to begin again today. Let us help one another by bearing one another's burdens. This is what **Christ** asks of us. This is how we can prove ourselves loyal and grateful subjects. This is what we will be judged on when we meet Him on our last day. If we love our neighbor with an active and practical love for **Christ's** sake, we are thereby loving **God**, and are keeping "the two greatest commandments on which the whole law and the prophets depend."

– Excerpted from *The Sunday Readings, Year A* by Fr. Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M.

Prayer: *Almighty ever-living God, whose will be to restore all things in Your beloved Son, the King of the universe, grant, we pray, that the whole creation, set free from slavery, may render Your majesty service, and ceaselessly proclaim Your praise. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen*



Lectio Divina

SCRIPTURE READING + MEDITATION + PRAYER + CONTEMPLATION

“What page, what passage of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is not the truest of guides for human life?” ~Saint Benedict, from the *Rule of Saint Benedict* (73:3)

The month of November is dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

"Whenever I go to the chapel, I put myself in the presence of our good Lord, and I say to Him, 'Lord, here I am. Tell me what You would have me do.' If He gives me some task, I am content and I thank Him. If He gives me nothing, I still thank Him since I do not deserve to receive anything more than that. And then, I tell God everything that is in my heart. I tell Him about my pains and my joys, and then I listen. If you listen, God will also speak to you, for with the good Lord, you have to both speak and listen. God always speaks to you when you approach Him plainly and simply."

+SAINT CATHERINE LABOURE

**Monday, November 27 ~ Thirty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time
Memorial, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal**

Holy Gospel: John 2:1-11 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons.

Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from, the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.



Meditation: John's Gospel takes its shape from a series of signs, revealing Jesus as the Messiah, Son of God, and Savior of the world. This miracle story is the first of these signs. The marriage feast at Cana heralds that Messianic age had begun. And, as a result of the miracle at Cana, "his disciples began to believe in him." Are you truly a disciple of Christ? If so, do you believe in him?

Prayer: Lord, in granting us the blessings of salvation, you chose the immaculate Virgin Mary to be associated with your Son in a unique way. Supported by her, may we always experience your attentive care, and devote ourselves in faith to the work of redemption. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal: O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you, and for all who do not have recourse to you, especially the enemies of the Church and those recommended to you. Amen.

Contemplation: When Mary says to the servers "Do whatever he tells you..." we, too, are taught by these words that if we desire anything from Christ, we will not obtain our wishes unless we depend on him and him alone, look to him, pray to him, and, in short, do whatever he tells us. This is part of his invitation throughout scripture when Jesus says "Follow me." He is the shepherd and we are his flock. Thus, as a disciple, do you really follow Christ? Do you do whatever Jesus teaches us in scripture, follow his teachings, and incorporate them in your daily life? Are you a "doer of the word" (James 1:22)? If not, why not?

About Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal: On this day in the year 1830 Our Lady appeared to St. Catherine Laboure, a Daughter of Charity in Paris, and told her that God had a mission for her. Standing upon a globe, the Virgin Mary held a golden ball which she seemed to offer to God, and on her fingers were rings with gems that emitted rays of light. She told St. Catherine, "These rays symbolize the graces I shed upon those who ask for them. The gems from which rays do not fall are the graces for which souls forget to ask." Afterward, the ball, symbolizing the world and each person, disappeared, and she held her hands outstretched in the manner of a loving mother, while rays of light continued to cascade upon the globe at her feet as she stood atop the serpent's head. Framing the image in an oval were the words, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." St. Catherine then saw an image of an "M" upon which was a cross. Underneath the "M" was Our Lord's heart crowned with thorns and Our Lady's heart pierced by a sword. Surrounding this image were 12 stars. The Blessed Virgin instructed St. Catherine to have a medal made of these images, and she promised many graces to all who wear it. It is important to note that, as with all sacramentals, the Miraculous Medal is not some "lucky charm." Keep in mind also that in expressing devotion to Mary, we do not worship her, as many Christians in other denominations believe, but rather honor her in her devotion to our Lord! As the popular saying goes "to Jesus through Mary." Remember also her last words in Scripture, which could almost be her motto, in which she told the attendants at the wedding feast of Cana "Do whatever he [Jesus] tells you" (John 2:5).

Send your prayer intentions on-line to the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in Paris:
www.chapellenotredamedelamedaillemiraculeuse.com/langues/english/prayer-intentions/

Tuesday, November 28 ~ Thirty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Holy Gospel: Luke 21:5-11 While some people were speaking about how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings, Jesus said, "All that you see here— the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down." Then they asked him, "Teacher, when will this happen? And what sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?" He answered, "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them! When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end." Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky."

Meditation: Jesus' prophecy is a two-edged sword, because it points not only to God's judgment, but also to his saving action and mercy. Jesus foretells the destruction of Jerusalem and the dire consequences for all who would reject him and his saving message. While the destruction of Jerusalem's temple was determined (it was razed by the Romans in 70 A.D.), there remained for its inhabitants a narrow open door leading to deliverance. Jesus says: "I am the door; whoever enters by me will be saved" (John 10:9). Jesus willingly set his face toward Jerusalem, knowing that he would meet betrayal, rejection, and death on a cross. His death on the cross, however, brought about victory and salvation, not only for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but for all – both Jew and gentile – who would accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Is your life securely submitted to the lordship of Jesus Christ?

Prayer: Stir up the will of your faithful, we pray, O Lord, that striving more eagerly to bring your divine work to fruitful completion, they may receive in greater measure the healing remedies your kindness bestows. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: A former judge, Robert H. Bork, wrote a book a few decades ago entitled, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*. His message sounds an alarm about the moral crisis and decay of culture which he sees in Western society. We often don't recognize the moral crisis and spiritual conflict of our age, until something "shakes us up" to the reality of our present condition. The reward for the righteous and the penalty for the unrighteous are not always experienced in this life; but they are sure to come in the day of judgment. There will be persecution, suffering, and difficulties in this age until the Lord comes again. God intends our anticipation of his final judgment to be a powerful deterrent to wrongdoing. God extends grace and mercy to all who will heed his call and his warning. Do you take advantage of God's grace and mercy to seek his kingdom and to pursue his will? Recall what we read in scripture: "Remain faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10C)

Wednesday, November 29 ~ Thirty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Holy Gospel: Luke 21:12-19 Jesus said to the crowd: "They will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name. It will lead to your giving testimony. Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand, for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute. You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. By your perseverance you will secure your lives."

Meditation: If the gospel message is good news, then why do so many oppose it with hostility and even violence? Jesus warns his followers that they will be confronted with persecution, wickedness, false teaching, and temptation. The real enemy of the Gospel is Satan who uses fear and hatred to provoke hostility in others towards those who follow Christ. And what is Jesus' response to this hostility and opposition? Love and truth. Only love can defeat prejudice, intolerance, and hatred. God's love purifies our hearts and minds of all that would divide and tear people apart. The truth is also essential for overcoming evil and tribulation in the world. Satan deceives and sin blinds the heart and mind. Only God's truth can free us from error and spiritual blindness. This Gospel is God's word of truth and salvation. That is why Jesus tells his disciples to proclaim the Gospel throughout the whole world, even in the midst of opposition and persecution.

Prayer: Stir up the will of your faithful, we pray, O Lord, that striving more eagerly to bring your divine work to fruitful completion, they may receive in greater measure the healing remedies your kindness bestows. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: The word *martyr* in Greek means *witness*. The Book of Revelation says that "Jesus was the faithful witness ...who freed us from our sins by his blood" (Rev. 1:5). Tertullian, a second century convert who saw the early Christians singing as they went out to die by the hands of their persecutors, said: "The blood of the martyrs is seed." Their blood is the seed of new Christians, the seed of the church. The third century bishop, Cyprian said: "When persecution comes, God's soldiers are put to the test, and heaven is open to martyrs. We have not enlisted in an army to think of peace and to decline battle, for we see that the Lord has taken first place in the conflict." True martyrs live and die as witnesses of the gospel. They overcome their enemies through persevering hope and courage, sacrificial love and forbearance, kindness and compassion. God may call some of us to be martyrs for our faith. But for most of us, our call is to be 'dry' martyrs who bear testimony to the joy and power of the gospel in the midst of daily challenges, contradictions, temptations and adversities which come our way as we follow the Lord. What most attracts others to the truth and power of the gospel? When they see Christians loving their enemies, being joyful in suffering, patient in adversity, pardoning injuries, and showing comfort and compassion to the hopeless and the helpless. Jesus tells us that we do not need to fear our adversaries. God will give us sufficient grace, strength, and wisdom to face any trial and to answer any challenge to our faith. Are you eager to bear witness to the joy and freedom of the Gospel? At all times? Before all peoples?

Thursday, November 30 ~ Thirty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time Saint Andrew, Apostle

Holy Gospel: Matthew 4:18-22 As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.

Meditation: Jesus speaks the same message to us today as he did when he walked this earth – we will "catch people" for the kingdom of God if we allow the light of Jesus Christ to shine in and through us. God wants others to see the light of Christ in us in the way we live, speak, and witness the joy of the truth contained in the gospel. Saint Paul the Apostles says, "But thanks be to God, who in Christ Jesus always leads us in triumph, and who through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing" (2 Corinthians 2:15). Do you show others around you the joy of the gospel and do you pray for your neighbors, co-workers, and relatives that they may come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and grow in the knowledge of his love?

Prayer: We humbly implore your majesty, O Lord, that, just as the blessed Apostle Andrew was for your Church a preacher and pastor, so he may be for us a constant intercessor before you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Contemplation: What is God calling you to do in your brief earthly life? As God calls you (as he calls each of us) how are you responding? Are you ready to respond? When Jesus began his ministry he went everywhere he could — the streets, towns, hills and lakeside of Galilee — to speak to people about the kingdom of God. He chose as his closest friends and coworkers those who were ready to follow as his disciples and he gave them an unusual mission — "to catch people for the kingdom of God". What kind of disciples did Jesus choose? Smelly fishermen! In the choice of the first apostles we see a characteristic feature of Jesus' work: he chose very ordinary people. They were non-professionals, had no wealth or position of power or fame in society. They were chosen from the common people who did ordinary things, had no special marks of education, and no social advantages. Jesus wanted ordinary people who could take an assignment and do it extraordinarily well. He chose these individuals, not for what they were, but for what they would be capable of becoming under his direction and power. When the Lord calls us to be his disciples, we must not think we have nothing to offer him in exchange. The Lord takes what ordinary people, like us, can offer and uses it for greatness in his kingdom.

Friday, December 1 ~ Thirty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Holy Gospel: Luke 21:29-33 Jesus told his disciples a parable. "Consider the fig tree and all the other trees. When their buds burst open, you see for yourselves and know that summer is now near; in the same way, when you see these things happening, know that the Kingdom of God is near. Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

Meditation: Jesus used the image of a fig tree to teach his disciples an important lesson about reading the "signs of the times." The fig tree was a common and important source of food for the Jews. It bore fruit twice a year, in the autumn and in the early spring. The Talmud said that the first fruit came the day after Passover. The Jews believed that when the Messiah came he would usher in the kingdom of God at Passover time. The early signs of a changing season, such as springtime, are evident for all who can see and observe the changes. Just so are the signs of God's kingdom and his return in glory on the day of judgment. The "budding" of God's kingdom begins first in the hearts of those who are receptive to God's word. Those who trust in God's word will bear the fruits of his kingdom. And what are the fruits of that kingdom? "The kingdom of God ..is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

Prayer: Almighty ever-living God, who gave Saint Catherine of Alexandria to your people as a Virgin and an invincible Martyr, grant that through her intercession we may be strengthened in faith and constancy and spend ourselves without reserve for the unity of the Church. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Despite the periodic headlines of supermarket tabloids, we do not know the day or hour when the Lord will return again in glory. But the Lord does give us signs, not only to "wake us up" as a warning, but also to "rouse our spirits" to be ready and eager to see his kingdom come in all its power and glory. The "Day of the Lord" will strike terror in those who reject God and his kingdom of righteousness, but it will be a day of joy and rejoicing for those who long to see the Lord face-to-face. The Lord wants us to be filled with joyful anticipation for his coming again. He surely comes to us each day and speaks to our hearts like a lover who whispers in the ear of the beloved. As he promised, the Lord will surely come again in all his glory. Do you look for the signs pointing to the Lord's return and do you pray that he come quickly to establish peace and justice on the earth?

Scripture passages (NAB translation) courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops;
prayers are from *The Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing, 2011;
information about saints, solemnities, feasts and memorials courtesy of the Catholic Culture web site.

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