



Ss. John & Paul CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



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ADVENT FEASTS OF MARY *by Paulette Chapman*

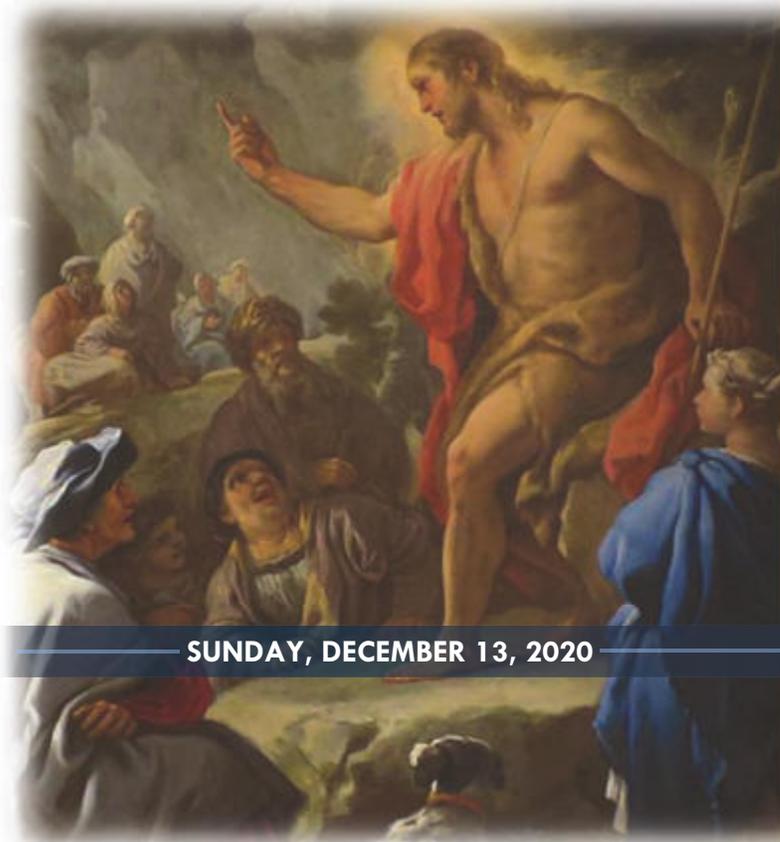
May is considered to be the month of Mary, and October has been designated as the month of the rosary. The month of December, which includes Advent and part of the Christmas season, pays a fair amount of attention to Mary, too. During Advent, we recall the events preceding the birth of Jesus – the Annunciation to Mary, Mary's visit to Elizabeth, and so forth. We imagine an expectant Mary, nearing the end of her pregnancy. We look to her as a model for our hopeful waiting during the quiet darkness of the Advent season.

In December, we also celebrate two important feasts of Mary. On December 8, we observed the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, which reflects our belief that Mary, the mother of God, was conceived without being touched by sin. Under that title, Mary is also patroness of the United States, so it is a significant holy day for our nation.

On December 12, we observed the Feast of Our Lady of

Guadalupe. Many of us are familiar with the story of the peasant, Juan Diego, to whom Mary appeared. Mary asked him to build a church on the site of her appearance, near what is now Mexico City. When the local bishop didn't believe Diego, Mary provided roses (out of season) for him to gather in his cloak to take to the bishop as proof. When he opened his cloak to allow the roses to fall out, the inside of it bore the image of Our Lady. That cloak is on display to this day in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is not only the patron saint of Mexico, she is also considered Patroness of the Americas. She appears as an indigenous person, not a European. She is pregnant with Jesus, an appropriate image for this time of the Church year. She is a symbol of hope for the oppressed, and use of her image has become more widespread in recent years. Visit the *Kitchen Table Faith* website to learn more about Our Lady of Guadalupe, our saint of the month.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



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

- Jn 1:6-7

QUESTIONS FOR THE SUNDAY READINGS

REFLECT AND RESPOND TO SCRIPTURE

“There is one among you whom you do not recognize, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.”

How many times have we failed to recognize a friend or acquaintance if it's been a long time since we've seen them? When someone is seriously ill or has been in an accident, have you barely been able to tell who it is? Have you discovered that sometimes people don't always recognize you? In these days, when wearing a mask has become the norm, have you struggled to tell who someone is – or have you not been recognized by someone you know? Sometimes we tell others that they've done something that “is not like them” – usually something bad! Can you recall being told that you aren't “acting like yourself?” What did they mean?

Have you ever felt that you were in the presence of someone truly great (whose sandal strap you weren't worthy to untie)?

Thanks to Fr. John Ludwig for some of the material in these reflections.

Children's Questions:

In today's gospel, we hear more about John the Baptist telling the people to get ready for Jesus. In this story, the priests and temple helpers are asking John questions about who he is. But John knows that his job is not to look for attention himself; his job is to point to Jesus.

If someone asked you to tell about Jesus, what would you say? How can we point to Jesus by the way we live and by our words? As we get ready for Jesus, how do we try to be like him?

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES AND COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Our Christmas Masses will be altered this year due to the virus and the risks. We plan on Christmas Eve Masses at 6:30 and 8:30 pm, and Christmas Day Mass at 8:30 am. A maximum of 200 people will be allowed at each liturgy. Advance sign-up will be required, and only those who signed up will be admitted, as we cannot accommodate people as we normally would. We will record and/or livestream Christmas Mass and post that for those who cannot be present in person. Watch for sign-up details coming soon.

ADVENT RECONCILIATION OPPORTUNITIES

This year we are not able to gather for a communal reconciliation service, but we will provide a guide for prayer and reflection to prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts. This guide can be accessed through the parish website under *Parish Liturgy/Advent Resources*. We will also have copies available for people to pick up at church. Reconciliation is still available on Saturdays from 4-4:30 pm, and by individual appointment by contacting Fr. Tim, tfitzgerald@ssjohnpaul.org.

LITURGICAL MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Sat., Dec. 19: 5:00 pm	Sun., Dec. 20: 8:30 am	Sun., Dec. 20: 10:30 am
Eucharistic Ministers:	Eucharistic Ministers:	Eucharistic Ministers:
Teresa Brandt*	Chevy Freiburger	Aaron Huey
Becky Horner	Annie Glaser*	Jan Johnson*
Renee Scott	Pam Riley	Cindy Majerus
Lectors:	Lectors:	Lectors:
Amy Kuhlens	Maris Freiburger	Randy Majerus
Barbara Majerus	Jim Germann	Rob McFarlane
Greeters:	Greeters:	Greeters:
Tom Brandt/NOT FILLED	Donald/JoAnn Freeman	Joseph/Carolyn Hanchak
Usher Coordinator:	Usher Coordinator:	Usher Coordinator:
Ken Loneman	Kevin O'Connor	Pat Hurley



WEEKLY PRAYER

THERE IS A LIGHT IN THIS WORLD

Loving Jesus,

In your name, we mark this season:
 As we bring forth light to defy the claims of darkness,
 As we bring forth joy and song to defy the claims of sadness,
 As we bring forth a spirit of generosity to defy the claims of want,
 As we bring forth peace to defy the claims of war.

That in the darkest, saddest, most wanting, warring corner of the world,
 All may look to Bethlehem
 Where, in the humblest of circumstances,
 In a time of repression
 From the person of a poor refugee woman
 In the filth of a manger
 In the form of a most vulnerable child
 You came among us to say,
 “No, there is a light in this world.”

Let us be this light to others.
 Let us be the fruit of the branch of Jesse's tree.
 Let us be the bearers of the indescribable gift that is your grace.
 And so defy all false claims on your people and their dignity.

And so, may you be born anew,
 into every season, into every age
 Into every land and every human heart.
 Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Amen

~ Catholic Relief Services

WORSHIP AND MEDITATION

READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 13, 2020

SUN 12/13: Is 61:1-2, 10-11/1 Thes 5:16-24/Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

MON 12/14: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17/ 8-9 [4]/Mt 21:23-27

TUE 12/15: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13/Mt 21:28-32

WED 12/16: Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21c-25/Lk 7:18-23

THU 12/17: Gn 49:2, 8-10/Mt 1:1-17

FRI 12/18: Jer 23:5-8/Mt 1:18-25

SAT 12/19: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Lk 1:5-25

SUN 12/20: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38

OBSERVANCES FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 13, 2020

Sunday: 3rd Sunday of Advent

Monday: St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church

Next Sunday: 4th Sunday of Advent

GOSPEL MEDITATION

Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

Did you ever stop and realize that there is no earthly gain that can ever really satisfy us? Think of winning the Lotto. On this side of the winning ticket, it's all about the money, the new car, house, vacations and infinite pleasures. The possibility of acquiring all of these earthly securities brings us back again and again to the purchase of a ticket. Then, one day we win! Our dreams are fulfilled, and happiness is on the horizon. Then we wake up and realize that nothing has really changed, and we are not as satisfied as we thought we would be. We did not find joy.

Glimpses of joy are possi-

ble but not by material means. They are brought to us through incredible experiences of connection that brings us face to face with authentic faith, hope, and love. And, they are glimpses and do not last. The moment we find ourselves looking back at them, they are gone, and we find ourselves remembering the moment in memory. To carry joy within us is to realize that it is not something we create or acquire. It is not able to be purchased. It is a gift. Our need for joy mirrors our need for eternity, for a Creator who has a claim on the very essence of who we are and desires a home within

us. As C. S. Lewis discovered, joy is a surprise that speaks to our soul and is given as gift by the God who loves us.

The beauty of Advent is found in discovering the gift of joy. God has visited his people to show them where and how to find joy! All of our human joy experiences are always only glimpses. They never satisfy us, sustain us or fulfill us. It is only God who is the joy of our souls. Real, Divine experiences of joy catch us off guard, make us stop and become aware, bring a feeling of awe and rightness and have an eternal Otherness about them. Nothing created by humans can ever come close to this. We probably will not fully realize the truth of all of this until we actually meet God face to face in heaven one day. Then, in that sacred moment when our hearts leap for joy we will understand what we have been tirelessly searching for all along. Intense gratitude will most surely follow. ©LPi



The desire for God is written in the human heart.

EUCCHARISTIC INTENTIONS

Mon., Dec. 14: No Mass

Tues., Dec. 15: No Mass

Wed., Dec. 16: 9:00 am
for those affected by COVID-19

Thu., Dec. 17: 9:00 am
for the unemployed

Fri., Dec. 18: 9:00 am
for Helen Hoagland

Sat., Dec. 19: 5:00 am
for Eileen Creager

Sun., Dec. 20: 8:30 am
for Greg Wentland

Sun., Dec. 20: 10:30 am
for the people of the parish

CONTACT US

Pastor: **Fr. Timothy Fitzgerald**
Deacon Dennis and Sarah Luft
Business Mgr: **Maxine McEnany**
Office Manager: **Laurie Delvaux**
Director of Adult Faith Formation: **Paulette Chapman 967-3796**
Director of Music: **Patty Hormann 967-3796**
Coordinator of Faith Formation: **Jenni Lihs 967-3796**
Confirmation Coordinator: **Janet Elwer 967-3796**
Senior High Youth Minister **Chris Smith 515-250-7209**
Junior High Youth Minister **Kristina Frank 319-269-8232**
Faith Formation Office Assistant: **Shelly Hiemer 967-3796**
Office Assistant: **Monna Sullivan 967-3796**
Parish Nurse: **Linda Gries 263-0268**
Knights of Columbus: **Jack Kopecky 577-0556**
Website: www.ssjohnpaul.org
E-mail: ssjohnpaul@ssjohnpaul.org
FAX: 967-7197

Eucharistic Celebrations:

Saturday 5:00 pm
Sunday 8:30 am
10:30 am
Online: ssjohnpaul.org 8:30 am
Tuesday 5:30 pm
Wednesday - Friday 9:00 am

Sacrament of Reconciliation:
Saturday 4:00 pm
and by individual appointment

Eucharistic Adoration
every Monday 7:00 pm

Prayer Chain: 967-3796 or
ssjohnpaul@ssjohnpaul.org



PARISH & DIOCESAN NEWS

SILENT NIGHT SING-A-LONG

Join the *Silent Night* Sing-a-long on Christmas Eve at 7 pm. All you need to do is grab the family and...

- ◆ Go outside on your porch, deck, balcony, or curb.
- ◆ Shine a light (candle or cellphone) and sing along to *Silent Night* (2 verses) as we stand together with a wish for a peaceful end to this crazy year!
- ◆ Take a moment to reflect on the meaning of Christmas.

Pass this along to your neighbors and friends. Let's have all of Iowa raise their voices!

COVID-19 UPDATES

Due to the anticipated COVID-19 difficulties that the winter season brings, parish staff members are working from home more. The office hours will be reduced to 9 am to 3 pm, and the office will be closed to foot traffic. Staff will be available by email and phone. If you need to meet in person, please call ahead to schedule an appointment. The parish hall entrance will remain open from 9 am to 3 pm for deliveries and to pick up or drop off items. Our desire is to protect our parishioners, staff and our partners in the broader community, and to provide services throughout this period of vulnerability due to the pandemic.

CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS

If you would like to give a memorial donation in honor of a loved one who has died, please place \$15 in an envelope and drop it in the collection boxes in the gathering space or parish hall entrance by Monday, December 14th.

THANK YOU FROM THE KNIGHTS

Thanks to all who participated in the Knights of Columbus Can Drive! Proceeds benefit the parish relief fund used to assist parishioners and others who need help over the Christmas and winter seasons. Thanks also to all the Knights and wives who worked throughout the day!

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Mon., December 14:

Small Faith Sharing Group, 6:30 pm, via Zoom
1st Reconciliation service, 7 pm, church
Adoration, 7 pm, day chapel

Wed., December 16:

Faith Formation Core Team, 9:45 am, via Zoom
Staff Meeting, 1 pm, via Zoom
JYM, 7 pm, via Zoom
Teen Group, 7 pm, via Google Meet

Sat., Dec. 19:

Men's Bible Study, 7:30 am, FDC room 10
Mass livestreamed via YouTube, 5 pm

Lord's Day, Dec. 20:

Mass, available on our website, ssjohnpaul.org, 10:30 am

FAITH FORMATION NEWS



Due to the increased threat of COVID-19, and the difficulties expected throughout the holiday and winter season, Youth Ministry programs are now meeting virtually.

JP KIDZ AND TWEENS MEET DECEMBER 13!

The next session is scheduled from 6 to 7 pm this Sunday, December 13.

JYM AND TEEN GROUP MEET DECEMBER 16!

Juniorhigh Youth Ministry and Teen Group will meet virtually on Wednesday, December 16 from 7-8 pm.

Please watch for the invitation emails for more information and instructions to "join the meeting."

DECEMBER PARISH CONNECTION

Create an Ornament for our Tree of Hope



As we prepare during Advent, we wait in joyful hope. We know many things are different this year, but what is one thing your family has great hope for? As a household, make an ornament and bring it to Mass to hang on our hope tree. Create your own, use the template on *Kitchen Table Faith*, or submit what you are hopeful for and staff will add that to an ornament for you. For details and links go to ssjohnpaulfaith-formation.org/december-main-course.html.

CALLING ALL SCOUTS

Now is the time to sign up to earn a Religious Scout Medal. Each level of scouting has a different program. Contact Janet Elwer, jewler@ssjohnpaul.org or 250-7088 for more information.



If you chose a child for Presence Under the Tree, all gifts are to be dropped off curbside at Altoona Elementary School *this Sunday*, December 13 from 1-4 pm. For complete directions, go to <https://ssjohnpaul.org/christmas-outreach>.

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MEETING TIMES
 First Thursday of Month
 6:00pm Rosary
 6:20pm Dinner
 7:00pm Meeting

OFFICERS
 GK Leon Stidfole (515) 360-2107
 DGK Jack Kopecky (515) 577-0556
 FS Marty DeDecker (515) 468-7772
 Mike Kockler (515) 681-2232

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