



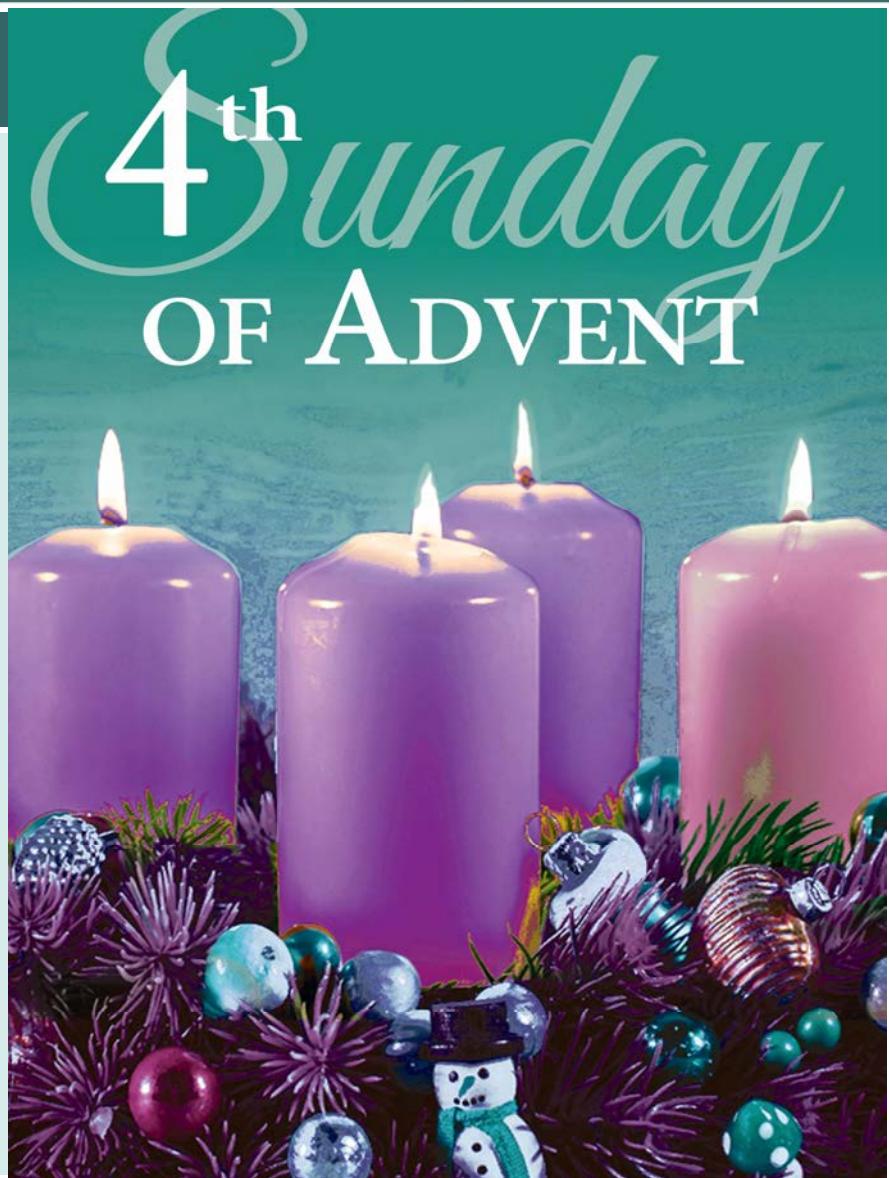
SAINT JOAN of ARC NEWS

The members of St. Joan of Arc Parish are disciples of Jesus Christ, who recognize God's love for the world & are empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel to all people through joyful worship, life-long education, compassionate service, responsible stewardship, & active community living.

~ Mission Statement - Pentecost 1998 ~

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PARISH CENTER

22412 Overlake
Saint Clair Shores, MI 48080
Phone: 586-777-3670
Fax: 586-774-5528
Website: www.sjascscs.org
E-mail: sjainfo@sjascscs.org

SCHOOL

22415 Overlake
Saint Clair Shores, MI 48080
Phone: 586-775-8370
Fax: 586-447-3574
Website: www.stjoan.net
E-mail: info@stjoan.net

FAITH AND FAMILY FORMATION OFFICE

22415 Overlake
Saint Clair Shores, MI 48080
Phone: 586-772-1282
Fax: 586-775-8374
E-mail: reppoffice@sjascscs.org

Parish Directory / Liturgy Schedule

ST. JOAN OF ARC DIRECTORY

Parish Center
Phone: 586-777-3670
Fax: 586-774-5528

School
Phone: 586-775-8370
Fax: 586-447-3574

Religious Education
Phone: 586-772-1282
Fax: 586-775-8374

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Weekdays

Monday thru Friday: 7:00 am

Pastor
Msgr. G. Michael Bugarin
gmbugarin@sjasc.org

Business Manager
Dina Ciaffone
dciaffone@sjasc.org

Athletic Director
Charles Kaiser
ckaiser@stjoan.net

Weekends

Saturday: 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm

Associate Pastor
Fr. Andrew Dawson
adawson@sjasc.org

Principal
Kathy Kalich
kkalich@stjoan.net

Office of Faith & Family Formation
Kristine Stewart Hass
khass@sjasc.org

Sunday: 8:00 am & 12:00 pm

Non-Resident Associate Pastors / Weekend Assistants:
Fr. Rich Bartoszek
Fr. James Grau

Assistant Principal
Mary Pat Brennan
mbrennan@stjoan.net

Exceptional Children
Mary Cal
mcal@sjasc.org

Holy Day Masses

Vigil Mass: (evening prior) 7:00 pm
7:00 am, 12:00 pm, 7:00 pm

Permanent Deacons
Deacon Tom Strasz
tstrasz@sjasc.org

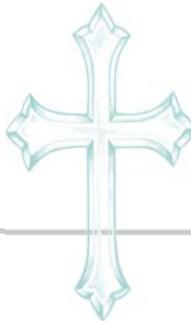
Anthems Director
Eleonore Ellero-Groth
eleonoraeellero@gmail.com

Youth Group
Linda Lietaert
llietaert@stjoan.net

Reconciliation

Saturday: 11:00 am in the Sister Carol Center adjacent to Church

Deacon Dom Pastore
dpastore@sjasc.org



Holy Hour

Thursdays in Church at 7:00 pm

Rosary

Monday - Friday after the 7am mass outside by the Holy Trinity statue.
(Bring your own lawn chair please)

PARISH CENTER OFFICE HOURS

The Parish Center is **CLOSED** to visitors for the foreseeable future. The foyer **ONLY** is open Monday -Thursday from 8:30am-5pm and Friday from 8:30-4pm. For mass intentions or any service we may be reached at 586-777-3670 during these hours.

For any urgent needs when we are not open, please call our after-hours emergency number: 586-777-1342.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A PARISHIONER?

If you would like to become a parishioner of St. Joan of Arc, at this time please register at stjoan.church and we will contact you by phone to get further information.

Once the Parish Center is re-opened please feel free to stop by and register in person.

Marriages: Arrangements should be made at the Parish Center at least six months prior to the desired date. Pre-marriage series required.

Registration: It is very important that every family and independent adult be registered in the Church in order to keep our records and mailings current. Please contact the Parish Office to register at your earliest opportunity.

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE OUR E-NEWS LETTERS!

If you would like to keep up with what is going on in the parish or if you need to update your email address go to our website at stjoan.church.



There's No Such Thing as a Free Lunch ... or Free Cookies:

Recently, my sister Jackie mentioned on one of our phone calls with our

parents that she purchased this awesome package of David's Ready to Bake Cookies from QVC. She ordered and received something similar three months before, and they were the rave of the family. There's nothing like pure butter, sugar, and chocolate to make people happy. And, given these things are ready to bake, it couldn't be any easier. When the first package arrived, Jackie was surprised by the quantity that was in the box. There was something like 120 cookies in a variety of recipes that made up the package. She only made a portion of them and put the rest in the freezer.

It was when the second batch arrived that she mentioned them on the phone. She thought the order was in error but hadn't had the time to call QVC yet to figure out what happened. Her original purchase was about three months before this; she was really confused about this new package. She also realized that given they were ready to bake cookies, they probably couldn't and shouldn't be returned. This could only mean it was time to enjoy them again. This time, however, the package contained a different variety of cookies.

When the details of this were being discussed on our call, most of us realized at the same time what was happening. It was apparent to us, and now Jackie, that she accidentally made a recurring cookie purchase (my type of gift ... but in my case, it wouldn't have been a mistake). At first, we thought it was a monthly purchase. To figure things out, Jackie went onto her QVC account and found she had committed to a quarterly purchase of David's Ready to Bake Cookies until the order was canceled (yikes)! She thought it was a one time purchase! She went ahead and made all the cookies she had on hand, and we all delighted in the cookie extravaganza. Those cookies were AWESOME. I started to have visions of partaking in those delicacies every so many months for a year! My big dream came to a crashing halt when my sister announced she would cancel the order. She began to calculate the costs and the

fact that she would be adding 120 more cookies every three months for a year to her stash. That's a lot of cookies, and a lot of dough (pardon the pun), as in bucks. She then realized the delivery wasn't "free" or a mistake on QVC's part after all. There's no such thing as a free lunch ... or, in this case, free cookies! But the thought of 120 ready to bake cookies a month or even every three months had me dreaming. I could see my credit card statement: one charge for QVC and an equal monthly charge for Weight Watchers!

Christmas Mass Schedule: Based on the Christmas Mass survey and the lived reality of what our attendance has looked like on the weekends, we've made some changes to the Christmas Mass schedule.

The schedule for Christmas Eve will be 4 PM, 6 PM, and 10 PM.

The schedule for Christmas Day will be 8 AM and 12 Noon.

These Masses will be live and live-streamed. We will have two 4 PM Masses as we have done in the past. Father Andrew will be the celebrant of the 4 PM Mass in Church, and I will be the celebrant of the 4 PM Mass in the Emmaus Hall. The option of having Mass in the Gym presented some logistical and accessibility obstacles. It was also clear people wanted a "live" mass rather than a streamed Mass into that second location. We also decided to create areas in both places to seat larger family units and areas to seat individuals or couples. This plan will allow us to maximize our seating as best we can. And, as you will note, there will be no Midnight Mass. Instead, the Midnight Mass has been "moved" to 10 PM (if this weren't 2020, I would say this move was a SURE sign your pastor is OLD).

The Mass schedule for the Feast of the Holy Family will remain the same as our current weekend mass schedule, namely 4 PM and 6 PM on Saturday and 8 AM and 12 Noon on Sunday.

I will be sending out multiple announcements and emails about our schedule change and other logistics for

Christmas weekend in the coming days. I will also post this information on the electronic signs. Any help you can offer in spreading or sharing this news will be greatly appreciated.

Christmas Thoughts: As we enter into these waning days and hours of Advent and the pace of life gets rather hectic with the final preparations for Christmas, please remember to keep your priorities ever in mind. It's all too easy to lose sight of what's important as we try to accomplish sometimes an unquestionable amount of activity. It will be yet another odd holiday as we forge through our COVID world. Let's again use technology. Let's do what we can to stay in touch with family and friends and still carry out many of our traditions. They may be very different. Gatherings will undoubtedly be small. We may be apart, but we can still create an environment where we are together in some way or another. In the end, it's all about the great gift that God the Father has given us in the person of Jesus Christ. May we keep our eyes fixed on Him as we celebrate His birth; may we also keep our hearts and souls fixed on the reality that Christ is still walking with us. Yes, it will be a different experience. But it will still be Christmas. Blessed be God.

Christmas Greetings: Since next weekend's bulletin will be our special Christmas edition, I want to take the opportunity now to extend my Christmas greetings and prayers to you, our faithful and regular parishioners. I am truly grateful for the many ways you share your time, talent, and treasure around the parish. Through your extraordinary generosity, we are changing many lives and doing so much to deepen people's relationship with the Lord! It's incredible to sit back and realize all the great work and ministry that is being done at our parish. Thank you for all that you do that makes us such an amazing parish!

May the Christ child, the Prince of Peace, enlighten your hearts and homes with the warmth of his light and love! Know you will be remembered in my prayers and masses this Christmas

Enjoy the week. Know of my prayers. Merry Christmas!

In Christ,

gmb
gmb@sjascscs.org



Online  Giving



Manage your
Online Giving account
with the app!

Download the Online Giving app
today at OLGApp.com

Donations

Payments

Give online at
stjoan.church
or from the app

REGISTER THE APP WITH OUR ORGANIZATION ID#

4719





December 20, 2020

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8B-12, 14A, 16 | Rom 16:25-27 | Lk 1:26-38

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

During Advent, we await the One who is perfect grace, light, and joy. The Christ Child's arrival during a time when darkness has been increasing each day, and our anticipation of that arrival, emphasize his salvific role. For if even the smallest light is a glimmer of hope in the night, how much more is Christ's perfect and all-consuming light a life-saving flare in the darkness of sin and death. As we hear the angel Gabriel say of Christ, in his visitation to Mary: "He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High ... and of his kingdom there will be no end." Emmanuel, God with us, is the reason for our hope, and the reason for our joy.

GO EVANGELIZE | PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

I don't know about you, but despite my best intentions, I have been known to get a little swallowed up in the commercialism of Christmas. But this last week of Advent feels like a chance to reorder my mind and heart. One way to do this is by focusing on the "O Antiphons," prayed during the Church's evening prayer from December 17-23. Each antiphon begins with the word "O," and is followed by a title for the Messiah, found in Scripture, and a petition for him to come and save his people. Although this may sound overly complicated, you most likely know of these without realizing it: they have been transposed into the verses of the hymn, *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. Today's first reading speaks of David, who thought he could build a place for God to dwell, but he can't. Instead, for us, whom God created and fashioned in his own image, God created a dwelling for his Son, so that he might enter into our human history as one of us; and in doing so, dwell among us and within us forever. Come, Lord Jesus.

INVITE When lighting the final candle on your Advent wreath, invite your family to help you make the prayer interactive. Focus on the lesser-known verses of *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, such as the one below – it is an ancient prayer still very relevant today.

O King of the Nations

O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of humankind;
O bid our sad divisions cease,
And be for us our King of Peace.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.*

istockimages

PARISH CENTER HOLIDAY HOURS

The Parish Center staff will be off for the Christmas Holiday starting Wednesday, December 23rd

Returning Monday, December 28th

Off for the New Year's Holiday starting Wednesday, December 30th returning Monday, January 4th.

Please Anticipate any needs such as mass intentions, etc. in advance since we will not be able to assist you when we are away from the office.

For Urgent Needs or after hours, we can always be reached at (586-777-1342).

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

The Staff of Saint Joan of Arc Parish.



2021 MASS INTENTIONS

The 2021 Mass book is open for mass intention requests. Mass requests can be made by phone, by mail or by email (info@sjasc.org). Intentions are also still available for this current year.

Intentions can always be requested by calling the Parish Center at: 586-777-3670.

We can send Intention Cards to your recipients via the Postal Service upon request or prepare them for pick up by calling the Parish Center in advance.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

STARTING JANUARY 2021 C.S. LEWIS' SCREWTAPE LETTERS

Men of the parish are invited to join other St. Joan of Arc men who will be studying and sharing their faith as they review C. S. Lewis' famous book The Screwtape Letters.

We will be using a study guide and will be hosting our meetings on zoom. We meet every 1st and 3rd Mondays at 7:00 P.M.

Please call Pat Adamcik at 586-775-3385 or Larry Kreszowski at 313-882-9369 for information.

Join this effort to learn more about the ways of "Screwtape" the head demon trying to teach his nephew how to prevent their patient from getting close to God. Share your faith and prayers with other men in the parish.

ST. JOAN OF ARC PILGRIMAGE

June 18-27, 2021

Stay in Monasteries while visiting St. Joan's 'Deep France'

God willing, next June we will again lead a St. Joan of Arc pilgrimage/retreat to France. This will be our thirteenth opportunity for taking a group on this fascinating journey. Our travel philosophy remains the same - one of going back to the essentials, of simplicity, of quality time in some places instead of 'rush-rush' in many. Although we will indeed see and do much, we hope to travel first of all as spiritual travelers, rather than as consumers. Consequently, we will again purposely remain a small group. Each day we will gather for some combination of the following: prayers/meditation, info on activities of the day, addressing questions, *Question du Jour* discussions. Come and experience many of the places where St. Joan lived, visited, and prayed.

Sites will include: Orléans, Troyes, Domrémy-la-Pucelle, Vaucouleurs, and Reims, with quiet stays at monasteries in the heart of France. Please visit our website, with more information and photos: www.pilgrimwitnesses.com.

For any questions, feel free to contact us by phone or email:

Chris & Catherine Snidow

Phone: (214) 327-4579

Email: cowlind@sbcglobal.net

Website: www.pilgrimwitnesses.com

St. Joan of Arc parishioner:

Darryl Bryk

Email: brykd@hotmail.com

Calendar of Events / Words on the Word

Weekly Calendar of Events



Monday, December 21st

7:00 am Public Morning Mass - Live Streamed

Tuesday, December 22nd

7:00 am Public Morning Mass - Live Streamed

Wednesday, December 23rd

7:00 am Public Morning Mass - Live Streamed

Thursday, December 24th

7:00 am Public Morning Mass - Live Streamed

4:00 pm Christmas Mass - Live Streamed

6:00 pm Christmas Mass - Live Streamed

10:00 pm Christmas Mass - Live Streamed

Friday, December 25th

8:00 am Christmas Mass - Live Streamed

12:00 pm Christmas Mass - Live Streamed

Saturday, December 26th

11:00 am Reconciliation

4:00 pm Public Mass - Live Streamed

6:00 pm Public Mass - Live Streamed

Sunday, December 27th

8:00 am Public Mass - Live Streamed

12:00 pm Public Mass - Live Streamed

Live Streamed Broadcasts at St. Joan of Arc

Though we have returned to public masses we will continue our Live Stream Broadcasts of all celebrations.

- **Weekdays -7 am Mass - (Monday thru Friday)**
- **Saturdays - 4 pm and 6 pm Masses**
- **Sundays - 8 am and 12 pm Masses**
- **Thursdays - 7 pm Holy Hour**

Go to: livestream.stjoan.church to watch all live streaming and to view archived celebrations.

Words on the Word

December 20, 2020 – A Universe of Awe!

As human technological capabilities continue to advance, we are privileged to experience in ever-more-unique ways the magnitude and majesty of God. An ocean submarine a few weeks ago plumb the deepest reaches of the earth.

And, also recently, a powerful telescope located in the darkness of the Australian Outback opened a heretofore unseen corner of the universe.

According to a story posted a couple weeks ago on an international news site, the telescope “mapped about three million galaxies in just 300 hours.” It’s a survey process that, the story goes on to note, would have taken up to 10 years with the previous generation of technology.

The story used the analogy of scientists now being able to create a Google Maps-type tool, but at the intergalactic level.

All of which, again, might elicit a collective gasp at the infinite love and creative power of God. Three million galaxies? Even one galaxy is beyond our ability to comprehend. But three million?

Here’s the part, though, that’s even more amazing: This same God who created three million (plus) galaxies loves each and every one of us. Personally.

So personally, in fact, that he speaks to us in this way:

“I will fix a place for my people Israel,” we hear in today’s first reading from the second book of Samuel. “I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance.

“I will give you rest from all your enemies. The Lord also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when the time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm.”

Christmas is later this week. How is our sense of awe and wonder?

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Mass Intentions / Weekly Readings

Mass Intentions	
Monday	December 21, 2020 Late Advent Weekday Saint Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church (Purple)
7:00 a.m.	Petruzza Lorenzano and In Thanksgiving
Tuesday	December 22, 2020 Late Advent Weekday (Purple)
7:00 a.m.	Steve Wright and Patrick Maher Jr.
Wednesday	December 23, 2020 Late Advent Weekday, Saint John of Kanty, Priest (Purple)
7:00 a.m.	William Dobrzechowski and Steve Finn
Thursday	December 24, 2020 Late Advent Weekday (Purple)
7:00 a.m.	Frank Shuder and a Special Intention for Latividad Mallare
4:00 p.m.	Grace and Sam Valenti, Joseph Simon, Dorothy Giuglaro, Joseph Kornibus, the J. Champine Family, the deceased members of the McQuillan, Zarane and Walters Families, Sophie and George Rupinski, Raquel Kosebutzki, Alice and Albert Czekaj, Robert Meldrum, Virginia Prill, Fran McCarron, Robert Ruhana, Gianfranco Moro, Special Intentions for Rosemary DeYonker Turchin, the Everett Family, Joan Kowalewski, Peggy McCarron and the Family Staff of Bommarito Bakery
6:00 p.m.	The Rogier and Dettloff Families
10:00 p.m.	For the Intentions of Saint Joan of Arc Parishioners
Friday	December 25, 2020 The Nativity Of The Lord (White)
8:00 a.m.	Mary T. Hobig
12:00 p.m.	Stancel Mecha, Cornelius B. Thelen, the J. Champine Family, Ron Logodna, Joseph Calus, Marie Champine, Marguerite and John L. Joseph, Florence and Joseph Semany, Pam Copek, Jill Copek, Mary Charrette, Bertha Conde, Robert Ruhana, Gianfranco Moro, David Curcuru, Dennis Buda, Robert Waldeck

Saturday December 26, 2020 Saint Stephen, The First Martyr (Rose)

4:00 p.m. Suzanna and Victor Markowsky, Dennis Fleming, Joe Komaroff, the J. Champine Family, Helen and James Walsh, Tommy Youngblood, the deceased members of the Huvaere and Kirby Families, Karl M. Parsons, Mary and Frank Fleming, Gerald Valeck,

6:00 p.m. Nancy and Stephen Fattore

Sunday December 27, 2020 Holy Family of Jesus Mary and Joseph (White)

8:00 a.m. For the Intentions of St. Joan of Arc Parishioners

12:00 p.m. Joanne, Helen and John Joseph Gleason, Peter and Pamela Gervasoni, Walt Kempinski, Father Richard Welsh, Gianfranco Moro, Josephine and Stephen Murawski,



Weekly Readings

Monday, December 21

Song of Songs 2:8-14
Luke 1:39-45

Vigil, December 24

Isaiah 62:1-5
Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
Matthew 1:1-25

Tuesday, December 22

1 Samuel 1:24-28
Luke 1:46-56

Friday, December 25

Isaiah 52:7-10
Hebrews 1:1-16
John 1:1-18

Wednesday, December 23

Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24
Luke 1:57-66

Saturday, December 26

Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59
Matthew 10:17-22

Thursday, December 24

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a
Luke 1:67-79D



Sunday, December 27

Words of Ben Sira 3:2-6, 12-14
Colossians 3:12-21
Luke 2:22-40

Tire Tracks in the d'Arc



A Miracle?: I've been a huge fan of Formula One auto-racing for about 35 years. Before my middle-aged memory arrived, I could rattle off the names of the

winners, and who finished 12th in some random Grand Prix half-way around the world, sometime in 1988 and endless technical and aerodynamic details of the cars or the rules to bore you. I still watch every qualifying session and race on TV. I love it. It's exciting and its endlessly fascinating to me.

A few weeks ago, there was a crash in a race the likes of which I have rarely seen before. It looked like something from a bygone era, when the cars were far less safe. In years past the fatality rate was sadly very high. In recent decades it has become easy to feel complacent. The technology means that the cars do an incredible job of protecting their driver from injury in a crash. But this time, surely that was not going to be the case, I thought. The car hit a metal armco-barrier head-on at 140mph and split into two about an inch behind where the driver sits. The accident did not look survivable. The front of the car, with the driver strapped-in, decelerated from 140mph to 0 in a distance of not more than 5 yards and was engulfed in a fireball, caught-up in the metal barrier. The safety crew arrived and could not see where the driver was in all the smoke and fire. They sprayed extinguishant on the flames and somehow, out of the dark, emerged the driver. After about 30 seconds in the fire, he had managed to unstrap his seat-belts, disconnect his radio and drink bottle from his helmet and extract himself through a small opening above the cockpit. He somehow pried himself through the twisted metal barrier over his head to jump clear of the remains of his car and scramble over the barrier into the arms of the safety crew. It was quite astounding and a huge relief to see.

Many things went wrong to lead to such a potentially devastating accident. The driver sustained minor burns to his hands and feet, but survived g-forces of 53g without a single broken bone. That day has put a lot of things into perspective for a lot of people, reminded that this is a sport, but that every day people's lives are on the line. Many people immediately labelled it "a miracle" that he survived. And I don't necessarily discount that. The driver himself said that

as he sat in the flames, "I saw death coming. But then I saw my kids and knew I had to get out." Certainly God was merciful that day. But there was also evidence that the improvements to the cars helped explain his light injuries. Just two years ago, he almost certainly would not have survived.

A Certain Miracle: Why this long and frightening tale? Was it a miracle or was it science? Only God knows, but it put in perspective for me, in another ways, the miracle that we celebrate this Christmas—God coming to dwell among us, as one of us, through a virgin birth, announced by an angel, to a woman conceived without sin—an incredible and indisputable miracle that science *cannot* explain. An incredible and indisputable display of God's mercy toward the human race. This was a plan foretold for thousands of years and discernable through scriptures written thousands of years before the birth of Jesus. A story evidenced by secular records of history. A story to which we are all more than merely viewers or spectators. God has intimately involved us in this story, His-story. It was for *our* benefit and for *all* His people. For the human race, collectively, "we saw death coming," but God wouldn't allow that and He rescued us. After so many things had gone wrong for us, He invited the Blessed Mother, Mary, to participate in His plan for our salvation. And though the plan seemed impossible, all things are possible for God. And so Mary simply offered her obedience: "I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

A Sacrifice: There had been much discussion that race weekend over the huge salaries of some of the race drivers and are they being paid too much. One of the results of the accident was that those discussions stopped. Some commentators noted that the drivers have made so many sacrifices in their lives to reach the pinnacle of their sport and sacrifice so much to stay there, so they justify these huge salaries. But I could only reflect on how today's culture misunderstands the concept of sacrifice. A sacrifice should be understood as someone relinquished on behalf of another. Making a "sacrifice" in order to be rewarded with success, fame and financial reward is not a concept you will find in any Catholic resource. Parents understand this. The sacrifices you make for your children are great and noble and praiseworthy,. But you don't make them in order to be rewarded financially or for

your own success. It's done out of love for the children God gifted to you. The result, hopefully is *their* success, not your own, and in that, is found its own reward.

It is an incredible witness to God's love for us, that every year, even in as strange and difficult a year as this has been, we have the opportunity before it closes to once again experience the amazing humility of our Lord. If our faith didn't allow us to confess it, that God would humble Himself to become a little child, born in a food tough, in a stable, and live for 30 years in a backwater village in an occupied land, not for Himself, but for our sake, so that He might one day sacrifice His own human life for our redemption – if it were for our faith, we could surely never believe such a sacrifice was possible.

Giving Thanks in Return: It was very important to the mental recovery of that race driver that after a brief stay in hospital, that he returned to thank the safety crew who were on scene to assist him. This Christmas, may we return often, whether to Mass, or watching online. Perhaps even just mentally throughout our day, and throughout the year, go to that moment when God stepped into our world in the little town of Bethlehem. Let us return our thanks, for the Christmas gift of a baby named Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. May we thank God's sacrifice, the gift of the miracle of the Eucharist, the way in which God is with us at every altar in every Catholic church, every day.

'Twas the Night after Christmas: Growing up in England, one of the joys of Christmas was the day *after* Christmas Day: "Boxing Day!" For kids it was like a second Christmas Day—great leftovers, visiting with "the other side of the family" you hadn't seen the day before, Christmas movies on TV, the surprise gift Santa left, but that mom had lost until the next day. Boxing Day doesn't not derive its name from the sport of boxing. The day after Christmas in England was traditionally the day that the wealthy would allow their servants to take a rest day. The servants were given a small box, which they would use to visit the homes of the rich and be given coins or food items, hence "Boxing Day." Let's remember those less fortunate that ourselves this Christmas and offer them what we are able to from our gifts. Merry Christmas!

You are in my prayers.
Fr. Andrew adawson@sjasc.org

An Act of Spiritual Communion

It has long been a Catholic understanding that when circumstances prevent one from receiving Holy Communion, it is possible to make an Act of Spiritual Communion which is a source of grace.

Spiritual Communion means uniting one's self in prayer with Christ's sacrifice and worshipping him in his Body and Blood. The most common reason for making an Act of Spiritual Communion is when a person cannot attend Mass.

Acts of Spiritual Communion increase our desire to receive sacramental Communion and help us avoid the sins that would make us unable to receive Holy Communion worthily.

A Prayer for Spiritual Communion

*My Jesus, I believe that you are present
in the Most Holy Sacrament.*

*I love you above all things and I desire to receive you in my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally,
Come at least spiritually into my heart.*

*I embrace you as if you were already there
And unite myself wholly to you.
Never permit me to be separated from you.*

Amen.



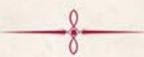
FIRST READING

"When your times comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will establish his kingdom firm." (2 Sm 12)



PSALM

For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.
(Ps 89)



SECOND READING

According to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God. (Rom 16:25b-26a)



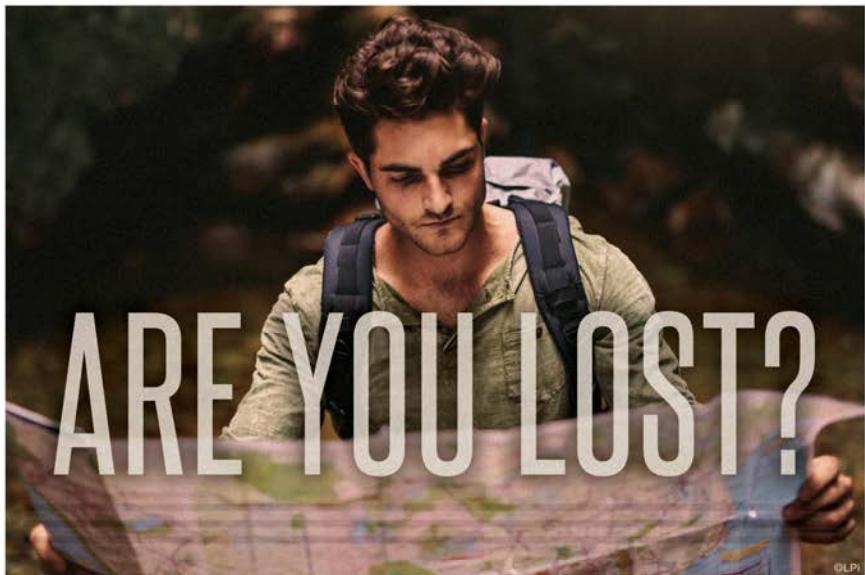
GOSPEL

"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." (Lk 1:31-32a)

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WORSHIP & MEDITATION



GOSPEL MEDITATION

Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

In Blaise Pascal's work, *Pensees*, he says: "What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself."

We have a difficult time accepting that fulfillment and happiness are not achieved by our own merits but through a relationship with God. We are hardwired for this relationship and it is in our DNA. The simple fact is that we come from God and are designed to return to God. If our beginning and our end define who we are, why would we not want to seek the One who can truly satisfy? The world does not realize that it is waiting. It is waiting for the birth of God in time, within one's soul and in eternity. We get so confused by seeking other momentary satisfactions that we misinterpret the hunger within. We crave God.

The union of God and humanity, revealed in Jesus Christ, is precisely what sets us on a straight path, orders our relationships, establishes proper focus and goals and tells us whose kingdom we really are meant to serve. We are so lost. God is with us. The prophet Nathan told this to King David, the angel said this to Mary and the birth of Christ brings this Good News to us. We do not need to be busily looking for more things but must learn to find contentment and blessing in the One Presence. This is the beautiful simple message of Advent!

If you are feeling unsettled, anxious, angry, disgruntled, disconnected, unhappy, worried, fearful, off center, becoming overly self-indulgent, unable to spend time alone and without distraction, then there's a good chance you are lost. Now is the time to allow God to find you! Ponder the holy simplicity of Mary's call to be the Mother of God. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." When we are helpless and at home with our emptiness, God will fill us. Our Savior has come.

Feast of the Holy Family – December 27

Reading 1 – Sirach

God sets a father in honor over his children; a mother's authority he confirms over her sons. Whoever honors his father atones for sins, and preserves himself from them. When he prays, he is heard; he stores up riches who reveres his mother. Whoever honors his father is gladdened by children, and, when he prays, is heard. Whoever reveres his father will live a long life; he who obeys his father brings comfort to his mother.

My son, take care of your father when he is old; grieve him not as long as he lives. Even if his mind fail, be considerate of him; revile him not all the days of his life; kindness to a father will not be forgotten, firmly planted against the debt of your sins — a house raised in justice to you.

Responsorial Psalm 128

R. (cf. 1) **Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.**

Reading 2 – Colossians

Brothers and sisters: Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the

peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Wives, be subordinate to your husbands, as is proper in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and avoid any bitterness toward them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, so they may not become discouraged.

Gospel – Luke

When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, They took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, *Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord*, and to offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, He took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel." The child's father and mother were amazed at what was

said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted — and you yourself a sword will pierce — so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.



Blessing of a Christmas Tree

The use of the Christmas tree is relatively modern. Its origins are found in the medieval mystery plays that depicted the tree of paradise and the Christmas light or candle that symbolized Christ, the Light of the world.

According to custom, the Christmas tree is set up just before Christmas and may remain in place until the Solemnity of Epiphany.

The lights of the tree are illuminated after the prayer of blessing.

**When all have gathered, a suitable song may be sung.
The leader makes the sign of the cross, and all reply "Amen."**

The leader may greet those present in the following words:

Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.
R/. Amen.

In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:

My brothers and sisters, amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:

Listen to the words of the Letter of St. Paul to Titus: **3:4-7**

But when the kindness and generous love
of God our savior appeared,
not because of any righteous deeds we had done
but because of his mercy,
he saved us through the bath of rebirth
and renewal by the holy Spirit,
whom he richly poured out on us
through Jesus Christ our savior,
so that we might be justified by his grace
and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

Or Ezekiel 17:22-24—I will plant a tender shoot on the mountain heights of Israel.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

R/. Thanks be to God.

The intercessions are then said. The leader says:

Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this
sign of our faith in the Lord.

R/. Lord, give light to our hearts.

Blessing of a Christmas Tree



R/. Lord, give light to our hearts.

That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. R/.

That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord. R/.

That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord. R/.

After the intercessions the leader invites all present to say the Lord's Prayer.
The leader says the prayer with hands joined:

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 illumine 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.

R/. Amen.

The lights of the tree are then illuminated.
The leader concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever.

R/. Amen.

The blessing concludes with a verse from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.



Catholic
Current

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Prayers Needed

PRAY FOR THE SICK - PARISHIONERS

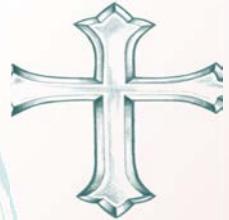
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Ed Cole
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Robert Cooper
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Deborah Dembeck
Alan DePorter
Catherine DeRose
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Geri Ellis
Louise Fetherolf
Gerald Flint
Merrie Foerster
Florence Fournier
Giovanna Foresta
Nora Anne Francis
Mark Franzel
Sylvia Gentile
Mary and Don Godfrey
Jane Gora
Larry Graham
Geoffrey Greve
James Gutowski

Deborah Hammersburg
Mary Harbart
Margaret Hartung
Ted and Gracie Hinz
Alleyn Hunt
James Kammer
Marilyn Kiefer
Pat Kohlitz
Edward Krappmann
Delaney Kraemer
Al Kraska
Genevieve Krembel
Maureen Lee Leija
Grace Litwinczek
Dotty Lubinski
Janet Malaski
Joan Mannino
Nancy McDonnell
Irene McMahon
Karen McMahon

Lee Majewski
Vilma Marone
Mark Moffitt
Mary Jane Naz
Toni Pantano
Fern Pascany
Frank Poeschel
Ronald Pollack
Salvatore Promesso
Lawrence Radzowski
Sr. Alice Riegel
Laura Rizzo-Andela
Suzanne Roland
Elena Roose
Jennifer Rose
Victoria Rydholm
Janet Saponaro
Alex Scapini
Elizabeth Schaller
Mary Anna Sheldon

Evelyn Smith
Kathleen Smith
Phyllis St. Amour
Ingrid Stemmerich
Donald Strobbe
Paul Tatti
Beverly Taylor
William Taylor
James Thompson
Janine Tomasello
Eileen Wallace
Audrey Weekley
William Woodruff
Chuck Wolschlager
Helen Wrynn
Thomas Ziolkowski



Pray for the Sick List: Please note that we regularly clear the “Pray for the Sick List” because the list grows beyond our space allocation and we don’t always hear from people when they’ve gotten better. If you would like to add a person please call the Parish Center front desk at 586.777.3670 or send an email to our general inbox at info@sjascsc.org.

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Bringing Home the Word

Fourth Sunday of Advent (B)
December 20, 2020

Extreme Makeover: Home Edition

By Fr. Mark Haydu

King David wants to build God a home! He had first built his own palace and afterward realized that he hadn't built a space for God—a place of worship and family communion.

It is admirable that David wants to give back, but do we have to take care of God or, rather, is it God who cares for us? Obviously, God doesn't need David to build him a house. The whole world is his. Didn't God build up David all along, bringing him to a place where he might consider offering God something in return? It is like children who want to

give their parents a gift. First, they ask a parent for money or a gift idea. On their own, they cannot give.

God turns the tables on David, saying God will build David a house—an everlasting lineage to rule over the people. God will build something much bigger than anything David had ever dreamt of. He will build David a kingdom that will become a nation and give birth to a worldwide universal Church.

In the painting, *The Annunciation with City by the Sea* by Marco Palmezzano, Mary stands in front of an ornate house. She stands like us, at the entrance, welcoming God's coming. It was her yes that allowed the master builder to enter into our world to begin building this house, which became a Church.

Like Mary, we await Jesus. With her, let us say yes to him, celebrating the one who has established that house where we celebrate today!

Sunday Readings

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.

Romans 16:25-27

Now to him who can strengthen you... through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever.

Luke 1:26-38

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

A Word from Pope Francis

The angel Gabriel calls Mary "full of grace": in her there is no room for sin, because God chose her from eternity to be the mother of Jesus and preserved her from original sin....We too are asked to listen to God who speaks to us, and to accept his will....The Lord is always speaking to us!

—Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2014



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

**REFLECTION
QUESTIONS**

- Is giving myself to God in prayer a way to let him accomplish his dreams for me?
- How can I offer hospitality to others so they can encounter God's love?

***God turns the tables,
saying God will build
David a house—
an everlasting lineage
to rule over the people.***

An Exhibit of Wonder and Love

By Johan van Parys

Growing up I attended midnight Mass on Christmas with my family. I insisted on arriving early because I didn't want to miss the moment before the beginning of the Mass when the sacristan carried the Baby Jesus into the church and placed him in the manger. He was an elderly man who had worked for the church his entire life. He walked with great difficulty and could barely make it down the steps of the sanctuary. Yet, he held the plaster image of Jesus in his arms with such tenderness and reverence he might as well have been carrying a real baby. He knew this image represented the Savior of the world.

As a teenager, I quickly lost interest in the Baby Jesus. I was too *cool* to fuss about any baby, let alone a plaster one. As a student at Notre Dame, I thought it theologically unsophisticated to pay much attention to Christmas beyond the reality of the Incarnation celebrated on that day. I had little patience for the obsession of people for Christmas trees and Nativity scenes. I wondered if they really understood the meaning of Christmas.

But my outlook on Christmas completely changed when I was given a small Nativity set from Burkina Faso, a country in West Africa. It was carved in local wood by a Christian villager. Although the figures were rather primitive, one could clearly see that the artist had carved the Holy Family in the



image of the people of his village. I loved it so much that this first Nativity set became the start of a large collection of Nativities from all around the world, all of which are in the image of the people who created them.

Each year, I carefully unwrap close to 400 Nativity sets. I do this deliberately, thinking of the people who carved each set in his or her own image. As I gently place the Baby Jesus in the manger, set after set, I also think of the old man in my home church from so many years ago and the woman in our church today who carries the Baby Jesus to the Nativity scene with such love and reverence.

In a simple yet poignant way, these many Nativity sets with their varied

features and skin tones and the way we treat them underline the essence of the Incarnation. The artist and beholder alike know that, though very different from us, Jesus became like all of us. Through Jesus, no matter who we are, we are all able to encounter God in a real and tangible way. The Nativity scenes and the rituals around them symbolize and affirm this wondrous reality.

Nativity scenes help symbolize the reality that, through Jesus, we're able to encounter God in a tangible way.

Indeed, this encounter with God in Jesus Christ is not a mere theological exercise or pietistic drivel. Rather, it's a great reality. We celebrate that he took on our image and became like us so we might take on his image and become like him. +



Lord, you have called us to be your instruments of peace and reconciliation in the world. Give me the courage to make peace with those who have hurt me and caused me pain.

—From *Joyful Meditations for Every Day of Advent and the 12 Days of Christmas*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

December 21–26

Monday, Advent Weekday: Sg 2:8–14 or Zep 3:14–18a / Lk 1:39–45

Tuesday, Advent Weekday: 1 Sm 1:24–28 / Lk 1:46–56

Wednesday, Advent Weekday: Mal 3:1–4, 23–24 / Lk 1:57–66

Thursday, Advent Weekday:

2 Sm 7:1–5, 8b–12, 14a, 16 / Lk 1:67–79

Friday, Christmas: Is 52:7–10 /

Heb 1:1–6 / Jn 1:1–18 or Jn 1:1–5, 9–14

Saturday, St. Stephen:

Acts 6:8–10, 7:54–59 / Mt 10:17–22



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