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BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Growing up, I loved lighting and decorating our family Christmas tree. My dad would always be the one who hung the lights, but I would help by testing the lights, laying out the strands and then holding the strands for him as we worked our way around the tree. My brothers and I would then help my dad hang the ornaments. Each year there were new ornaments to be hung, things we made in school. I could always tell whether or not I did a good job making an ornament based on where it was hung on the tree. And I am amazed at how many of the ornaments my brothers and I made are still around and make it onto my mom's tree each year, along with newer additions from my nieces and nephews.

In a lot of ways, our Christmas tree tells our family history. There are very old and fragile ornaments that belonged to my grandmother. There are the mitten ornaments, one for each of my brothers and I that contain a silver dollar from the year we were born. There are the ornaments we made as kids. Ornaments from places that we have visited on family trips. And baby's first Christmas ornaments that celebrate the births of my nieces and nephews.



As I look at my mom's Christmas tree, it is filled with the memories of the many wonderful blessings God has bestowed upon my family. That's why I love getting together each year with my family to decorate the tree. It's a fun night to tell stories, to relive old memories and to make new ones as we hang out together and share some Christmas cheer.

I hope your tree is a beautiful reminder of how God has blessed you in your life too. May your heart be filled with God's gifts of joy and peace as you decorate your tree.

Here is a Christmas Tree blessing for you to use when you finish decorating your tree:



Lord our God,
We praise you for the light of creation: the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.
We praise you for the light of Israel: the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.
We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son: he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the wonder of your love.

Lord God,
Let your blessing come upon us as we decorate this tree.
May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts.
May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

God Bless,

Fr. Francis

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT December 6, 2020

First Reading Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Responsorial Psalms 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14

**Lord, let us see your kindness,
and grant us your salvation.**

Second Reading 2 Peter 3:8-14

Gospel Mark 1:1-8

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

1ST: IS 40:1–5, 9–11 2ND: 2 PT 3:8–14 GOSPEL MK 1:1–8

The readings for the Second Sunday of Advent continue with the theme of Advent: to watch for the coming of Jesus. Last Sunday's readings focused on being watchful and alert because we do not know when Jesus is coming. I can feel such a longing of the people to have Jesus reveal himself during this time. This Sunday, the readings have a more hopeful and preparatory tone.

There is a tenderness in these readings which offer a sense of hope, excitement and comfort. I can't help but think of the time and the terrain that the people during this time were living in. Last Sunday, the people were tired, longing and hopeless. And this week, "a voice cries out in the desert to prepare a way of the Lord." The people are told to "cry out the good news." It seems that after years of waiting for the Lord to reveal himself and losing hope that he ever would, now there is word that the Lord is coming and the people should "make straight his path." And not only is he coming, but he will gather everyone in his loving arms with kindness and tenderness.

The Responsorial echoes this idea "Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation."

The 2nd Reading continues with this loving tone of hope. We need to conduct ourselves in holiness and devotion again to be ready for the Lord, so we "can be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace." The Gospel shows how excited and hopeful this made the people of Jerusalem. Not only is the Lord going to finally reveal himself to us and offer us a new earth in which "righteousness dwells," John the Baptist, a man clothed in camel's hair and eating locusts is going to baptize us in the Jordan River for the forgiveness of our sins. There is hope and faith in the belief that if we act in "holiness and devotion," our lives will get better.

— Erin Bretts, Coordinator of RE and Youth Ministry



GET IN THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT!

GIFTS DUE THIS WEEK!

SUPPORT THE GIVING TREE

Thank you for your generosity! All of the tags (almost 400 of them!) have been claimed. Don't forget: **all gifts are due this week!!** Please drop off at the Parish Office **no later than Friday, December 11.**



REFLECT EACH WEEK

Prepare your heart for Christmas by receiving a weekly Gospel reflection throughout Advent, written by seminarians from the Mundelein Seminary community. Sign up to receive reflections via email: <https://usml.edu/advent-reflections/>

COME TO NATIVITY NIGHTS

Spend some quiet time in prayer with the Lord. Tuesdays, December 8, 15 and 22 from 7–8 pm in the church. Fr. Francis will also be available for reconciliation. Visit our website to reserve your pew.

HELP THE IMPRISONED

Fr. Francis is collecting unused Christmas cards and stamps to bring to Kolbe House Jail Ministry again this year, to give those imprisoned an opportunity to send cards to their friends, family and loved ones. Please drop off your donations at the Parish Office before Friday, December 18.

GET YOUR TREE AND WREATHS

The Christmas Tree Lot behind church is open weekdays 11 am–8 pm and weekends 9 am–8 pm. For every purchase, a portion is donated to St. Josaphat.

MASS INTENTIONS

Fr. Francis is praying his daily Mass for us and these intentions this week:

- MONDAY** Living and Deceased Mothers and Fathers
- TUESDAY** Parishioners of St. Josaphat
- WEDNESDAY** Mary Louise Koehl
- FRIDAY** Karen Peaslee
- SATURDAY** † Purgatorial Society
- SUNDAY** † Donald Alvarado, † James Keller

PLEASE INCLUDE IN YOUR PRAYERS

WELCOMED IN BAPTISM

Oliver Roman, child of Krzysztof Marzec and Magdalena Filipowicz

THOSE IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Anna Marie Caponigri, Theresa & Leonard Hester, Megan Hutsell, Robert Johnson, Mary Louise Koehl, Edward Ladewski, The Ziolkowski Family

REST IN PEACE

Marvin Schwab (grandfather of parishioner Lisa Knobloch), Ron Marsella (father of parishioner Brian Marsella), Grant Alberts



We're most in need of: bottled water and travel-size hand moisturizer/lotion.

LOOKING FOR A PARISH?

We warmly welcome new parishioners. Please register through our website at stjosaphatparish.org.

THIS WEEK

Mon.	12/7	8:00 am	School Reconciliation (<i>Church</i>)
		7:00 pm	Parish Pastoral Council Meeting (<i>Zoom</i>)
Tues.	12/8	8:00 am	School Reconciliation (<i>Church</i>)
		10:00 am	Faith Sharing: Breaking Open the Word (<i>Zoom</i>)
		7:00 pm	Nativity Nights* (<i>Church</i>)
		7:00 pm	PTO Meeting (<i>Zoom</i>)
Wed.	12/9	8:00 am	School Reconciliation (<i>Church</i>)
		7:00 pm	Faith Sharing: The Book of Matthew (<i>Zoom</i>)
Thu.	12/10	7:00 pm	Alpha (<i>Zoom</i>)
Fri.	12/11	8:00 am	Mass* (<i>Church</i>)
Sat.	12/12	5:00 pm	Mass* (<i>Church</i>)
Sun.	12/13	10:00 am	Mass* (<i>Church</i>), or Watch Live on Facebook
		11:15 am	Baptism (<i>Church</i>)
		11:30 am	RCIA (<i>Zoom</i>)
		6:00 pm	Youth Group (<i>Online</i>)

*Reservations required

Next weekend's Special Collection is for the **Retirement Fund for Religious**. If you donate through Give Central, you can also specify an amount for this cause by selecting this "Event" or text **RELIGIOUS** to **312.625.5666**. Thank you!

SHOP AND SUPPORT

SHUTTERFLY: Order Christmas cards and photo gifts, and our parish gets 8% back! Go to sjs.shutterflystorefront.com

MINTED: Purchase greeting cards from minted.com and use promo code FUNDRAISEJOSAPHAT at checkout to receive 20% off your purchase, PLUS 15% of your purchase will be donated to us!

MABEL'S LABELS: New this year, purchase holiday gift tags, return envelope labels and engraved ornaments! Plus labels for winter items like gloves, hats, boots, coats, and snow pants. At www.campaigns.mabelslabels.com, pull down to St. Josaphat School (Chicago) to get free shipping and 20% goes back to us!

AMAZON: Shop smile.amazon.com and select St. Josaphat Parish as your charitable organization and we get 5% on eligible items!

GIVE CENTRAL NOVEMBER 16-22

Total..... \$4,701.00
 Weekly Need \$10,012.50
Deficit (-5,311.50)

TEXT-TO-GIVE CODES:

Text to 312.625.5666
SUNDAY (Sunday Offertory)
RELIGIOUS (Retirement Fund)

THIS WEEK!

DELICIOUS FUNDRAISER

Dine-Around at Lou Malnati's
 Wednesday, **December 9**,
 11 am-10 pm

Use code **FUNDSTJS20** at the Lincoln Park (958 W. Wrightwood) or Bucktown (1520 N. Damen) locations—carryout or delivery—and **20%** goes back to St. Josaphat!

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