

DECEMBER 10, 2017

Scripture Reflection

Perhaps you can recall making preparations for a big event, a wedding or anniversary. There were invitations to send, menus to prepare, decorations to make, and party clothes to purchase. Today's readings are about preparing for an even bigger event, the coming of God's Chosen One. The Gospel begins with a proclamation of the "good news" about Jesus Christ. Mark apparently believes that his community already received a "Save the Date" notice for this celebration in the words of the prophet Isaiah, words which are part of our First Reading.

Mark emphasizes throughout his Gospel that Jesus is God's Son. With this title, he affirms that Jesus Christ is God's agent who will restore divine kingship. Mark emphasizes Jesus' power. John the Baptist proclaims, "One mightier than I is coming after me!" Throughout his Gospel, Mark reminds his audience that, no matter how chaotic the world had become, Jesus bore the power of God and could defeat even the fiercest opponents. John's baptism was an act of resistance. Those who received it left death and chaos behind and publicly identified themselves as subjects of God's authority. God's response to these declarations, John promises, will be a second baptism "with the Holy Spirit," in which believers will receive a share of the Son's power to defeat the forces of disruption.

Mark reminds us that we bear the power of Christ. We who have received the Holy Spirit in our baptism carry on Christ's struggle against chaos and death. God's kingdom is not yet fully restored. John began the work; we continue it today in the power of the Spirit. We bear Christ's power to unlock centuries old chains of fear, hate, alienation and mistrust. We bear Christ's power to forgive those who wrong us and beg forgiveness for ourselves. We bear Christ's power to heal scars of mind and soul, to dismiss demons of loneliness, despair and self-loathing and to restore those dead in spirit to life. To prepare for Christ's arrival, let us recommit ourselves to Christ's mission and challenge chaos and death wherever we find them.

● **Where has chaos gained a foothold in your life? How can Christ's power help you overcome it?**

AT HOME with the WORD 2018, Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, pg. 21. AMERICA MAGAZINE, "Thy Kingdom Come", Michael R. Simone, S.J., November 17, 2017.

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Holy Trinity Catholic School Cash Raffle tickets are being sold. Tickets are \$2.00/ticket. Cash prizes are \$1,000, \$750, and \$500. Please purchase tickets off of a Holy Trinity Student or by calling 814-942- 7835. Prizes will be drawn on December 14, at the Middle School Christmas Show.

Holy Trinity Catholic School Toy Drive started on November 28th. This toy drive is to benefit the St. Vincent DePaul Society's Family Kitchen/Hollidaysburg American Rescue Workers. Each child is asked to bring one unwrapped toy (\$15 max) to the school before December 14th. To participate, or for more information, please contact HTCS at 814-942-7835.

Holy Trinity Christmas Concert is coming up! Join us for a festive evening while watching the children perform various Christmas songs and readings. Hollidaysburg Campus is December 10 at 4 PM. Altoona Campus is December 11th at 7 PM and the Middle School campus is on December 14th at 7 PM.

Volunteering at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament Parish

Would you like to volunteer your time and talent to the Cathedral Parish but do not know how to obtain the mandatory state and diocesan clearances? Every employee and volunteer must fulfill all clearances needed from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown to participate in parish activities. Every parish and church-associated activity are required to meet these standards as we uphold our commitment to protecting God's children and youth. Cathedral Parish is offering assistance to fulfill all clearances at the Altoona Public Library on Saturday, January 13 from 9:00 AM through 1:00 PM. Free help to fill in the forms and to view the training films will be provided. The Parish will cover any costs needed for these required clearances. For more information, please call the Cathedral Parish Office at 944-4603 or Chris Laraia at 312-7317.

Baptism Congratulations!

On Sunday, December 3, Brooks Michael Gormish was baptized and welcomed into our Cathedral Parish Family. Congratulations to parents, Francis and Meghan, sister Giavanna and brother Luca. May the graces of the Sacrament of Baptism strengthen Brooks and the adults who care for him.

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.

ANOIDING 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.

Charismatic Prayer - Monday 7:00 PM.

Evening Prayer within Eucharistic Exposition -Advent and

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

Eucharistic Adoration - First Wednesday - 12:30 PM - 8:00 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

EUCCHARIST:

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

CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAM - 944-4603

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 944-4603

MAIL MINISTRY TO ELDERLY, HOMEBOUND, SERIOUSLY SICK, AND GRIEVING - 944-4603

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Web: www.holytrinitycatholic.school

Altoona Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 381-7011

Hollidaysburg Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 695-6112

Middle School Campus (Grades 5 thru 8) - 942-7835

BISHOP GUILFOYLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org - 944-4014

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 8 - 312-7317

Jean Koury - 9 thru 12 - 949-2777

Religious Education Office: Sundays - 943-7424

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

Leslie C. Thayer, MM, CAGO

Music Ministry Office - 944-2044

E-mail: lthayer@dioceseaj.org

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

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 10, 2017

Readings: *Is 40:1-5,9-11; 2 Pt 3:8-14; Mk 1:1-8*

MASS INTENTIONS

December 11, Monday: Saint Damasus I, Pope

Readings: *Is 35:1-10; Lk 5:17-26*

6:45 AM Bill Crouse (Dave & Karen Rhoa)

8:00 AM Rose Himmelein (Minnie Yahner)

12:00 PM Patty Geis (Ken & Norma Farabaugh)

December 12, Tuesday: Our Lady of Guadalupe

Readings: *Zec 2:4-17; Lk 1:26-38*

6:45 AM Gloria & Eric Hockenberry, Wedding Anniv.

8:00 AM Bernard G. Plank, Birth/Anniv (Family)

12:00 PM Charles McCall, Birth/Anniv (Family)

December 13, Wednesday: St. Lucy, Virgin & Martyr

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

6:45 AM Thomas & Mary Irwin (Irwin Family)

8:00 AM Helen Anderson (Mary Lysinger)

12:00 PM Paul R. Rose, Birthday (Rose Family)

December 14, Thursday: St. John of the Cross, Pr & Dr

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

6:45 AM David Riley (Carol Riley)

8:00 AM Health of Carrie Detwiler (Rita & Jerry Kibler)

12:00 PM Jerry Smith (Mary Ann Carroll)

December 15, Friday: Advent Weekday

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

6:45 AM Fred J. Martynuska (Family)

8:00 AM Leroy & Irmina Helfrich (Estate)

12:00 PM David Axinn (Family)

December 16, Saturday: Advent Weekday

Readings: *Sir 48:1-4,9-11; Mt 17:9,10-13*

8:00 AM Marian & Thomas Swires (Children)

12:00 PM Carol Z. Smith, Birthday (Family)

Vigil: Third Sunday of Advent

Readings: *Is 61:1-2,10-11; 1 Thes 5:16-24; Jn 1:6-8,19-28*

5:00 PM Mary Kathryn Kantoski, Birthday (Family)

Advent of Christmas Concert

The Cathedral Choir, guest singers, and members of the Altoona Symphony will present Sing the Songs of Bethlehem, a concert of Advent and Christmas music in the "Lessons and Carols" format, composed and arranged by K. Lee Scott, on Sunday, December 17, at 3:00 PM in the Cathedral. The audience will be invited to participate in singing the familiar carols. There will be a free-will offering.

Please remember our sick in your prayers.

Communal Advent Penance Service

Cathedral Parish will celebrate our annual Advent Penance Service on Wednesday, December 20 at 6:30PM. Bishop will preside along with fourteen priests. Our second grade parishioners will be making their First Confession. There will be a reception in the Cathedral Hall following the Penance Service to congratulate our First Penitents. All are welcome. The Reconciliation Liturgy lasts one hour. Everyone going to Confession will have the opportunity to go face-to-face or anonymously to each priest. This is a rich opportunity to prepare for the great Christmas Feast. Free your calendars and be present to celebrate the Lord's sacramental forgiveness at this annual liturgy.

Advent Evening Prayer with Exposition and Benediction

On the Sundays of Advent and Christmas season, we will 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. Please join us for Evening Prayer this Second Sunday of Advent.

Advent/Christmas Prayer Partners

Sign-up forms are available this weekend at tables located at the church doors. You may complete the form or pick one up to take home with you to return by mail. You will receive the name of your Prayer Partner this week.

Advent Giving

Cathedral Parish prepares baskets of food for needy families at the conclusion of Advent for the celebration of the Christmas holidays. Bins are placed at the three doors of the Cathedral to collect non-perishable food items, paper products, cleaning items, and personal care products. Please remember to bring in your donations the Sundays of Advent so we can serve the poor in our community. Paper products, laundry and cleaning products, and personal care items cannot be purchased with food stamps. Also, remember to place winter coats that are in good condition on the clothes rack located near the front doors of the Cathedral. Individuals have already contacted the Parish for heavy coats to wear throughout the upcoming winter weather.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Sunday, December 3, 2017 - \$9,434.00

Christian Initiation - Inquiry Sessions

Are you interested in the Catholic Church? Do you know someone who might be interested in seeking information about our Catholic faith? Today the Cathedral Christian Initiation Team will meet in the Seton Suite at 11:00 AM with all those seeking information on the Catholic Church.

Christmas Flower Memorials

Please remember to have your Christmas Flower Memorial envelope returned to the Parish Office by **December 18** to assure that your memorial will be listed in the Christmas bulletin. If you have misplaced this envelope, just place the name of your loved one on any envelope marked "Christmas Flowers."

Christmas For Families

All Cathedral families and individuals are encouraged to help others this Advent. We are sponsoring three families through Catholic Charities. Confirmation classes are shopping for specific items for three girls and four boys ranging in age from newborn to 17. Gift certificates for your favorite stores, markets, gas stations, etc. would be great additions. We will need the items by Monday, December 11th. Call Jean Koury at 934-7316 with any questions. Students will wrap gifts on December 17th.

Monthly Eucharistic Adoration

Cathedral Parish will offer our monthly adoration before the Blessed Sacrament on Wednesday, January 3, from 12:30PM until 8:00PM. Plan ahead to make time for quiet prayer before the Sacrament of Life. Please pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life from among the members of the diocesan family. Adoration is a rich opportunity for deepening our spiritual life and our relationship with the Lord.

Sacramental Preparation - Confirmation

All Ninth Grade Students: **Baptismal Retreat**, Saturday, December 16, 2017, 1:30 - 4:30 PM in the Cathedral Hall, followed by 5:00 PM Mass.

F.I.R.E. Classes for December

Class for December are as follows:

December 17, 2017. Class will gather in Church for Evening Prayer at 6:30 PM. Following Evening Prayer, we will wrap Christmas gifts.

Calendars of Prizes 2018 Are Here!

Calendars of Prizes 2018 are being sold at the Cathedral Square door after all Masses. 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. 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. If you have a favorite three digit number, call the Parish Office (944-4603) weekdays between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM to check on availability or stop at the Cathedral Square door after Mass. These make great Christmas gifts that last all year!

Friar's Nook Gift Shop - Christmas Happenings

Celebrate the Christmas season by receiving 20% off your entire purchase at The Friar's Nook Gift Shop December 11th - 23rd! The Friar's Nook is located across from St. Bernardine Monastery at 793 Monastery Road, Hollidaysburg.

Take the stress out of you Christmas cookie prep work by stopping at The Friar's Nook Gift Shop on Wednesday, December 20th to purchase homemade Christmas cookie trays! There will be a variety of both traditional and ethnic cookies, so stop out early!

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

Liturgical Reflection ...

Advent is a time of hopeful anticipation as we prepare to celebrate the remembrance of the Lord's first coming and, also, recalling his final coming in glory at the end of time. As we celebrate our funeral rites, the goal is to bring hope to the living. We turn to the Lord of life at the time of death to find assurance in our faith. We turn to the God of mercy in time of crisis and pain. To those who mourn and grieve, there is reason to have hope. In God is our hope and our salvation.

Order of Christian Funerals, 1998/1989, General Introduction, Number 7.

2017, Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Liturgy Office, 925 South Logan Boulevard, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania 16648.