

Third Sunday in the Season of Advent



"Today's Gospel tells us that John the Baptist came as a witness to testify to the Light – Jesus Christ.

We need to bear witness to Christ the Light.

By Baptism we become members of the family of Christ, the true Light of the world.

Jesus said: "You are the light of the world."

Hence, our mission as brothers and sisters of Christ and members of His Church is to reflect Christ's Light to others.

It is especially important during the Advent Season that we reflect Christ's unconditional love and forgiveness."

+Advent Reflection
Vatican Radio, 2006



HOLY MASS SCHEDULE

SEE BULLETIN FOR HOLY DAYS

Saturday Vigil	4:00pm
Sunday	8:30am
	10:30am
	12:30pm
	5:00pm

Daily

Monday-Friday	6:30am
Monday-Saturday	8:15am

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

2:00pm on first and third Sundays.
Pre-Baptism class is at 2:00pm on second Sunday. All by appointment.

Sponsors need letter from their pastor.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

2:30–3:30pm every Saturday;
Weekly Holy Hour with Confessions from 6:30–7:30pm every Wednesday.
Anytime upon request.
(Call for appointment.)

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

No date should be set prior to seeing a priest or deacon six months before desired date.

SACRAMENT OF THE SICK

Please contact the Parish office.

614.885.7814

SAINTMICHAEL-CD.ORG
5750 NORTH HIGH STREET
WORTHINGTON, OHIO 43085



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SAINT MICHAEL STAFF DIRECTORY

WEBSITE: SAINTMICHAEL-CD.ORG

Parish Office: 614-885-7814

MINISTERS TO THE PARISH

Pastor:

Fr. Michael J. Lumpe

Parochial Vicar:

Fr. Wojciech Stachura, SAC

Priest in Residence/Diocesan Judicial Vicar:

Fr. Robert Kitsmiller

Priest in Holy Service:

Fr. Peter Fegan, O.P.

Permanent Deacons:

Dcn. John Crerand

Dcn. Bill Demidovich

Dcn. Klaus Fricke (Retired)

Pastoral Minister:

Sr. Riya Mary

srriya@saintmichael-cd.org

Youth Minister:

Jake Asuncion

jasuncion@saintmichael-cd.org

Director of RCIA:

Jake Neal

jneal@sjhcc.org

PARISH OFFICE

Business Manager:

Kris Jesse

kjesse@saintmichael-cd.org

Office Manager:

Kathy Trafford

ktrafford@saintmichael-cd.org

Receptionist/Secretary:

Rhonda Marinelli

rmarinelli@saintmichael-cd.org

Marketing & Communications:

Rebecca Lund

rlund@saintmichael-cd.org

Campus Facility and Safety Director:

Steve Moore

smoore@saintmichael-cd.org

Safe Environment Coordinator:

Bethany Cook

bcook@saintmichael-cd.org

Choir Director/Organist:

Ron Barrett

rbarrett@saintmichael-cd.org

ST. MICHAEL SCHOOL

Website: stmichaelworthington.org

School Office: 614-885-3149

Principal:

Sr. Mary Regina, O.P.

principal@stmichaelworthington.org

Preschool Director:

Laura Wells

lwells@stmichaelworthington.org

SAINT MICHAEL INFORMATION CENTER



LOW-GLUTEN HOST

If you are in need of a low-gluten host, please scan this QR code for full details.



NEW MEMBERS

Registering in a parish is a declaration of your desire to be part of a Catholic community and a commitment to the life of the parish family. We are often asked to provide affidavits for parishioner standing. We can only do this if a person is a registered, active, and contributing member in our parish. You can register by scanning the QR code above or by visiting our website at www.saintmichael-cd.org.

BULLETIN DEADLINE

To submit a bulletin request, the request must be made no later than 12:00 p.m., Monday. Send bulletin requests to rlund@saintmichael-cd.org with "BULLETIN REQUEST" in the subject line with all details and contact person for questions. Early submission deadlines may be required surrounding holidays. All bulletin requests are subject to approval.

HOMEBOUND MINISTRY

St. Michael's Homebound Ministry is available to bring the Eucharist to the homebound. If you or a loved one within St. Michael Parish boundaries would like someone to bring the Eucharist to you, please reach out to Sr. Riya Mary to coordinate. She can be reached by calling the Parish Office or by emailing srriya@stmichael-cd.org.



ONLINE GIVING

St. Michael offers online giving as a convenient tool for you to use. Scan the QR code to learn more or to set up online contributions.

Athletic Association Representative:

Liz Trolli

smaa@saintmichael-cd.org

Knights of Columbus Representative:

Seth Walker

grandknight@kofc11445.com

St. Vincent de Paul Society Representative:

Elaine Miracle

svdp@saintmichael-cd.org

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 17, 2023

DAILY MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday, December 17

- 8:30 a.m. + Deceased Members of the Mathy-Miller Families
 10:30 a.m. + James Mentel (Rose & Doug Bickford)
 12:30 p.m. For the Living & Deceased Members of our Parish
 5:00 p.m. + Christopher Pena (The O'Leary Family)

Monday, December 18

- 6:30 a.m. + Poor Souls in Purgatory
 8:15 a.m. Special Intention of Ron Horvath (The Smullen Family)

Tuesday, December 19

- 6:30 a.m. + Dan Oparowski (Mary Maurer)
 8:15 a.m. Special Intention of Adam Jazwiec (Lauren Jazwiec)

Wednesday, December 20

- 6:30 a.m. + James W. Stofer (The Stofer Family)
 8:15 a.m. For the School
 6:00 p.m. For our Parish Families during this Advent Season

Thursday, December 21

- 6:30 a.m. + Rita McNally (James McNally)
 8:15 a.m. + Jo Kell (Patty & George Doyle)

Friday, December 22

- 6:30 a.m. + Mary Kortyna (The Vincent Family)
 8:15 a.m. + The Weaver Family (The Pillivant Family)

Saturday, December 23

- 8:15 a.m. Special Intention of Johnny Shepherd (Lauren Jazwiec)
 4:00 p.m. + Thomas O'Leary (The O'Leary Family)
 6:00 p.m. + Trevor Warnken (Carl & Sharon Merhar)

Sunday, December 24

- 8:30 a.m. + For the Living & Deceased Members of our Parish
 10:30 a.m. + Vera Jaketic (Dennis Jaketic)
 NO 12:30 p.m. MASS
 4:00 p.m. + Cesidio Pizzuti (The Pizzuti Family)
 6:00 p.m. For the Needs of our Parish Families
 10:00 p.m. + For the Living & Deceased Members of our Parish

Monday, December 25

- 10:30 a.m. + Ed Ferkany (Jeanne Ferkany)



DECEMBER 17, 2023

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."

– 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

This Scripture reading sums up Stewardship. "Rejoice always" means place your trust in God; He will provide all that you need. "Pray constantly" means prayer should be a running conversation with God throughout the whole day, every day. "Give thanks in all circumstances" means even in bad situations, thank God. Suffering a little bit helps build empathy for others in similar situations and shows our dependence on God.



BAPTISM
CONGRATULATIONS
ON THE BAPTISM OF
LUCAS VINCENT TALIANI



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

DECEMBER 10, 2023:

Envelopes.....	\$ 17,568.20
Online Giving	\$ 9,537.00
Total	\$ 27,105.20

PARISH CALENDAR: DECEMBER

SUNDAY December 17	SVdP Giving Trees in Marian Hall K of C Collection for Troops in Marian Hall 11:30 a.m. RCIA (LMR) 2:00 p.m. Baptism (C) 3:00 p.m. Middle School Youth Group (Gym) 6:00 p.m. High School Youth Group (MH)	Thursday, December 21	Eucharistic Exposition (AC) 5:30 p.m. Cub Scout Meeting (U) 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice (C)
Monday, December 18	6:30 p.m. Boy Scouts (U)	Friday, December 22	Eucharistic Exposition (AC) Parish Office Closed
Tuesday, December 19	No Activities	Saturday, December 23	2:30 p.m. Confessions (C)
Wednesday, December 20	6:30 p.m. Holy Hour & Confessions (C)	SUNDAY December 24	11:30 a.m. Christmas Decorating (MH. C)

(U) = Undercroft/Cafeteria, (S) = School, (C) = Church, (G) = Gym, (MH) = Marian Hall, (SL) = School Library, (UMR) = Meeting room on the first floor of the Parish Ministry Center, (LMR) = Meeting room in the basement of the Parish Ministry Center, (AC) = Adoration Chapel

FROM THE PASTOR

ON THIS THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – GAUDETE SUNDAY – we find ourselves – liturgically speaking – halfway through this Advent Season. Amid the busyness of various preparations for Christmas, today is a perfect time to ask ourselves: What will bring me true joy and happiness? From our personal experience, we know there are various types of joy and happiness. Some are superficial and they come and go. But there is also deeper and lasting joy and happiness that abides and remains. The challenges of life, with all the pains and anxieties that can accompany them, remind us of where we find our true joy and happiness – in God, and in His Son Jesus Christ. This busy time of year should remind us all of the Gospel of Martha and Mary, with Jesus coming to visit them in their home, and Martha busy with preparations:

Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38-42 – RSV)

Martha was so busy and occupied with things to feed and provide for Jesus as part of hospitality, while Mary sat at the feet of the Lord to listen to Him, to learn from Him, to find comfort and consolation in Him. So amid the busyness that we find ourselves in during this time of year, let's strive to be less like Martha and more like Mary – let's find a balance between our spiritual needs, and the other things on our plates during this time of Advent preparations. Let's choose the "good portion," which shall not be taken away from us. Advent also reminds us that the joyful answer to our problems lies in God. Think about the signage and sentiments we see and hear this time of year. What a significant difference there is between "Happy Holidays," "Seasons Greetings" and "Merry Christmas." Anyone can celebrate the emptiness of Happy Holidays and Seasons Greetings. But how beautiful it is to have *Christ* at the center of a Merry Christmas! Christ is the one and only gift at the center of a Merry Christmas Who is lacking from Happy Holidays and Seasons Greetings. Jesus truly is the "reason for this season!" In the first reading today, we hear the prophet Isaiah reminding us that God is the source of our joy: "I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul; for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation, and wrapped me in a mantle of justice." During this Advent season of looking to God as the answer to our deepest needs, I especially enjoy the line, "in my God is the joy of my soul." We could use that line as an examination of conscience – is God the joy of my soul? Am I centered on God? Folks, let us place God first because that is the only way to have joy. In today's Psalm, we sing the Blessed Virgin Mary's *Magnificat* – her song of praise when she visited Elizabeth, which also reminds us that God is our joy: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him." Again, during this Advent Season of looking to God as the answer to our deepest needs, I especially enjoy the phrase, "my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." What a joy for us to be saved by Jesus! We can indeed rejoice in God our Savior. Our second reading, taken from St. Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, urges us to "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." It is really our vocation to "rejoice always." How? When we place our trust and hope in God! Then even in difficult times when there is a storm at the surface, we can "rejoice always" deep within. In today's Gospel, John the Baptist was asked, "Who are you?" He declared, "I am not the Messiah" and went on to say, "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." In John the Baptist, we see a model for our own spirituality, knowing that we, too, are not worthy to untie even the sandal strap of the Lord. John pointed away from himself to Jesus. Humility, like that of John the Baptist in the Gospel today, brings authentic joy and happiness. These beautiful Scripture texts we heard proclaimed today remind us that true joy and happiness is to be found only in God. Again, if we are not finding our joy and happiness in God, we are under an illusion and sooner or later God will give us the painful grace of allowing that illusion to give way to reality. God is the answer. Advent reminds us that the joyful answer to our problems lies in God. What a difference there is between "Happy Holidays" and "Merry Christmas," recognizing that Christmas begins with Christ, and Jesus truly is the "reason for the season." Christ is the one and only gift at the center of a truly joyful, happy, and Merry Christmas. Keep this in mind during the remainder of Advent, which is passing so quickly this year, so that all of us will indeed experience the joy of encountering Jesus next Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Advent), and through a truly Blessed and Merry Christmas, beginning at 4:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve, one week from today.

PARISH MASS SCHEDULE REMINDER

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 23: Vigil Masses at 4:00 p.m. **AND** 6:00 p.m. (6:00 p.m. Mass added for this year)

Sunday, December 24: 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m.; **NO** 12:30 p.m. Mass (time to decorate the church for Christmas)

Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Christmas Eve + Sunday, December 24: 4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m.,

10:00 p.m. "Midnight Mass" with homecoming reception following in Marian Hall

Christmas Day + Monday, December 25: 10:30 a.m.

– Fr. Mike Lumpe

ADVENT SEASON

Saint Michael the Archangel Parish + 5750 N. High Street + Worthington, Ohio 43085 + (614) 885-7814

Merry Chris – Uh, Oh, Excuse Me... “Happy Holidays”

By Rich Maffeo

My wife placed the salad bowl on the table, sat down and looked at me. "I'm starting a one-person campaign to revive Christmas."

I paused for a moment and then reached for the rolls. "What are you talking about?"

"I'm tired of rolling over for the culture that's changed Merry Christmas to 'Happy Holidays' and 'Good Spirit.' If it wasn't for Jesus, no one would be saying anything."

Except perhaps, 'Bah Humbug' I thought.

"From now on," she continued, "I'm wishing people a Merry Christmas."

I took a bite of the roll, but had already lost some of my appetite. That always happens when I feel guilty about something. Her words reminded me how often I succumb to political correctness and rarely use the "C" word. It's easier to just say, "Happy Holiday" -- or say nothing at all.

Humbug.

She continued. "Today, when the UPS guy dropped off the package, I said, Merry Christmas as he walked back to his truck." She stopped a moment, her eyes alive with excitement, and added, "He turned around and smiled and wished me a Merry Christmas, too. He seemed surprised someone said that to him. I think he really enjoyed hearing me say it."

Nancy then told me of two other people she'd said those two words that raise PC hackles and cause ACLU lawyers to rush to their casebooks. "They also were glad I said it."

Merry Christmas. Why would the best story the world has ever known raise the blood pressure of so many people? Why would the eternally gracious and sacrificial gift of God make so many people Christmasphobic?

I think it's because God insists forgiveness of sins is wrapped neatly in His gift package marked: Only For Those Who Love My Son, Jesus.

A lot of people think that's too restrictive.

Well, they're right. It is.

Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through me." He also warned, "Unless you believe I am He, you will die in your sins."

And then there's the Scripture, "At the name of Jesus every knee will bow. . . and every tongue confess, that Jesus is Lord." And again, "There is no name (but Jesus) under heaven" through which we can be saved.

Those who are familiar with the Bible can cite dozens of other passages which support the point that God established only one way to Him, exclusive of all other paths.

I suppose if I didn't like being told what to accept and how to behave to gain eternal life, I'd hate Christmas, too. I'd hate being reminded of God's narrow doorway every December. I'd be a raving Christmasphobe. Maybe also a Christianphobe.

My wife is on the right track. Without John 3:16 there wouldn't be a Christmas. Without Christmas there would be no hope – for you, me, our families, our neighbors. No one.

But there ***IS*** a Christmas. And I thank God for this holiday – this *Holy Day*. Each year Christmas reminds us just how much the Father paid for our gift of forgiveness and eternal life.

"Happy Holiday" is a humbug.

"Merry Christmas" is the beginning of an intimate relationship with Him.

This article is made available courtesy of Catholic Exchange.

DOERS OF THE WORD

SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PARISH • 5750 N. HIGH STREET • WORTHINGTON, OHIO 43085 • (614) 885-7814

'Tis the Season for the Works of Mercy

By Sally Guest

"Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' " (Matthew 25:37-40)

Isn't it wonderful? All the opportunities that come with this time of year to practice the works of mercy. There are can food drives through which we may **feed the hungry**. Mitten trees and coat drives enable us to **clothe the naked**. Bingo and Christmas caroling at nursing homes provide chances to **visit the sick**. Being hospitable to all the family and friends who will visit, especially those who may "be staying a few days," can even be seen as giving **shelter to the homeless** when welcoming them with the love of Jesus.

Our Lord lets us know, through St. Matthew's Gospel, that these acts of charity are good and necessary. Perhaps that is why upon performing the corporal works of mercy we often feel good. Even more so when we actually get to deliver the food or clothing and interact with those we are serving. We can then see the difference our simple gestures make. Indeed, we are most happy when we are living for others more than for ourselves.

How about the spiritual works of mercy: **instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish the sinner, bear wrongs patiently, forgive offences willingly, comfort the afflicted, pray for the living and the dead**. Why do we find these harder to perform (with, perhaps, the exception of the last one)? Why is it that we do not perform these acts as often as their corporal counterparts? [Tweet "Why don't we perform spiritual acts of mercy as often as corporal works?"]

Are there not as many opportunities? I don't think so. There is plenty of sin, doubt and ignorance in our world nowadays. Many wrongs to bear and forgive. Too many who need comfort in their affliction. So why, then, do we not perform the spiritual works of mercy as often as the corporal works?

I purpose two reason why: 1) they are harder to do, and 2) we don't always get that good feeling that we do when we perform a corporal work of mercy.

Prayer and a bit of wisdom is required to instruct, counsel and admonish. We must trust that God will give us the right words, unassuming confidence, and a gentle disposition. Moreover, it is not easy to bear wrongs without complaint, and even harder to forgive of our own free will, especially if the person who has hurt us has not asked for forgiveness. In order to truly be able to touch another soul, we must develop the gifts of the Holy Spirit - wisdom, knowledge, understanding, piety, counsel, fortitude and fear of the Lord.

It takes courage to instruct, counsel, and admonish. We fear not saying the right thing, being accused of being hateful, and/or ending up in an argument. Instruction, advice and especially admonition is not always well-received. Thus, we may walk away from a spiritual work feeling unsure about what we did or sadden by the response. Definitely not that same good feeling we experience giving a homeless person a Happy Meal.

Perhaps that is why praying for the living and the dead is the only spiritual work many of us will ever do. We see the need, but think, "I'll pray about that and let the Holy Spirit take care of it." Prayer is most needed, for sure, but so are works. Sometimes, the Holy Spirit needs a mouth to speak out loud. Sometimes, He needs arms to wrap around someone. Sometimes, He wants us to be willing to stand up for Him.

So let us take advantage of every opportunity given us to spread the good news that God loves us, His mercy is meant for us, He sees and cares for us. God provides everyone with all that they need, body and soul. Sometimes, many times, He chooses to provide those needs through us.

This article is made available courtesy of The Catholic Mom.

Lectio Divina

SCRIPTURE READING + MEDITATION + PRAYER + CONTEMPLATION

“What page, what passage of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is not the truest of guides for human life?” ~Saint Benedict, from the *Rule of Saint Benedict* (73:3)

The month of December is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

"Let my eyes take their sleep, but may my heart always keep watch for You. May Your right hand bless Your servants who love You. May I be united with the praise that flows from You, Lord Jesus, to all Your saints; united with the gratitude drawn from Your heart, good Jesus, that causes Your saints to thank You; united with Your passion, good Jesus, by which You took away our guilt; united with the divine longing that You had on earth for our salvation; united with every prayer that welled from Your divine heart, good Jesus, and flowed into the hearts of Your saints."

~A PRAYER COMPOSED BY SAINT PETER CANISIUS

Monday, December 18 ~ Third Week in the Season of Advent

O Lord and Ruler of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the flame of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: Come and redeem us with outstretched arm.

Holy Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

Meditation: Mary had to face an enormous challenge to her faith and trust in God and to the faith of her family and Joseph, the man she chose to marry. She was asked to assume a burden of tremendous responsibility. It had never been heard of before that a child could be born without a natural father. Mary was asked to accept this miraculous exception to the laws of nature. That required faith and trust in God and in his promises. Second, Mary was not yet married. Pregnancy outside of wedlock was not tolerated in those days. Mary was only espoused to Joseph, and such an engagement had to last for a whole year. She was asked to assume a great risk. She could have been rejected by Joseph, by her family, by all her own people. Mary knew that Joseph and her family would not understand without revelation from God. She nonetheless believed and trusted in God's promises.

Prayer: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we, who are weighed down from of old by slavery beneath the yoke of sin, may be set free by the newness of the long-awaited Nativity of your Only Begotten Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Joseph, a just and God-fearing man, did not wish to embarrass or punish his espoused wife, Mary when he discovered that she was pregnant. To all appearances she had broken their solemn pledge to be faithful and chaste to one another. Joseph, no doubt took this troubling matter to God in prayer. He was not hasty to judge or to react with hurt and anger. God rewarded him not only with guidance and consolation, but with the divine assurance that he had indeed called Joseph to be the husband of Mary and to assume a mission that would require the utmost faith, confidence, and trust in Almighty God. Joseph believed in the divine message to take Mary as his wife and to accept the child in her womb as the promised Messiah. Like Mary, Joseph is a model of faith for us. He is a faithful witness

and servant of God's unfolding plan of redemption. Are you ready to believe in the promises of God, even when faced with perplexing circumstances and what seems like insurmountable problems?

Tuesday, December 19 ~ Third Week in the Season of Advent

O Root of Jesse, who stands for an ensign of the people, before whom kings shall keep silence and unto whom the Gentiles shall make supplication: Come to deliver us, and tarry not.

Holy Gospel: Luke 5:1-25 In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren and both were advanced in years. Once when he was serving as priest in his division's turn before God, according to the practice of the priestly service, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense. Then, when the whole assembly of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense offering, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was troubled by what he saw, and fear came upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord." Then Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel said to him in reply, "I am Gabriel, who stand before God. I was sent to speak to you and to announce to you this good news. But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time." Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and were amazed that he stayed so long in the sanctuary. But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He was gesturing to them but remained mute. Then, when his days of ministry were completed, he went home. After this time his wife Elizabeth conceived, and she went into seclusion for five months, saying, "So has the Lord done for me at a time when he has seen fit to take away my disgrace before others."

Meditation: Zechariah was a faithful man who was tuned to God's voice. He was born into a priestly family and it was his privilege to be chosen to enter the inner court of the temple to offer sacrifice to God. Luke records that the people wondered at Zechariah's delay and were amazed that he was speechless when he withdrew from the inner sanctuary. They rightly perceived that he had a special encounter with God. God's angelic messenger greeted Zechariah with a blessing beyond his expectations. "Your prayer is heard! You will have a son! And his mission will be great for all of Israel." Now that seemed like a lot for Zechariah to take in all at once. Could God really do a miracle for his barren wife, Elizabeth? The angel somewhat wisely put Zechariah in his place before God's mighty action. He became speechless until the day the infant was dedicated to the Lord and given the name, John. When God draws us into his presence, he wants us to be still and quiet before him so we can listen as he speaks to our hearts and reveals his mind to us.

Prayer: O God, who through your Only Begotten Son have made us a new creation, look kindly, we pray, on the handiwork of your mercy, and at your Son's coming cleanse us from every stain of the old way of life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: In the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist, the angel explains to Zechariah the role his son is to play in preparing the way for the Messiah. John will be great in the sight of God. He will live as a Nazarite (read Book of Numbers 6) – a person set apart for the Lord. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even within his mother's womb. And he shall be sent to the people of God, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers and children to God and one another, by turning the "disobedient to the wisdom of the just." The name John means "the Lord is gracious." When God acts to save us he graciously fills us with his Holy Spirit and makes our faith "alive" to his promises. Do you pray that "the hearts of parents and children may be turned to God and one another?"

Wednesday, December 20 ~ Third Week in the Season of Advent

O Key of David, and Scepter of the House of Israel, who opens and no man shuts, who shuts and no man opens; Come and bring forth the captive from his prison, he who sits in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Holy Gospel: Luke 1:26-38 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 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, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his Kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Meditation: How does Mary respond to the word of God delivered by the angel Gabriel? She knows she is hearing something beyond human capability. It will surely take a miracle which surpasses all that God has done previously. Her question, "how shall this be, since I have no husband" is not prompted by doubt or skepticism, but by wonderment! She is a true hearer of the Word and she immediately responds with faith and trust. Mary's prompt response of "yes" to the divine message is a model of faith for all believers. Mary believed God's promises even when they seemed impossible. She was full of grace because she trusted that what God said was true and would be fulfilled. She was willing and eager to do God's will, even if it seemed difficult or costly.

Prayer: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that the coming solemnity of your Son may bestow healing upon us in this present life and bring us the rewards of life eternal. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Mary is the "mother of God" because God becomes incarnate when he takes on flesh in her womb. When we pray the Nicene Creed we state our confession of faith in this great mystery: "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man". God gives us grace and he expects us to respond with the same willingness, obedience, and heartfelt trust as Mary did. When God commands he also gives help, strength, and means to respond. We can either yield to his grace or resist and go our own way. Do you believe in God's promises and yield to his grace?

Thursday, December 21 ~ Third Week in the Season of Advent Saint Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church

*O Dawn, splendor of eternal light, and sun of justice,
come, and shine on those seated in darkness, and in the shadow of death.*

Holy Gospel: Luke 1:39-45 Mary set out in those days and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Meditation: What is the significance of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth before the birth of Jesus? When Elizabeth greeted Mary and recognized the Messiah in Mary's womb they were filled with the Holy Spirit and with a joyful anticipation of the fulfillment of God's promise to give a Savior. What a marvelous wonder for God to fill not only Elizabeth's heart with his Holy Spirit but the child in her womb as well. John the Baptist, even before the birth of the Messiah, pointed to his coming and leapt for joy in the womb of his mother as the Holy Spirit revealed to him the presence of the King to be born. The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us to enable us to know and experience the indwelling presence of God and the power of his kingdom. The Holy Spirit is the way in which God reigns within each of us. Do you live in the joy and knowledge of God's indwelling presence with you through his Holy Spirit?

Prayer: O God, who for the defense of the Catholic faith made the Priest Saint Peter Canisius strong in virtue and in learning, grant, through his intercession, that those who seek the truth may joyfully find you, their God, and that your faithful people may persevere in confession you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: You are indeed blessed if you see and recognize the Lord with the "eyes of faith." The word "blessed" [*makarios* in Greek] literally means "happiness" or "beatitude." It describes a kind of joy which is serene and untouchable, self-contained, and independent from chance and changing circumstances of life. There is a certain paradox for those "blessed" by the Lord. Mary was given the "blessedness" of being the mother of the Son of God. That blessedness also would become a sword which pierced her heart as her Son died upon the cross. Mary received both a crown of joy and a cross of sorrow. Her joy was not diminished by her sorrow because it was fueled by her faith, hope, and trust in God and his promises. Jesus promised his disciples that "no one will take your joy from you" (John 16:22). The Lord gives us a supernatural joy which enables us to bear any sorrow or pain and which neither life nor death can take away. As we move closer to the end of Advent, have you come to know during this time the joy of living a life given over to God in greater faith and trust?

Friday, December 22 ~ Third Week in the Season of Advent

*O King of the Gentiles and their desired One, the Cornerstone that makes both one;
Come, and deliver man, whom You formed out of the dust of the earth.*

Holy Gospel: Luke 1:46-56 Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior, for he has looked upon his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, and has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever." Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home.

Meditation: Today's gospel, referred to as *The Magnificat*, is not what one would have expected to hear from the lips of a simple village girl named Mary. It is Mary's response to the greeting she received from her cousin Elizabeth – a song is full of joy, especially because Mary recognizes that God has acknowledged the presence of a simple girl living in a small place who, in the eyes of the world, is deemed a person of no consequence. But, where God is concerned, everyone is of equal consequence because we are all children of God, equal in his eyes. "My spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked upon his lowly servant."

Prayer: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we, who are weighed down from of old by slavery beneath the yoke of sin, may be set free by the newness of the long-awaited Nativity of your Only Begotten Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Despite what we may think about ourselves, always remember that God has great things in store for his people. It is again a vision of the Kingdom, of God's will being done on earth. It is indeed Good News. All this is very much in line with the picture of Jesus when one reads the gospels. It is in the gospels where the poor, the weak, the marginalized, the outcast and the sinful have a special place in the eyes of Jesus. We, too, can rejoice with Mary in the long list of good things that we have been gifted with by our loving Lord. Those gifts are not just for our enjoyment. Our task is, in accordance with those God-given gifts, abilities and talents, to make sure that the love of God is tangibly experienced by the poor, the weak, the marginalized, the outcast and the sinful in our own midst. The realization of what Mary sings about in today's gospel will only take place when we all work together with Jesus to bring it about. With Mary, let us all say a hearty and resounding "Yes" to God's plans for we, his sons and daughters.

Scripture passages (NAB translation) courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Daily meditations and contemplations adapted from the Irish Jesuits' *Sacred Space* web page and *Biblical Meditations for Advent* by Rev. Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P.; prayers are from *The Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing, 2011; information about saints, solemnities, feasts and memorials courtesy of the Catholic Culture web site.

rflumpe:2023



Reflections...

thoughts to pray and ponder from Father Richard A. Tomasek, S.J.

Empathize with the Joy of the Father

Christianity is a rescue operation. Mankind is kidnapped and being held captive by a sadistic monster who is abusing us in every way while trying to convince us that our real enemy is the so-called "loving God" who brought us into a world of suffering and injustice. Our Father in heaven, however, has launched a rescue operation, sending us mighty signs and prophets to keep the truth alive through the centuries, and finally sending His Son in that final mortal battle on Golgotha to set us free.

In every rescue operation, there is a double drama unfolding--in the hearts of those needing rescue and in the hearts of the rescuers. As we journey through Advent our human tendency is to focus on the joy of our potential rescue. The third Sunday in Advent is called *Gaudete* Sunday in which the Church begins to rejoice (the Latin word *Gaudete* means Rejoice!) that our Savior is very near. But what must our Rescuer, our Savior, be feeling as He beholds our pitiful enslavement and draws ever nearer to liberating us and rejoining us to Himself?

Years ago when the Chilean miners were entombed 2,000 feet deep in the earth, there was a twofold drama unfolding--in the hearts of the doomed miners and in the hearts of the family and rescuers who prayed and labored above ground to save these trapped men. Whose joy was greater when finally they were pulled to safety, that of the miners or that of their families and rescuers?

There is the story of the father who rushed into a burning building to save his daughter who was screaming for help from a fourth story window. The firemen trying to prevent him from entering the doomed building but he broke through them, impelled by his desperate love for his daughter. He reached her and had just succeeded in throwing her to safety in the fire department net below when he himself was engulfed and overcome by smoke and flames. But what joy must have filled his heart to see his loved one live! How worthwhile the sacrifice!

The us try this Advent to imagine and empathize with the joy of the Father and of Jesus, who has released us from the living entombment of our darkness and sin, who has flung us free from this burning world by sacrificing Himself that we may live forever. While we rejoice in our own salvation, let us not forget to share in God's even greater joy. Only He knows our true and eternal worth to Him. Only He knows the bitter sorrows of the endless hell from which we have been rescued.

Look at His smile; feel His relief; celebrate with the ecstasy in His Sacred Heart. In fact, it will help our spiritual lives greatly if from now on we always try to see and feel all the events or Mysteries of the life of Jesus from His perspective as well as from our own perspective. Likewise, let us imagine what He is feeling and experiencing as He accompanies us in all the events of our own personal life. It is in each of us that Jesus continues to live His mysteries of conception, birth, childhood, hidden life, work, family, friendship, ministry, temptations, suffering, acceptance of the Father's will, dying, rising and becoming channels of the Holy Spirit Who renews the face of the earth. Imagine His joy when we become more and more transformed in His holiness. And so, from our hearts and from the heart of Jesus one cry goes forth this third Sunday of Advent: *Gaudete--Rejoice!*

In addition to being a noted theologian, speaker and writer, Fr. Tomasek served as Director of Spiritual Formation at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, and the Pontifical North American College in Rome.



Advent

A POEM BASED ON
THE BOOK OF REVELATION 22:20
BY W.H. SMAW

I am. I was. I will be.

I am not coming soon I am here.

*I was born on a cold night in a cold place,
unnoticed, unheralded by cold people
who turned my mother away.*

On that night were you listening?

On that night the “least of your brothers” was me.

Now do you see, do you hear and do you care?

I am not coming soon I am here.

*In your life do you see me
in the ragged men and women
who search the cold street
looking for my reflection in your heart?*

*Do you hear my voice in
their muttered plea or in their tear?*

I am not coming soon I am here.

*Do you hear me when your friend turns to you
to ask forgiveness and trust?*

Do I not forgive you always?

Do I not give you a merciful ear?

I am not coming soon I am here.

*In this season I was born unto you
fulfilling the promise of God’s care.*

Look for me, listen to me...

I am not coming soon; I am here.

4th Sunday of Advent & Christmas Mass Schedule

Since Christmas falls on a Monday this year, Catholics are fortunate to have **TWO** obligations to fulfill from December 23-25. Sunday, the 4th Sunday of Advent & Christmas. Below are the Mass times for each obligation, we are fortunate to be able to offer you with multiple options for your planning purposes.

4th Sunday of Advent Masses

Saturday Vigil

4:00pm

6:00pm

Sunday

8:30am

10:30am*

*Join us after the 10:30am Mass to decorate the Church for Christmas!
There will NOT be a 12:30pm Mass

Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve

4:00pm

6:00pm

10:00pm*

Christmas Day

10:30am

*followed by a Homecoming Reception in Marian Hall

SPEND TIME IN ADORATION

This Advent season, there is no better way to prepare your heart for the coming of Our Lord than in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Consider signing up for Adoration. Our Adoration Chapel offers Eucharistic Exposition on Thursdays and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. Thursday morning through 9:00 p.m. Friday evening. Adoration is available at all other times with the Blessed Sacrament reposed in the tabernacle. Registration is easy to do from your phone. Visit StMichael.WeAdoreHim.com to sign up. You also can visit the church on Wednesdays during Advent for Mass at 6:00 p.m., followed by our weekly Holy Hour with Confessions from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Parish Office Holiday Hours

Please note that the Parish Office will be closed on the following days as we celebrate this Christmas season. We look forward to serving you in 2024!

Friday, December 22

Monday, December 25

Tuesday, December 26

Monday, January 1



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS CHRISTMAS COLLECTION FOR TROOPS

St. Michael's Knights of Columbus will be collecting items for deployed troops on the weekend of December 16-17, prior to Masses. The items being collected will be sent to Fr. Chris Yakkel, deployed U.S. Air Force Chaplain from the Diocese of Columbus and the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, to provide to troops he is deployed with. Fr. Yakkel is also the Faithful Friar for the Cristino P. Damo Assembly 3932, the Fourth Degree assembly our local Knights of Columbus council is associated with for patriotic activities. In this role, Fr. Yakkel has requested items that the servicemen he serves could use. **The items requested and that we are collecting are: Beef Jerky, Coffee*, Hand Lotion, Body Wash, Shampoo and Handmade Christmas Cards.** *Please no Keurig cups, as they need coffee they can use in the pot. Knights of Columbus members will be in Marian Hall to collect donations before Mass on the weekend of December 16-17. Any questions on the collection can be sent to BrettGissel@gmail.com. Thank you for supporting our troops this Christmas season.



Break free from your Pharaohs.



Our culture today has no shortage of Pharaohs and idols that hold us back from true unity with God. Exodus 90 offers you a way out.

This men's Catholic program spends the 90 days leading up to Easter focused on prayer, asceticism, and fraternity. We are looking to bring together the men of St. Michael's Parish for this journey. **We start January 1... join now.**

Sign up using the QR code or at bit.ly/st-michael-exodus-90
Program details can be found at exodus90.com/exodus-90

MEN'S FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP

There is no meeting for Saturday, December 16th and 23rd. We will begin the next session of "Worthy of the Call" on January 6th. Of course, we will continue to pray the Rosary with your family because, "The family that recites the Rosary together reproduces something of the atmosphere of the household of Nazareth." (St Pope John Paul II) Any questions can be directed to mensgroup@saintmichael-cd.org.



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **Isaac J. Smith** from St. Michael Troop 123 on earning the EAGLE rank! Isaac's Eagle Scout project created an archery range for the Brian Muha Foundation. This foundation helps inner-city youth.

SCHOOLS

ST. MICHAEL SCHOOL IS HIRING!

St. Michael School is hiring a Before Care Assistant for the 2023-2024 School Year to work the following shift: 6:45-7:45 a.m., Monday-Friday. Students arrive at 7:00 a.m., so the start time for the position could be discussed if the applicant wishes to attend the 6:30 a.m. Mass. **Requirements:**

- Current satisfactory BCI and FBI background checks.
- Have attended or be willing to attend a **VIRTUS Protecting God's Children** training.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.

For more information or to apply, please contact Sr. Mary Regina at principal@stmichaelworthington.org.

ST. MICHAEL PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

St. Michael Preschool is now accepting application for the 2024-2025 school year. Please visit www.stmichaelworthington.org/admissions/preKindergarten/ for the application form and for more information. Completed applications can be emailed to Preschool Director Laura Wells at lwells@stmichaelworthington.org. Please note that we only accept digital copies of the application form. We anticipate to have a waitlist, so be sure to get your applications in as soon as possible.

Enrollment now open and accepting applications for the 2024-2025 school year!

St. Michael School is now an Ed Choice scholarship provider. Learn more about St. Michael School and find application paperwork by visiting

www.stmichaelworthington.org/admissions





SAVE THE DATE FOR TRIVIA NIGHT 2024!

Trivia Night is a FUNdraising evening benefiting the St. Michael Tuition Assistance Endowment Fund. Trivia Night will take place on Saturday, February 10th. Tables will be on sale for \$300.00 for a table of eight, which will include unlimited water and eight drink tickets. Tables can be purchased through One Cause using the QR code or by visiting <https://one.bidpal.net/smstrivianight24/welcome>. If using a mobile phone, please go to the MENU to purchase a table.



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Ohio tax credit is up to \$750.00 per person, or \$1,500.00 if married filing jointly. Based on tax rates posted by the Ohio Department of Taxation, an individual with an annual income of \$40,000.00 has an average state tax liability of \$750.00. Consult a tax advisor for guidance on your specific situation. The Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund is a certified scholarship granting organization (SGO) in the state of Ohio.

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