

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,

This week I will be gone from **Monday-Wednesday**. A priest friend of mine had scheduled a **Parish Mission** a year ago and had done a lot to advertise it and invite people to attend. At the last minute, the priest who was going to give the mission was unable to do so, so I was asked to step in. The theme is supposed to be the **Holy Family – Joseph, Mary, and Jesus** – please say a prayer that it goes well for the sake of the people.

I will also be gone from the evening of **January 1st-7th**. I have been asked to give the canonical **Retreat** to the **five** young men who will be ordained **Priests** this year for the **Diocese of Columbus**. Please pray also for our **five** future priests. While I'm gone, **Father Metzger** will take the daily **Masses**.

Also – It would be greatly appreciated if you would let us know of any of our parishioners who are no longer able to get to church. Some are homebound, others can't drive anymore, some are simply experiencing serious health problems. We are working toward making a plan to provide regular visits and Communion calls from parishioners. Your cooperation will be a great gift.

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 the 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 12/16	4:00 p.m.	+ John Joseph Spetrino by Linda Spohn & family
Sunday 12/17	11:00 a.m.	+ Jim L.
Thursday 12/21	6:30 p.m.	+ Richard Dirksen by Carla Guggenbiller
Saturday 12/23	4:00 p.m.	+ Tommy Dean Compton by The Knoppe Family
Sunday 12/24	9:00 p.m.	+ Elisa Sinang by Jim & Gloria Merckling
Monday 12/25	10:30 a.m.	+ Jack L.
Thursday 12/28	6:30 p.m.	+ Paul & Patty Thurn by The Thurn Family

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 at 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
December 10, 2023**

Number of Envelopes used Sunday – 16

In Env:	\$ 955.00
Loose:	\$ 908.00
Holy Day:	\$ 25.00
Total	\$ 1,888.00
Less Diocesan 8% Assessment	\$ -(151.04)
	\$ 1,736.96
Votives	\$ 23.00
Community Outreach	\$ 30.00
Capital Repair	\$ 25.00
Christmas Flowers	\$ 90.00
Religious Retirement Fund	\$ 20.00
Total	\$ 188.00

**?? ? ? HOW IS SACRED HEART DOING? ? ? ?
Budgeted Offertory for Fiscal Year (7/1/23-6/30/24)**

	Budgeted	Actual	Difference (\$)
This Wk.:	\$ 2,800.00	\$ 1,888.00	-\$ 912.00
FYTD:	\$ 60,200.00	\$ 47,025.00	-(\$ 13,175.00)

**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, December 18, 2023
Rita Ward and Donna Bowers

SH Collection Counters for Wednesday, December 27, 2023
Dave and Gilda Cottrill



Office Hours: Parish Office hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Our Office will be closed for Christmas, Monday, December 25, and Tuesday, December 26 and will resume on Wednesday, December 27.

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.

Sacred Heart is very thankful to have received a grant from the Catholic Foundation to help repair our windows. A special thank-you to Monsignor Lane for pursuing this grant! Your hard work is appreciated by all of us here at Sacred Heart!



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.**

Christmas Flowers: Christmas poinsettias are available again this year. Flowers may be requested in memory of a loved one and will be placed on the altar throughout the **Christmas Season**. There is a suggested donation of **\$10.00 per poinsettia**. The **Christmas** flowers add such beauty to **Sacred Heart** during this special time of year. Thank you.

Our Women and Men Religious Offer Gratitude: A sister shares, "I thank the **Lord** for all who give. I don't think we would make it without them." Thank you for giving to the **Retirement Fund for Religious** last week. Your donation makes a difference in the lives of elderly women and men religious. To learn more about how your gift helps, visit retiredreligious.org.

AROUND US

You are invited to pray for the Holy Father's Intentions for the Month of December 2023: *We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.*

JOIN Needs Your Help! **JOIN (Joint Organization for Inner-city Needs)** is often a "stop-gap" for our brothers and sisters who are doing their best to provide and succeed in life. We all come upon unexpected obstacles. For our neighbors who live paycheck to paycheck, that can be something as simple as missing work due to illness or something bigger, like a car repair. Basic supplies like toilet paper, soap, shampoo, conditioner, multi-purpose cleaning solutions, dish soap and laundry soap are items that people request at **JOIN** daily. **Kelsey** is a mom that came to **JOIN** to get assistance with bus passes for a new job she had. When she learned that we also had cleaning supplies and personal care items, especially toilet paper, she was overwhelmed that she could get those items as well. Meeting these most basic needs, when you don't have them, is a relief that is not measurable to a parent. Try to imagine running out of something, with no hope of getting it yourself for another week or so. If you would like to organize a collection or even donate an item or two on your own, it would be a gift to the neighbors we serve at **JOIN**. Feel free to call, **614-241-2530**, or email, lkeita@columbuscatholic.org, me, **Lisa Keita** to get further information or just discuss what all **JOIN** does provide.

Christmas Plenary Indulgence: This **Christmas** season, **Catholics** can receive a **plenary indulgence** by praying in front of a **Nativity Scene** located in a **Franciscan church**. The indulgence will be available from **December 8 through February 2, 2024**. Those wishing to receive the indulgence must pray in front of a **Nativity Scene** at a **Franciscan church**. A **plenary indulgence** is a grace granted by the **Catholic Church** that removes the temporal punishment due to sin. To receive this indulgence, one must receive the **Holy Eucharist** and the **Sacrament of Confession** within **20 days** of praying in front of a **Nativity Scene**. In addition, those attempting to receive the indulgence must pray for the intentions of the **Holy Father**.

Liturgical Calendar: The first two days of **December** fall during the liturgical season known as **Ordinary Time** and are represented by the liturgical color green. The next **22 days** fall during the liturgical season of **Advent** and are represented by the liturgical color purple. The remaining days of **December** mark the beginning of the **Christmas** season. The liturgical color changes to white or gold – a symbol of joy, purity, and innocence. The month of **December** is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.



Third Sunday of Advent: "Rejoice: The Lord is nigh." As **Christmas** draws near, the **Church** emphasizes the joy which should be in our hearts over all that the birth of our **Savior** means for us. The great joy of **Christians** is to see the day drawing nigh when the **Lord** will come again in **His** glory to lead them into **His** kingdom. Today is known as **Gaudete Sunday**. The term **Gaudete** refers to the first word of the **Entrance Antiphon**, "Rejoice." Rose vestments are worn to emphasize our joy that **Christmas** is near, and we also light the rose candle on our **Advent** wreath.

Today's Gospel: The **Gospel** is from **John 1:6-8, 19-28**. Last **Sunday** we had **St. Mark's** account of the **Baptist's** activity at the **Jordan** as he prepared the people for the public mission of **Jesus**. **John** was the last of the great line of prophets and he was the greatest of them all. It was his privilege to point out to his audience the **Son of God** in human nature, the "**Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,**" and to hear **God's** voice from heaven proclaiming **Christ** to be His "**beloved Son.**" He was surely a man sent from **God**. Let us listen to the call of **John the Baptist**, and from our hearts repent of our sins. Let us prepare for **Christmas**, the anniversary of **Christ's** human appearance on earth, by making a firm resolution to follow the **Lamb** through life.

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

"To proceed on the journey of life, we need to be stripped of the "more," because to live well does not mean being filled with useless things, but being freed from the superfluous, to dig deeply within ourselves so as to hold on to what is truly important before God."

@Pontifex



Prayer: *O God, who see how Your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. 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 December is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

"Let my eyes take their sleep, but may my heart always keep watch for You. May Your right hand bless Your servants who love You. May I be united with the praise that flows from You, Lord Jesus, to all Your saints; united with the gratitude drawn from Your heart, good Jesus, that causes Your saints to thank You; united with Your passion, good Jesus, by which You took away our guilt; united with the divine longing that You had on earth for our salvation; united with every prayer that welled from Your divine heart, good Jesus, and flowed into the hearts of Your saints."

~A PRAYER COMPOSED BY SAINT PETER CANISIUS

Monday, December 18 ~ Third Week in the Season of Advent

O Lord and Ruler of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the flame of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: Come and redeem us with outstretched arm.

Holy Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

Meditation: Mary had to face an enormous challenge to her faith and trust in God and to the faith of her family and Joseph, the man she chose to marry. She was asked to assume a burden of tremendous responsibility. It had never been heard of before that a child could be born without a natural father. Mary was asked to accept this miraculous exception to the laws of nature. That required faith and trust in God and in his promises. Second, Mary was not yet married. Pregnancy outside of wedlock was not tolerated in those days. Mary was only espoused to Joseph, and such an engagement had to last for a whole year. She was asked to assume a great risk. She could have been rejected by Joseph, by her family, by all her own people. Mary knew that Joseph and her family would not understand without revelation from God. She nonetheless believed and trusted in God's promises.

Prayer: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we, who are weighed down from of old by slavery beneath the yoke of sin, may be set free by the newness of the long-awaited Nativity of your Only Begotten Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Joseph, a just and God-fearing man, did not wish to embarrass or punish his espoused wife, Mary when he discovered that she was pregnant. To all appearances she had broken their solemn pledge to be faithful and chaste to one another. Joseph, no doubt took this troubling matter to God in prayer. He was not hasty to judge or to react with hurt and anger. God rewarded him not only with guidance and consolation, but with the divine assurance that he had indeed called Joseph to be the husband of Mary and to assume a mission that would require the utmost faith, confidence, and trust in Almighty God. Joseph believed in the divine message to take Mary as his wife and to accept the child in her womb as the promised Messiah. Like Mary, Joseph is a model of faith for us. He is a faithful witness

and servant of God's unfolding plan of redemption. Are you ready to believe in the promises of God, even when faced with perplexing circumstances and what seems like insurmountable problems?

Tuesday, December 19 ~ Third Week in the Season of Advent

O Root of Jesse, who stands for an ensign of the people, before whom kings shall keep silence and unto whom the Gentiles shall make supplication: Come to deliver us, and tarry not.

Holy Gospel: Luke 5:1-25 In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren and both were advanced in years. Once when he was serving as priest in his division's turn before God, according to the practice of the priestly service, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense. Then, when the whole assembly of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense offering, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was troubled by what he saw, and fear came upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord." Then Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel said to him in reply, "I am Gabriel, who stand before God. I was sent to speak to you and to announce to you this good news. But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time." Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and were amazed that he stayed so long in the sanctuary. But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He was gesturing to them but remained mute. Then, when his days of ministry were completed, he went home. After this time his wife Elizabeth conceived, and she went into seclusion for five months, saying, "So has the Lord done for me at a time when he has seen fit to take away my disgrace before others."

Meditation: Zechariah was a faithful man who was tuned to God's voice. He was born into a priestly family and it was his privilege to be chosen to enter the inner court of the temple to offer sacrifice to God. Luke records that the people wondered at Zechariah's delay and were amazed that he was speechless when he withdrew from the inner sanctuary. They rightly perceived that he had a special encounter with God. God's angelic messenger greeted Zechariah with a blessing beyond his expectations. "Your prayer is heard! You will have a son! And his mission will be great for all of Israel." Now that seemed like a lot for Zechariah to take in all at once. Could God really do a miracle for his barren wife, Elizabeth? The angel somewhat wisely put Zechariah in his place before God's mighty action. He became speechless until the day the infant was dedicated to the Lord and given the name, John. When God draws us into his presence, he wants us to be still and quiet before him so we can listen as he speaks to our hearts and reveals his mind to us.

Prayer: O God, who through your Only Begotten Son have made us a new creation, look kindly, we pray, on the handiwork of your mercy, and at your Son's coming cleanse us from every stain of the old way of life. 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: In the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist, the angel explains to Zechariah the role his son is to play in preparing the way for the Messiah. John will be great in the sight of God. He will live as a Nazarite (read Book of Numbers 6) – a person set apart for the Lord. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even within his mother's womb. And he shall be sent to the people of God, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers and children to God and one another, by turning the "disobedient to the wisdom of the just." The name John means "the Lord is gracious." When God acts to save us he graciously fills us with his Holy Spirit and makes our faith "alive" to his promises. Do you pray that "the hearts of parents and children may be turned to God and one another?"

Wednesday, December 20 ~ Third Week in the Season of Advent

O Key of David, and Scepter of the House of Israel, who opens and no man shuts, who shuts and no man opens; Come and bring forth the captive from his prison, he who sits in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Holy Gospel: Luke 1:26-38 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his Kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Meditation: How does Mary respond to the word of God delivered by the angel Gabriel? She knows she is hearing something beyond human capability. It will surely take a miracle which surpasses all that God has done previously. Her question, "how shall this be, since I have no husband" is not prompted by doubt or skepticism, but by wonderment! She is a true hearer of the Word and she immediately responds with faith and trust. Mary's prompt response of "yes" to the divine message is a model of faith for all believers. Mary believed God's promises even when they seemed impossible. She was full of grace because she trusted that what God said was true and would be fulfilled. She was willing and eager to do God's will, even if it seemed difficult or costly.

Prayer: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that the coming solemnity of your Son may bestow healing upon us in this present life and bring us the rewards of life eternal. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Mary is the "mother of God" because God becomes incarnate when he takes on flesh in her womb. When we pray the Nicene Creed we state our confession of faith in this great mystery: "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man". God gives us grace and he expects us to respond with the same willingness, obedience, and heartfelt trust as Mary did. When God commands he also gives help, strength, and means to respond. We can either yield to his grace or resist and go our own way. Do you believe in God's promises and yield to his grace?

Thursday, December 21 ~ Third Week in the Season of Advent Saint Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church

*O Dawn, splendor of eternal light, and sun of justice,
come, and shine on those seated in darkness, and in the shadow of death.*

Holy Gospel: Luke 1:39-45 Mary set out in those days and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Meditation: What is the significance of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth before the birth of Jesus? When Elizabeth greeted Mary and recognized the Messiah in Mary's womb they were filled with the Holy Spirit and with a joyful anticipation of the fulfillment of God's promise to give a Savior. What a marvelous wonder for God to fill not only Elizabeth's heart with his Holy Spirit but the child in her womb as well. John the Baptist, even before the birth of the Messiah, pointed to his coming and leapt for joy in the womb of his mother as the Holy Spirit revealed to him the presence of the King to be born. The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us to enable us to know and experience the indwelling presence of God and the power of his kingdom. The Holy Spirit is the way in which God reigns within each of us. Do you live in the joy and knowledge of God's indwelling presence with you through his Holy Spirit?

Prayer: O God, who for the defense of the Catholic faith made the Priest Saint Peter Canisius strong in virtue and in learning, grant, through his intercession, that those who seek the truth may joyfully find you, their God, and that your faithful people may persevere in confession 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. Amen.

Contemplation: You are indeed blessed if you see and recognize the Lord with the "eyes of faith." The word "blessed" [*makarios* in Greek] literally means "happiness" or "beatitude." It describes a kind of joy which is serene and untouchable, self-contained, and independent from chance and changing circumstances of life. There is a certain paradox for those "blessed" by the Lord. Mary was given the "blessedness" of being the mother of the Son of God. That blessedness also would become a sword which pierced her heart as her Son died upon the cross. Mary received both a crown of joy and a cross of sorrow. Her joy was not diminished by her sorrow because it was fueled by her faith, hope, and trust in God and his promises. Jesus promised his disciples that "no one will take your joy from you" (John 16:22). The Lord gives us a supernatural joy which enables us to bear any sorrow or pain and which neither life nor death can take away. As we move closer to the end of Advent, have you come to know during this time the joy of living a life given over to God in greater faith and trust?

Friday, December 22 ~ Third Week in the Season of Advent

*O King of the Gentiles and their desired One, the Cornerstone that makes both one;
Come, and deliver man, whom You formed out of the dust of the earth.*

Holy Gospel: Luke 1:46-56 Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior, for he has looked upon his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, and has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever." Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home.

Meditation: Today's gospel, referred to as *The Magnificat*, is not what one would have expected to hear from the lips of a simple village girl named Mary. It is Mary's response to the greeting she received from her cousin Elizabeth – a song is full of joy, especially because Mary recognizes that God has acknowledged the presence of a simple girl living in a small place who, in the eyes of the world, is deemed a person of no consequence. But, where God is concerned, everyone is of equal consequence because we are all children of God, equal in his eyes. "My spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked upon his lowly servant."

Prayer: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we, who are weighed down from of old by slavery beneath the yoke of sin, may be set free by the newness of the long-awaited Nativity of your Only Begotten Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Despite what we may think about ourselves, always remember that God has great things in store for his people. It is again a vision of the Kingdom, of God's will being done on earth. It is indeed Good News. All this is very much in line with the picture of Jesus when one reads the gospels. It is in the gospels where the poor, the weak, the marginalized, the outcast and the sinful have a special place in the eyes of Jesus. We, too, can rejoice with Mary in the long list of good things that we have been gifted with by our loving Lord. Those gifts are not just for our enjoyment. Our task is, in accordance with those God-given gifts, abilities and talents, to make sure that the love of God is tangibly experienced by the poor, the weak, the marginalized, the outcast and the sinful in our own midst. The realization of what Mary sings about in today's gospel will only take place when we all work together with Jesus to bring it about. With Mary, let us all say a hearty and resounding "Yes" to God's plans for we, his sons and daughters.

Scripture passages (NAB translation) courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Daily meditations and contemplations adapted from the Irish Jesuits' *Sacred Space* web page and *Biblical Medications for Advent* by Rev. Carroll StuhlmueLLer, C.P.; prayers are from *The Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing, 2011; information about saints, solemnities, feasts and memorials courtesy of the Catholic Culture web site.

frlumpe:2023



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