

St. Mary's Catholic Church



Hamburg, Iowa

With just three days to go until Christmas, the kind of preparation we may be focused on may have little to do with Jesus' birth. Let us take this opportunity to focus on the true gift of Christmas. A virgin will bear a son, one in the line of David, who will be called Emmanuel, "God is with us." Along with preparing gifts and Christmas dinner, let us also prepare a place in our hearts for God to be with us.

Bulletins are online at—<http://www.parishesonline.com/find/st-mary-church-51640>



Cycle A -- Reflections on the Readings

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-14; Psalm 24; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew
1:18-24

Theme: Faith as a pillar of our decisions

Today's readings deal with the reality of faith. Isaiah gives us a negative example, Matthew a positive one. Paul develops the notion of personal commitment as the underpinnings of faith. All three see belief as acceptance of God's presence.

Some of us are celebrating this wonderful season in the happy family situations we see on television or around the Christmas crib, others in the loneliness and isolation depicted by some newspaper headlines. The latter can be very close to the situation of the Holy Family, who did not have a very comfortable time at this season.

God or nothing-point of decision

To help guide us on how not to be lonely even though we may be alone, we have at our option two contrasting ways to live our lives. The first way is personified by St. Joseph in today's Gospel, the second by king Ahaz in Isaiah. Joseph represents a life in which the individual trusts in God even when God throws in a few surprises. As G. K. Chesterton wrote, "whoever tries to fit God into their minds ends up with a cracked skull." This way of life, despite the astonishment, leads to joy and fulfillment due to the freeing of the spirit through commitment, responsibility, and trust in God. In contrast, Ahaz represents a life built on trusting things of the world, leading to an existence where emptiness abounds.

Fear is the enemy of Faith, when one turns to God; he gives hope where humans are completely hopeless and helpless.

**Faith sees the invisible,
Faith believes the unbelievable
Faith receives the impossible**

Joseph and Mary had their plans. But God calls them to set aside their plans and embrace His. Like their forefather Abraham, they too put their total trust in God.

Mary asks for an explanation, Joseph does not. The silent obedience with which Joseph makes his own plan is striking.

When our plans change

Many things can upset the regular rhythm of our daily lives such as an unforeseen encounter, a joyful event, an illness, a success, a failure. We are forced to review our projects and follow new paths, at times dark, difficult and very exacting. How do we react when people frustrate our plans? With rebellion, refusal, discouragement, or as it happened to Joseph, do we place our trust in God and welcome his will?

Let our way of life not be that of Ahaz, who trusted in the power of this world and found frustration and hollowness, but the way of Joseph who, though surprised at God's way of doing things, trusted in God, welcomed Jesus, and thus found joy and peace.

Our celebration must reflect a deep and total acceptance of Christ and his message of peace on earth and goodwill toward all people. As Advent closes and Christmas dawns, we look to the Person born again in our hearts, the Person who is "God with us." Continue to Pg. 4.....

May the prince of this world establish peace, justice and happiness in our families.

May the Spirit of God help us to discern his plan in our lives like Mary and Joseph. Shalom!

Are you planning a resolution for 2020?

Some things to consider

1. **Prayer** – Seek the Holy Spirit to discern and know the plans God has for you.
2. **Look Where You Stand** – Look at your previous resolutions. Accessed how far you have stood by them? If not, it is time you did!
3. **Accomplish the Incomplete** – If you still feel that the resolutions you made last year and abandoned midway are worth a second shot, give it another chance!
4. **Realistic Resolutions** – Instead of weaving dreams in the air, make a resolution that would have significance in and add a meaning to your life.
5. **Monitor Progress** – Resolve this year to monitor how far you are holding on to your commitment – it will help you to hang on.
6. **Quit an Addiction** – It will not take you anywhere good. If it does you no good, why stick to it? If needed, seek support groups or professionals. If you have the will, you shall find the way.
7. **Contribute for a Cause** – Giving back to the society, church or family is the least we can do to make the world a better place to live in.
8. **Organized** – This is the key to make life easy, manage time and live stress free. Make a proper To-Do list, and you are halfway there already.
9. **Spend less time on social media.** Do you feel ok without being on social media a day or two? What of your cell phone? There is important call to pick etc.

Motivational story

Once upon a time, there lived a wise man. He was the head of the local administration of a small village. Everyone respected him and his views and opinions were well regarded. Many people came to him seeking for advice.

His son, however, was very lazy and wasted his time sleeping and spending time with his friends. No amount of advice or threat made any difference to him. He wouldn't change at all.

The years passed, and with time faded the youth of the wise man. As he grew older, he began to worry about his son's future. He recognized the need to give something to his son so that he can take care of himself and his family to be.

One day, he called his son to his room and said- "My son, you are no more a kid now. You must learn to take responsibilities and understand life."

"I want you to find the real purpose of your life and when you find it remember it always and you will lead a life full of happiness and joy."

Then he handed his son a bag. When the son opened the bag, he was surprised to see 4 pair of clothes, one for each season. There also were some raw food, grains, lentils, little money and a map. His father continued-"I want you to go find a treasure. I have drawn a map of the place where the treasure is hidden, you need to go and find it."

The son loved this idea. The next day, he eagerly set out on a journey to find the treasure. He had to travel really far across borders, forests, plateaus and mountains.

Days turned into weeks and weeks turned into months. Along the way, he met a lot of people. He was helped by some with food and by some with shelter. He also came across robbers who tried to rob him.

Slowly the season changed and so did the landscapes along with it. When the weather was unpleasant, he halted for the day and continued his journey when the weather cleared.

Finally, after a long year, he reached his destination. It was a cliff. The map showed the treasure being placed below the cliff under the tree. Upon spotting the tree, he began to dig the ground. He searched and searched- around it, under it, on it- but found nothing. He spent two days looking and digging for the treasure. By the third day, he was so exhausted that he decided to leave.

Disappointed over his father's lie, he headed back to his home. On his way back, he experienced the same changing landscapes and seasons. This time, however, he halted to enjoy the blooming flowers in spring and the dancing birds in monsoon. He stayed in places only to watch the sun set in paradise or to enjoy pleasant summer evenings.

Since, the supplies he carried were over by then, he learned to hunt and make arrangement for his meals. He also learned how to sew his clothes and shelter himself. He was now able to determine the hour of the day by the position of the sun and plan his journey accordingly. He also learned how to protect himself from wild animals.

He met the same people who had helped him earlier. This time he stayed a few days with them and helped them in some or the other way to repay them. He realized how nice they were to an ordinary passerby who had nothing to offer to them in return.

When he reached home, he realized it had been two years since he left the place. He walked straight into his father's room. "Father", – He said, The father immediately jumped to his feet and hugged his son.

"So how was your journey my son, did you find the treasure" he asked.

"The journey was fascinating father. But forgive me for I wasn't able to find the treasure. Maybe somebody took it before I reached." He surprised himself by what he just said. He wasn't angry at his father. Instead, he was asking for forgiveness.

"There wasn't any treasure in the very first place my son"-father answered smiling.

"But why did you send me to find it then", he asked.

"I will surely tell you why, but first you tell me, how was your journey to the place? Did you enjoy it?"

"Of course, not father! I had no time. I was worried someone else would find the treasure before I did. I was in a hurry to reach the cliff." He continued-"but I did enjoy the journey on my way back home. I made many friends and witnessed miracles every day. I learned so many different skills and the art of survival. There was so much I learnt that it made me forget the pain of not finding the treasure."

The father said to him- "Exactly my son. Want you to lead your life with a goal. But if you remain too focused on the goal, then you will miss out the real treasures of life. The truth is, life has no goal at all, other than to just experience it and grow with it every single day."

Moral: It is when we set out in life without trying to associate any meaning or greater purpose to it that we find the treasure of true joy in each moment.



A Christmas Message

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14).

Dearly beloved, as we make our final preparations for Christmas, my heart goes out to those who remember with fond memories their departed relatives who won't be present, or who are alone, or who get upset with all the media noise going on. If we can develop that all-encompassing trust of God, knowing that out of all the chaos, misery, suffering, unhappiness that sometimes make up our lives, God has a plan for us, and the ending will be good, despite what it may look like to us now. God sent his Son in human form, lowered himself to experience what we experience. He knows and partakes in our humanity, and he will empathize with us, and carry us through. Let this thought give you peace and joy in these few days as we welcome the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

As we celebrate this joyous day, I wish you the best of health, blissful year and everything that comes with good tidings.

It is my prayer and hope that, you feel the happiness and joy this season may bring. Best wishes to you and your family.

Feliz navidad, prospero año y felicidad!

Merry Christmas to you and your family!"

Fr. Raphael



This and that

- Our church family would like to wish you Merry Christmas. May the infant King bring you good health and endless happiness.
- Next weekend, we celebrate the feast of Holy Family. As part of our celebration, families will receive blessings and couples renew their vows.

ADA UPDATE!

This is a update on our St. Mary's ADA goal. Our goal for 2019, which is set by the diocese, was \$17,780, unfortunately we are \$4,310 short. With the flood issues and recovery we have been consumed with a lot of other concerns.

The 2020 ADA campaign will start in March!

If you haven't made your pledge towards the 2019 ADA and could possibly consider it, please let Dan know. **It is not too late to make your pledge!**

CHRISTMAS GATHERING

If you don't have Christmas eve plans, we invite you to join us downstairs after the mass for fellowship and food. Everyone is ask to bring a snack to share.

Merry, Merry Christmas

St. Mary's Christmas events.....

Dec. 22—Christmas Pageant

St. Mary's service @ the Ambassador w/ Christmas Pageant
Following mass

Dec. 24—Christmas Vigil Mass @ 7:00 p.m.

Dec. 29—Renewal & Blessing Mass



Mass Intention for December 22

Tim & Lois Whelan

George and Bernice Petree

Dean Harris & Ky Wakefield

By their Family



Readings for the week of 12-22-19

Sunday: Is 7:10-14/ Ps 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 [7c, 10b]/Rom 1:1-7/Mt 1:18-24

Monday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14/Lk 1:57-66

Tuesday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29 [2]/Lk 1:67-79

Wednesday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 [2a]/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25

Midnight: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 [Lk 2:11]/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14

Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20

Day: Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 [3c]/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or Jn 1:1-5, 9-14

Thursday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17 [6]/Mt 10:17-22

Friday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 [12]/Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Saturday: 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7b-8 [7]/Mt 2:13-18

Next Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14/ Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 [cf. 1]/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17/Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

ST. MARYS HAPPENINGS

PRAY FOR THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY

CHRIS HINES

JOSH SIMMONS

JACOB ANDERSON

JUSTIN PHILLIPS

DERRICK HUBARD

STEVEN ANDERSON

COLBY MCGINLEY



12-22—Joseph Roberts

12-23—Emily Welch

12-31—Garett Phillips

1-2—Mary Burkhiser

1-9-- Quentin Laumann



Greg Andersen
Grady Secht

Reese Kemp

James Dowling

LeRoy Herscheid

Noah Howe

Mary Lou Miller

Dottie Dankof

Isacc Durr

Robert & Nancy Dalton

Todd Quick

Verona Mitchell

Joel Loggins

Kenneth Russell

Bill Long

Henry Johnsen

Lawrence DuBois

Angie Witter-Childers

Pat Sheldon

Joe Kirk

Tim Konecny

Esther McCowan

Shawn Collins

Drake Travis

Martha Gude

Gloria Green

Larry Dalton

Vickie Graham

Glen Whitehead

Ronda Shirley

Zayne Osborn

Marty Weston

*Your
Contributions
Dec 15, 2019*

Tithes-\$1140.00

Plate-\$50.00

Coffee-\$

Thank You!!!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

12-4-Jim & Cheryl Owen

12-7-Henry & Helen Martin

12-13-Dean & Shelly Mount

12-26-Dan & Lori Goodman

12-27-Marty & Ruth Paper

12-29-Jeff & Lisa Phillips

2019	December 22 4th Sunday of Advent 8:30	December 24 Christmas Eve 7:00	December 29 The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph 8:30	January 5 The Epiphany of the Lord 8:30	January 12 The Baptism of the Lord 8:30
Greeters and Ushers	Vince & Susan Hilton	Joe & Robbie Travis	Tim & Donna Whelan	Jim & Cheryl Owen	Rick & Teresa Jamison
Eucharist Ministers	Denny Travis Bill Green	Dan, Vince, Rich & Denny	Robbi Travis Annie Wakefield	Denny & Joella Travis	Joe & Robbi Travis
Servers	Keeley Mount Ryan Roberts	Garett Phillips Brady Hutt	Max & Gabriel Casey	Mia & Addy Foster	Amelia Moody Tate Mount
Lector	Dave Dowling	Linda Dewhirst	Michael Gallagher	Cara Goodman	Jed Whitehead
Mass Setup	Joe	Rosie	Joe	Rosie	Joe
Cantor	Kim/Evan	TBA	Beth/Liliah	Children's Choir	Kate/Cara Cora H/Cora M
Accompanist	Donna	TBA	Nancy	Kate	Cale/Nichole Joseph/Emily
Coffee and Donuts	Shane & Connie Smith	Fellowship Gathering	Tim & Donna Whelan	Jeff & Lisa Phillips	Youth Biscuits and Gravy
Wash Linens	Marilyn Gude	Marilyn Gude	Marilyn Gude	Annie Wakefield	Annie Wakefield
PASTOR		PASTORAL ASSISTANT	BOOKKEEPER		DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION
Fr. Raphael Assamah 712-246-1718 712-246-8876 (c) e-mail max.assamah@yahoo.com		Cheryl Phillips 712.382.2668 (h) 712-350-0169 (c) cherylphil@gmail.com	Anne Hendrickson Bookkeeper 712.382.2432 (h) 712.350.0368 (c)		Scott Mayberry 712.374.3300(h) 712.370.3247(c)

