

DECEMBER 6, 2015

Scripture Reflection

In Baruch's intensely joyful proclamation, Jerusalem is portrayed as a mother who rejoices at seeing her children gathered by the Word of God. The tone is jubilant because God who has commanded that the earth be prepared for all of Israel to "advance secure in the glory of God." We are to wrap ourselves in God's justice and rejoice in the light of God's glory.

Paul's letter to the Philippians speaks of his "joy" for their "partnership" with him in announcing the Gospel. He prays for the Christians of Philippi, that their "love may increase ever more and more." They need increased love to be ready for "the day of Christ." The return of the Lord did not happen in Paul's time, but his words are encouraging and timely for us. We need to be constantly striving to live "pure and blameless lives" in the presence of the Lord who dwells among us. We are always preparing for his return in glory.

The Gospel touches on different time scenarios. Luke's references to current political leaders place the in-breaking of God in human history and announce that the coming of the Messiah will alter human affairs. John the Baptist's message introduces the long view of salvation history: the Messiah will fulfill the prophecies of Isaiah. John stands in the line of the prophets, announcing God's plan for those who have been waiting in hope. The repentance he urges is the proper posture for all those preparing to welcome the Messiah, and the liturgical time of Advent is our time to heed John's message in our own hearts.

John the Baptist presents for us the task of the people of God in response to the coming of the Messiah. John tells the people to prepare with "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As with Baruch, John presents an image of the mountains and valleys being made flat and smooth as a sign of Israel's repentance and moral transformation. This moral leveling allows Israel to "walk safely in the glory of God" and also allows "all flesh" to see God's salvation.

• **This Tuesday, December 8, begins the Jubilee of Mercy for the new liturgical year. How do you experience God's mercy in your life? How do you show mercy to others?**

AT HOME WITH THE WORD 2015. (C) 2014 ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO, LITURGY TRAINING PUBLICATIONS, 3949 South Racine Avenue CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60609. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION. AMERICA MAGAZINE: November 30, 2015 Issue, John W. Martens.

Advent Penance Service

Our communal celebration of Advent Reconciliation is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 16** at 6:30 PM. All are encouraged to attend this seasonal Liturgy. This Reconciliation Liturgy will last one hour. Additional priests will be present to help with individual confessions. This Penance Service is for the entire Parish Family. Our second grade students will celebrate their First Penance during this Advent service. There will be a reception following the service at 7:30 PM to congratulate the First Penitents. All are welcome to join us in the Cathedral Hall.

Calendar of Prizes 2016

Calendar of Prizes 2016 are being sold at the Cathedral Square door after all Masses. Like last year, each calendar costs \$20.00. There is a \$10.00 daily prize; an additional \$1,000.00 in special monthly prizes awarded throughout the year; and a grand prize of \$5,000.00 Family Trip or Cash Option. Due to the state regulations for small games of chance, it is necessary that all one thousand tickets be sold. Otherwise, the parish will lose money on unsold tickets. For this fund-raiser to be successful, all calendars must be sold. If you have a favorite three digit number, call the Parish Office (944-4603) weekdays between 9:30 AM and 5:00 PM to check on availability or stop at the Cathedral Square door after Mass. Thank you.

ALTOONA CENTRAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Please join Altoona Central Catholic School (ACCS) for the 6th annual **Soup Throw-Down Today, Sunday, December 6**, 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Father Kelly Hall, 25th Avenue and 5th Street, Altoona. Soups made by parent and teachers. Sample 20 soups and vote for your favorite. Tickets will be sold at the door for 50 cents per sample or \$6 per quart. The day will also feature several vendors and a Chinese Auction. All proceeds from this event go directly to ACCS.

Renderings of New Parish Activity Center

Drawings and floor plans of the new Parish Activity Center are on view by the Cathedral Square door of the Cathedral. If you have not yet seen the plans for this project, please take time to stop by.

THE CHURCH OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN THE CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

ONE CATHEDRAL SQUARE, Altoona, Pennsylvania 16601-3315
Church Office: 814-944-4603

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:

The process of formation for those seeking God through membership in the Catholic Christian community.

INFANT BAPTISM:

Arrange in advance for pre-baptismal instructions.

CONFIRMATION:

Ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students are invited to participate in the Confirmation Preparation Process.

RECONCILIATION:

Wednesday: 7:00 PM, Saturday: 12:30 PM.

Communal Penance Services: Advent and Lent.

ANointing OF THE SICK:

Communal celebration Easter Season.

MARRIAGE:

Arrange nine months in advance. Couples expected to participate in pre-marriage preparation program.

DEVOTIONS:

Novena of the Miraculous Medal - Monday 7:45 AM.

Rosary - Wednesday 6:00 PM.

Charismatic Prayer - Monday 7:00 PM.

Evening Prayer within Eucharistic Exposition - Advent and

Christmas, Lent and Easter Seasons - Sunday 6:30 PM.

Eucharistic Day - Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

September through April: Pre-Kindergarten thru 12.

Sunday morning 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Pre-Kindergarten thru 8.

Sunday evening 6:15 PM - 8:30 PM

Grades 9 thru 12.

WEB: WWW.ALTOONACATHEDRAL.ORG

FAX: 814-942-4337

E-MAIL: ALTCATHEDRAL@DIOCESEAJ.ORG

EUCHARIST:

Sunday: 5:00 PM (Vigil)

8:00 AM

10:00 AM

12:00 Noon

5:00 PM

Holyday: 5:30 PM (Vigil)

8:00 AM

12:00 Noon

5:30 PM

Weekday: 6:45 AM

8:00 AM

12:00 Noon

Saturday: 8:00 AM

12:00 Noon

Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, Bishop

Reverend Monsignor Robert C. Mazur, Rector

Reverend Father Dennis M. Kurdziel, Parochial Vicar

Deacon Michael A. Anna

Deacon John J. Szwarc, Senior Deacon

CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAM - 944-4603

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 944-4603

ALTOONA CENTRAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Web: www.altoonacentralcatholic.com

Elementary - Pre-K thru Grade 5 - 381-7011

BISHOP GUILFOYLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org - 944-4014

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 8 - 946-3475

Jean Koury - 9 thru 12 - 949-2777

Religious Education Office: Sundays - 943-7424

MUSIC MINISTRY

Nina M. Tedeschi

Choir Director and Head Organist - 944-2044

Kevin J. Luke - E-mail: kluke@dioceseaj.org

Administrative Duties and Organist - 944-2044

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE CITY OF ALTOONA SINCE 1851

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 6, 2015

Readings: Bar 5:1-9; Phil 1:4-6,8-11; Lk 3:1-6

MASS INTENTIONS

December 7, Monday: Saint Ambrose, Bishop, Doctor

Readings: Is 35:1-10; Lk 5:17-16

6:45 AM Merle & Joan Hirt (Children, Great & Grand)

8:00 AM Freddy Fedeli (Wife, Rosemarie)

12:00 PM Margaret L. Dodson (Joe Dzurenko)

Vigil - Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary

5:30 PM Moose Plutko (Cathedral Parish)

December 8, Tuesday: **Immaculate Conception**

Holy Day of Obligation

Readings: Gn 3:9-15,20; Eph 1:3-6,11-12; Lk 1:26-38

8:00 AM Sam Coen (Mike and Sherry Byrne)

12:00 PM Pat Rabine (Gerri Rose)

5:30 PM Margaret McConnell (Charlene Frank)

December 9, Wednesday: Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin

Readings: Is 40:25-31; Mt 11:28-30

6:45 AM Nozzie, Jennie, Sandy Calabrese (Family)

8:00 AM Ruby Doyle (Dave Donnelly)

12:00 PM John and Mildred Flick (Daughters)

December 10, Thursday: Advent Weekday

Readings: Is 41:13-20; Mt 11:11-15

6:45 AM Eleanor Toth (Marge Moschella)

8:00 AM Bernadette Weakland (Jeanie Farabaugh)

12:00 PM Paul Rose (Lorraine Shuma)

December 11, Friday: Saint Damasus I, Pope

Readings: Is 48:17-19; Mt 11:16-19

6:45 AM Doris Green (Karen and Greg Querry)

8:00 AM Carl Fischer (Wife, Eleanor and Family)

12:00 PM Deacon John Rys, Birthday (Family)

December 12, Saturday: Our Lady of Guadalupe

Readings: Zec 2:14-17; Lk 1:26-38

8:00 AM Marian and Thomas Swires (Children)

12:00 PM Spec. Int. of Eric and Gloria Hockenberry

Vigil: Third Sunday of Advent

Readings: Zep 3:14-18; Phil 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18

5:00 PM M. Virginia Jones (Jim and Mary Ellen Kelly)

CHRISTIAN INITIATION - Following the Universal Prayer at 10:00 AM Mass each Sunday, our Catechumens and Candidates are dismissed to reflect on the Scriptures proclaimed and to learn more about our Catholic faith and tradition. Please remember these individuals in your Advent prayers.



Liturgical Reflection ...

This Tuesday is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is a day of obligation for Catholics to participate at Mass. Mary who was called to be God's mother was immaculate, free from original sin, from the moment of her conception in her mother's womb. Today opens the Jubilee Year of Mercy. The year long celebration begins December 8, 2015, and ends November 20, 2016. May the Immaculate Mother grace this Year of Mercy through her intercession. The Diocese has offered a concluding prayer for mercy to be prayed at the conclusion of the Universal Prayer for Sundays and Solemnities throughout the Jubilee.

2015, Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Liturgy Office, 925 South Logan Boulevard, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania 16648.

Advent Wreath and Offertory Procession

Help is needed during the Advent Season to carry the Advent Wreath candles at the beginning of Mass and to present the gifts of bread and wine at the Offertory. Individuals/families are encouraged to volunteer. Also, all liturgical ministers are asked to be especially aware of what help might be needed when attending Liturgy.

Advent/Christmas Prayer Partners

Sign-up forms are available this second weekend of Advent at tables located at the church doors. All Prayer Partners will be assigned by Tuesday, December 8. You may complete the form or pick one up to take home with you. Please return to the Parish Office as soon as possible.

Advent Evening Prayer with Exposition and Benediction

On the Sundays of Advent and Christmas we gather at **6:30 PM** to pray the Hours of the Church. Families are encouraged to make this a part of their Advent and Christmas prayer. We are the Parish Family of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, and all those with a deep love of the Eucharist are invited to be present before the Sacrament in exposition on the altar. Evening Prayer and Benediction go about forty-five minutes. Please join us tonight for Evening Prayer this Second Sunday of Advent.

Advent of Christmas Concert

The Cathedral Festival Choir will present an evening of classic music for the Advent and Christmas seasons on **Sunday, December 13** at **7:00 PM**. Take a bit of time from your busy December schedule to hear the sounds of the season in the glorious acoustics of the Cathedra. There will be a *Free Will Offering*.

Thank You Received

The Church of Mandeville, Jamaica, and Saint Margaret Mary Parish in Lionnetown, send a gracious thank you for our annual gift of \$5,000.00. Over the years we have been partnered with Saint Margaret Mary. Mandeville is a very poor Diocese with a very small Catholic population. Our stewardship of treasure helps the Local Church evangelize in the name of Jesus Christ. They expressed their gratitude for our commitment and generosity to them.

Youth Choir For Christmas Eve

At 4:20 PM on December 24, all children who like to sing will be invited to join Miss Nina in the front of the Church to sing carols before the 5:00 PM Mass. Seats will be reserved for those children who come to rehearsal on Saturday, December 19 at 10:00 AM in the Music Room. For more information call the Music Ministry Office at 944-2044.

Charismatic Prayer Group

The Charismatic Prayer Group will NOT meet this Monday, December 7th. There will be **Praise & Worship** on Monday, December 14th, at 7:00 PM in the Cathedral. Music will be led by the Cathedral Charismatic Prayer Group. All are welcome!

Liturgical Reflection ...

This Tuesday the Catholic Church begins the Holy Year of Mercy. The focus for believers will be the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The corporal works of mercy are: to feed the poor; to give drink to the thirsty; to clothe the naked; to shelter the homeless; to care for the sick; to visit the imprisoned; and to bury the dead. The spiritual works of mercy are: to convert sinners; to instruct the ignorant; to advise the doubtful; to comfort the sorrowful; to bear wrongs patiently; to forgive injuries; and to pray for the living and the dead. This will be a year to celebrate God's mercy by living lives of mercy.

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OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Sunday, November 29, 2015 - \$7,777.00

Christmas Flower Memorials - Please remember to have your Christmas Flower Memorial envelope returned to the Parish Office by **December 21** to assure that your memorial will be listed in the Christmas bulletin. If you have misplaced this rose colored envelope, just place the name of your loved one on any envelope marked "Christmas Flowers".

Baptism Congratulations

Kennedy Rose Moran was baptized and welcomed into our Cathedral Parish Family at 10:00 AM Mass on Sunday, November 29. Congratulations to parents, Brendan and Jamie, along with godparents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. And at Noon Mass, Patrick Parrish and Ashley Merritts presented their son Jameson Shane Parrish for Baptism. Congratulations also to godparents, Seth and Ashley Parrish, grandparents, family and friends. Kennedy and Jameson will grow in their Christian identity to the degree that family and friends model the faith.

New and Expectant Parents Please Note:

Our next Session of **Baptismal Preparation** is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 6** at **7:00 PM** in the Seton Suite. This change was necessary due to our very hectic Advent/Christmas schedule.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

F.I.R.E. (High School Religious Education)

Our teens will be shopping for our *Christmas For Families* children on **December 13**. We will meet at **Walmart at 2:00 PM**. At our evening session we will be wrapping our gifts and packing boxes of food and non-perishable paper and cleaning products. This is our service project and all students should be in attendance.