

Fourth Sunday in the Season of Advent



"The Gospel narrative surprises us by reminding us that God's promise is best fulfilled in humble souls like Mary, who trusted in God's promise. Mary says "May it be done to me according to your word..." – she does not require confirmation, but responds in faith. Her humble acquiescence to the will of God commends itself to every believer. Those who find out what God wants of them and accept His message as Mary did are Jesus' true followers. Those who only hear the Word but never put it into action are deceiving themselves. An authentic Christian faith is a matter of continually making Jesus a part of our lives."

+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

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Parish Office: 614-885-7814

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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:

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Dcn. Bill Demidovich

Dcn. Klaus Fricke (Retired)

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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

DECEMBER 24, 2023

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DAILY MASS INTENTIONS

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)

Tuesday, December 26

6:30 a.m. + The Stanko & Stillian Families
 8:15 a.m. Residents & Staff at Heinzerling (Mike Butchko)

Wednesday, December 27

6:30 a.m. Special Intention of Amy Jazwiec (Lauren Jazwiec)
 8:15 a.m. Special Intention of St. Michael Clergy (The Smullen Family)

Thursday, December 28

6:30 a.m. + Souls in Purgatory
 8:15 a.m. + Kim Brosnan (Kevin & Lisa Barlage)

Friday, December 29

6:30 a.m. Special Intention of Charel Bowman (Mike Butchko)
 8:15 a.m. + Kyle Ann Kowaleski (Kristy & Steve Wagner)

Saturday, December 30

8:15 a.m. Special Intention of Marcus Jazwiec (Lauren Jazwiec)
 4:00 p.m. + Claudia Pena (The O'Leary Family)

Sunday, December 31

8:30 a.m. + Cesidio Pizzuti (The Pizzuti Family)
 10:30 a.m. + Tom Kalinoski (The Kalinoski Family)
 12:30 p.m. Special Intention of the Brown Family
 5:00 p.m. + For the Living & Deceased Members of our Parish



DECEMBER 24, 2023

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" – Luke 1:28

After Jesus, we look to Mary as an ideal steward. Her entire life was lived in obedience to God's call. Mary teaches us to live with joy for all we have been given. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, Mary reflects the light of Christ. Like Mary, we are called to reflect Christ's light to the world through our gratitude and generosity.

PARISH CALENDAR: DECEMBER

SUNDAY, December 24	11:30 a.m. Christmas Decorating (MH, C)	Thursday, December 28	Eucharistic Exposition (AC) 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice (C)
Monday, December 25	Parish Office Closed Merry Christmas!	Friday, December 29	Eucharistic Exposition (AC)
Tuesday, December 26	Parish Office Closed	Saturday, December 30	2:30 p.m. Confessions (C)
Wednesday, December 27	6:30 p.m. Holy Hour & Confessions (C)	SUNDAY, December 31	No Activities

(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 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, we would all do well to pause and reflect on what we have accomplished during these past weeks in preparation for what we will begin celebrating, literally, later this Sunday afternoon – the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And as we draw ever so near to this celebration, we find that in order to bring true and lasting joy and peace to others, we have to bring them Christ. Jesus is the greatest gift that we can ever bring to someone we love. This is something we all have to remember, especially at Christmas. We can buy people all types of gifts – and giving gifts is a sign of our love and affection for others – this is a wonderful tradition, especially when kept in check. But the greatest gift we can bring them is Jesus Christ. If we aren't trying to give them the Lord Jesus, then we're really giving them only mere things which bring short-lived joy and fleeting happiness. We can send out a thousand cards and letters, but of lasting value are our prayers for others that they come to the Lord and help them to encounter Jesus and to draw them into a deeper relationship with Christ our Savior. Unless we try to bring Christ to them, we're really not giving them anything of true value, anything that will truly last. Mary didn't bring Elizabeth ancient Hebrew pregnancy textbooks; she wasn't bringing John the Baptist a cute little outfit; she was bringing Christ, and hence, she was bringing them everything – Mary was bringing them Jesus Christ. And Mary wants each of us to learn from her example and inspire us to bring her Son to others as well. We all know people who need Christ in their lives, who need His mercy and forgiveness, who hunger for His love and His presence, perhaps without even knowing it. Mary's example shows us the way to live Advent and Christmas well and explicitly challenges and calls us to bring Jesus to our family members, relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and to those we know who are in need. We know from experience that the greatest blessings in this world are Jesus Christ and our faith in Him. These are the gifts we should be longing for this Christmas, because these are the ones that will truly make us happy. Even if we were to receive the entire inventory of any shopping center for Christmas, that would not be as valuable to us as the gift of God and the gift of increased faith in Him. Mary cried out in her hymn of praise later in this scene, "All generations will call her blessed." And that prophecy came true. We still call her blessed today, for the same reasons, because "the Lord – the blessed fruit of her womb – is with her," and because of her faith, which is the model for every disciple. This Christmas, the Lord is calling us to make these our priorities. The Father who gave us the gift of His Son that first Christmas wants to give us that Son anew this Christmas, to be God-with-us, *Emmanuel*, but He wants us to ask for Him in faith and respond to Him in faith, by making the time to be with God in prayer, by saying "let it be done to me according to your word" and allowing the Lord's words to be fulfilled in us, in every moral decision we make.

Sincere thanks to all who responded so generously to our Saint Vincent de Paul efforts to help those in need during Advent – the beneficiaries of which are the children and families who are in need. And thank you for the well-oiled machine of our Saint Vincent de Paul volunteers – what a dedicated group of people! They are always looking for new members to help volunteer, so I would encourage you to get involved in this wonderful group of people dedicated to helping those in need. As Saint Vincent de Paul once said: **"Charity is the cement which binds Communities to God and persons to one another..."** Let that all-important bond be part of your life by volunteering in our Saint Vincent de Paul Chapter.

I also want to express sincere thanks to all who are organizing and who supported the Cranks Creek, Kentucky, Youth Group mission project to help those desperately in need there, and our Knights of Columbus project to support our service men and women overseas with much desired items that they cannot get while deployed in various areas of the world. These items were requested by Fr. Chris Yakkel of our Diocese. Thanks to our Live Wires and their wonderful Christmas lunch gathering, all who prepared and served the meal, and our school students who sang at the luncheon. Thanks, too, to all involved in our school Christmas concert this past Thursday – a packed house, with beaming students and their families! I hope I am not forgetting anyone – apologies if I did – a lot going on here at Saint Michael!

I also want to thank the MCs, ushers/hospitality, lectors, altar servers, choir members and cantors, our parish maintenance and security staff, our office staff, those who were involved in cleaning and in Phase I in decorating our Church this weekend for Christmas, and those who will be involved in Phase II in decorating the Church for Christmas (following the 10:30 a.m. Mass on December 24), our off-duty police officers, and certainly our priests and deacons. This is a wonderful parish, folks – I hope you enjoy being part of this parish family as much as all of us enjoy serving here!

Finally, It is my sincere hope and desire, and that of Bishop Fernandes, retired Bishop Griffin, retired Bishop Campbell, Bishop Emeritus Brennan, Fr. Robert Kitsmiller, Fr. Wojciech Stachura, SAC, Fr. Peter Fegan, O.P., Dcn. John Crerand, Dcn. Bill Demidovich, Dcn. Fricke, our school principal, Sr. Mary Regina, O.P., all of the parish staff, and all of the teachers and school staff, that you and your family members – those here, and those who are not here with your family and with our parish family for whatever reason – may have a safe, joyous, blessed, spirit-filled and Merry Christmas! God bless!

–Fr. Mike Lumpe

Good Grief: It's Christmas

by Tom Purcell, courtesy of the Catholic Exchange

Good grief.

It has been 58 years since the "A Charlie Brown Christmas" special first aired. It was broadcast again the last week of November, and the show holds more power over me now than it did when I was a kid.

I think I know why.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Americans, bolstered by stability and prosperity, married young and had large families. In my neighborhood, we had six kids, the Kreigers five, the Gillens four, the Greenaways four and so on.

The design was simple then for many folks: Many men and women believed that when they married, they became one under God. They believed their role was to sacrifice for their children, so their children could have better lives than they.

Their mission was to teach their kids good values and to provide them with an excellent education. That's why so many moved into our neighborhood. It was located a few blocks from St. Germaine's Catholic Church and School.

It was a traditional time, to be sure. Most of the dads went off to work while most of the moms kept an eye on both kids and neighborhood.

And although life for adults certainly had its limitations and challenges, there was no better time to be a kid. Especially during Christmas.

At Catholic school, we kicked off Christmas preparations one month before the big day. We put up decorations, sold items to raise money for the needy and practiced for Christmas concerts (we sang real Christmas songs, too, such as "Silent Night" and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing").

We were just as busy at home. My mother was a master at building suspense. She played Mitch Miller's Christmas albums on the stereo most nights after dinner and whistled to the tunes as we hung decorations and talked over what to get for one another. She celebrated the mystery of giving and taught us that being kind and helping others were the best things we could give.

Silly as it may sound today, the TV Christmas specials were a real event in our home. We all packed into the family room and plugged in the tree. We turned off all the lamps so that the Christmas lights would shine bright. Then we'd wait with great anticipation for the specials.

Every year I laughed out loud when the Grinch's dog, massive antlers strapped to his tiny head, jumped up on the back of the sleigh, causing the Grinch to grimace. In "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," the Abominable Snowman terrified me, but I was always relieved when he turned out a lovable fuzz ball.

But the granddaddy of them all was the "A Charlie Brown Christmas" special, a show that captured half the viewing audience when it first ran on Dec. 9, 1965. As it goes, Charlie Brown is depressed because everyone around him fails to see the true meaning of Christmas. Lucy complains that she doesn't want stupid toys or a bicycle or clothes for Christmas, but real estate.

To resolve his depression, Charlie Brown throws himself into work as the director of the Christmas play. But that soon falls apart, too.

Distraught, he follows a light in the east and finds his way to a Christmas tree lot. The only tree he can find is a small sickly one.

When he brings it back, the others mock him. But then Linus comes to the rescue. Linus tells Charlie Brown he knows the real meaning of Christmas. He tells the story of Christ's birth.

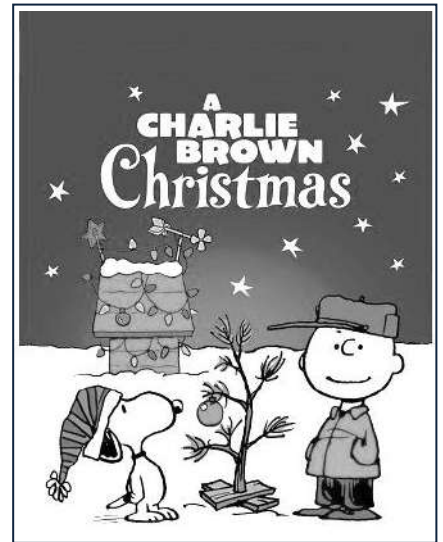
"Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, goodwill toward men," he says, quoting from Luke's Gospel in the Bible (Luke 2:8-20).

Suddenly, the other characters are transformed. They become compassionate and concerned. They decorate the tree and transform it into a thing of beauty. They wish Charlie Brown a Merry Christmas and sing a Christmas hymn "Hark the Herald Angels Sing."

This show holds tremendous power over me still because it brings back powerful childhood memories — memories of security and love and the anticipation of Christmas morning.

But I love it for another reason. Despite Christmas being a celebration of the birth of Christ, more than just a historical figure — despite that the show's innocence, simplicity and honesty still make it a ratings winner — it would never be made today.

Good grief.



ADVENT SEASON

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

Ready or Not, Jesus Comes Anyway

by Patricia Gohn

A long time ago, I was a child who couldn't wait for Christmas to come — counting down the days with glee! Now I'm an adult with an obligatory calendar counting days 'til Christmas with a to-do list and a mindset of, "how will I ever get it all done?" But the believer in me knows this much: Things may not always go as planned, or according to my list, but Jesus is coming anyway...

- I meant to spend more of Advent in prayer and meditation instead of on household chores that were never ending... but Jesus is coming anyway.
- I meant to do a few things that would "make the season bright" instead of getting absorbed in an extra project that distracted me many days this month... Jesus is coming anyway.
- I meant to find time to bake and join with my neighbors at the annual cookie swap, instead of spending it cocooned in a library to finish my term paper... Jesus is coming anyway.
- I meant to shop for gifts and ship early to long-distance loved ones instead of scrambling at the last minute and paying expedited shipping fees... but Jesus is coming anyway.
- I meant to take each of my teens out for a little excursion — both to let them shop for their Dad and siblings and to enjoy local festivities — instead of putting it off until things got too crazy... but Jesus is coming anyway.
- I meant to finish painting our front hallway before Christmas (it has been under construction since before Thanksgiving), instead of just decorating around it and hoping no one will mind our mid-construction motif... Jesus is coming anyway.
- I meant to find that perfect gift for my husband instead of finding just a few little things... Jesus is coming anyway.
- I meant to send personal Christmas notes in each of my Christmas cards, instead of wondering if I'd have time to even put stamps on the ones I've already purchased... Jesus is coming anyway.
- I meant to "anticipate" Christmas in a holy way instead of feeling the pressure of time and the pressing needs to fulfill obligations... and, yes, Jesus is coming anyway.
- I get frustrated at moments like these — especially by my lack of time, opportunity, and resolve. But in reality, my complaints are minimal. This Christmas, perhaps you know, like I, many people who are struggling with enormous burdens: grieving the death of a loved one, having surgery, facing job loss, experiencing divorce or a tragic illness, (you fill in the blank). And for many of them, the coming of Christmas seems like a time of stress and sorrow.

Indeed, some years Christmas just comes sooner than we expect, and sooner than we are ready. But Jesus comes anyway... and, really, it's just in the nick of time.

For Jesus comes to fill us with all that we lack in time and space. He is the fullness of time, and the opportunity of our lifetimes. Jesus knows our lack of resolve and resolved to come anyway: to replenish us and to gift us beyond every need, saving us from ourselves, and worse. Jesus is greater than the faith we lack, the hope we seek, and the charity we fail to exercise. He is ALL for ALL. The child in my heart really still does believe that deep down. Despite all my grown-up obligations, foibles, and missteps, the child in me can't forget the Child who comes.

And because He is the Child who can never forget us, Jesus comes anyway.

This article is made available courtesy of the Catholic Exchange web site.

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)

“Kiss the feet of the baby Jesus, who lies in the manger, and pray that the Holy Virgin will allow you to hold Him. Take Him between your arms, hold Him and see His lovable face, kiss it with reverence and rejoice with Him. You can do this because He has come to bring salvation to sinners and He has humbly conversed with them, finally giving Himself as food.” +SAINT BONAVENTURE

Monday, December 25 ~ Solemnity of Christmas The Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God

Holy Gospel: Luke 2:1-14 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”



Meditation: Following is an excerpt of a sermon from Pope St. Leo the Great: “Dearly beloved, today our Savior is born; let us rejoice. Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; life brings us joy with the promise of eternal happiness. No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. Our Lord, victor over sin and death, finding no man free from sin, came to free us all. Let the saint rejoice as he sees the palm of victory at hand. Let the sinner be glad as he receives the offer of forgiveness. Let the pagan take courage as he is summoned to life. In the fullness of time, chosen in the unfathomable depths of God’s wisdom, the Son of God took for himself our common humanity in order to reconcile it with its creator. He came to overthrow the devil, the origin of death, in that very nature by which he had overthrown mankind. And so at the birth of our Lord the angels sing in joy: Glory to God in the highest, and they proclaim peace to men of good will as they see the heavenly Jerusalem being built from all the nations of the world. When the angels on high are so exultant at this marvelous work of God’s goodness, what joy should it not bring to the lowly hearts of men? Beloved, let us give thanks to God the Father, through his Son, in the Holy Spirit, because in his great love for us he took pity on us, and when we were dead in our sins he brought us to life with Christ, so that in him we might be a new creation. Let us throw off our old nature and all its ways and, as we have come to birth in Christ, let us renounce the works of the flesh. Christian, remember your dignity, and now that you share in God’s own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition. Bear in mind who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Do not forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of God’s kingdom. Through the sacrament of baptism you have become a temple of the Holy Spirit. Do not drive away so great a guest by evil conduct and become again a slave to the devil, for your liberty was bought by the blood of Christ.”

Prayer: O God, who gladden us year by year as we wait in hope for our redemption grant that, just as we joyfully welcome your Only Begotten Son as our Redeemer, we may also merit to face him confidently

when he comes again as our Judge. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: On Christmas Day it remains only for us to find in the Gospel, as we find in all the words of the Holy Gospels, the answer as to what we should do in response to the gift that has been given to us, the song that has fallen on our ears from angelic voices. And the answer is there; the birth of this mystery - of love triumphant in the face of evil - is Christ as He came to life from the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem, and Christ, as we come to life in Him, through the Sacrament we share. Let us pray that our Christmas will be filled with the song of this life, and that our love will conquer all things contrary to Christ, so that we may follow the Son sent by God to redeem us, and do so with love and fidelity to the truths of Christ.

On the Birth of Jesus, the Son of God: Today is the great solemnity that shows the world that the Word Incarnate, the Savior of mankind, is finally born. God becoming truly man is an enormous event [...]. Something truly happens that goes beyond any evolutionary process: the fusion of man and God, the creature and the Creator. It is not the progression of another step in the evolutionary process, but the eruption of a personal action, founded on love, that from this point forward reveals to men new space and possibilities. (Joseph Ratzinger in *God and the World: A Conversation with Peter Seewald*, 2001, p. 197). Christmas says to us: alone we can't profoundly change the world to remedy it. Alone, we can make the world better or worse, but we can't save it. Christ came therefore, because left to ourselves; we couldn't escape the 'mortal disease' that has enveloped us from the first moment of conception in our mother's womb. This gives us hope, true hope, and true Christian optimism: I can't do it but He is there! This is the mystery of grace synthesized in the human figure of God incarnate. Christmas Eve and Christmas day are moments of contemplation. We consider, in many dimensions, the mystery of love that was incarnated for us. First of all, we contemplate the light and joy, without forgetting Jesus and Mary's sorrows and sufferings, and the many difficulties that had surrounded them: the cold, the uncomfortable place, the dangers..... It would be good to accompany these thoughts by reciting and meditating slowly on the Holy Rosary, preferably in front of a crib. "Blessed grotto of Bethlehem that testified to the wonders! Who, in this hour would not turn our hearts? Who would not prefer the opulent palace of the King?" (P. Guéranger, *L'Anno Liturgico*, Alba 1959 [orig. franc. 1841], I, p122).

Tuesday, December 26 ~ Second Day in the Octave of Christmas Saint Stephen, First Martyr

Holy Gospel: Matthew 10:17-22 Jesus said to his disciples: "Beware of men, for they will hand you over to courts and scourge you in their synagogues, and you will be led before governors and kings for my sake as a witness before them and the pagans. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say. You will be given at that moment what you are to say. For it will not be you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will hand over brother to death, and the father his child; children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all because of my name, but whoever endures to the end will be saved."

Meditation: "You will be hated by all on account of my name," Jesus says in today's gospel. A strange fate indeed for those whose lives are built on truth, love and peace. And yet it is a fate only too sadly confirmed down these many centuries to this very day. Jesus had said that all those who wished to follow him would have to take up their cross and go after him. The servant is no greater than his master. "Whoever loves his own life will lose it; whoever hates his own life in this world will keep it for life eternal. Whoever wants to serve me must follow me, so that my servant will be with me where I am" (John 12:25-26). Stephen clearly is a perfect model of such a Christian disciple.

Prayer: Grant, Lord, we pray, that we may imitate what we worship, and so learn to love even our enemies, for we celebrate the heavenly birthday of a man who knew how to pray even for his persecutors. 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: There are some today who say "religion divides." When we hear this, today's gospel should come to mind, because so many routinely turn their back on God and on his Son, Jesus Christ. By their actions, they are the ones who actually cause division - not those who live their lives in faith of God or his Son Jesus Christ - because by their actions and their lifestyles they freely choose to not follow the laws of God and the teachings of Christ; in doing so they separate themselves from the way, the truth, and the life of Christ. The beauty of this situation, though, is that God always welcomes back those who have sinned, those who have strayed. God sent his Son into this world to teach us right from wrong, to shepherd and guide us, and to lead us on the path to eternal life. With a contrite heart through the

Sacrament of Reconciliation, we can confess our sins, receive absolution, and get back in Christ's fold. What a great thing to do in the Christmas Season – and any time of the year, for that matter!

Wednesday, December 27 ~ Third Day in the Octave of Christmas Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist

Holy Gospel: John 20:1a, 2-8 On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed.

Meditation: The placement of today's Gospel seems to "rush" in the life of Jesus from his birth – which we celebrated just two days ago – to his resurrection, describing the scene where Peter and the "beloved disciple" rush to the tomb of Jesus after being told by Mary Magdalene that the body is no longer there. But this gospel points to the great love that John the Apostle and Evangelist – the beloved disciple – had for Jesus Christ as the Word Incarnate, the Messiah, the Son of God, the one whose birth we just celebrated. Although the "beloved disciple" got there first, he deferred to Peter who went in first and saw the burial cloths. One of them – the piece that was wrapped around the face – was rolled up in a separate place. When the "beloved disciple" went in, "he saw and he believed" – in other words, he understood the significance of the cloth and he knew that his Lord had risen. And the promise of salvation of all mankind began with the birth of Jesus. I suggest that you read John 1:1-18 today as well.

Prayer: O God, who through the blessed Apostle John have unlocked for us the secrets of your Word, grant, we pray, that we may grasp with proper understanding what he has so marvelously brought to our ears. 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: John in his first epistle testifies: What we have seen, heard, and touched we proclaim as the word of life which existed "from the beginning" (1 John 1:1-4). John bears witness to what has existed from all eternity. This "word of life" is Jesus the word incarnate, whose birth we just celebrated, but also Jesus as the word announced by the prophets and Jesus the word now preached throughout the Christian church for all ages to come. One thing is certain, if Jesus had not risen from the dead and appeared to his disciples, we would never have heard of him. Nothing else could have changed sad and despairing men and women into people radiant with joy and courage. The reality of the resurrection is the central fact of the Christian faith. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Lord gives us "eyes of faith" to know him and the power of his resurrection. The greatest joy we can have is to encounter the living Christ, sent by God into this world to save and redeem us, to teach us how to live our lives, to shepherd and guide us on the path that leads to eternal life. Get to know Christ personally as your Lord, Savior and Redeemer.

Thursday, December 28 ~ Fourth Day in the Octave of Christmas Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Holy Gospel: Matthew 2:13-18 When the magi had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, Out of Egypt I called my son. When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi. Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet: "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more."

Meditation: During this octave of Christmas the Church celebrates the memory of the small children of the neighborhood of Bethlehem put to death by Herod. Sacrificed by a wicked monarch, these innocent lives bear witness to Christ who was persecuted from the time of His birth by a world which would not receive Him. It is Christ Himself who is at stake in this mass-murder of the children; already the choice, for or against Him, is put clearly before men. But the persecutors are powerless, for Christ came to perform a work of salvation that nothing can prevent; when He fell into the hands of His enemies at the

time chosen by God it was to redeem the world by His own Blood. The joy of this Christmas Season is tempered today by a feeling of sadness. But the Church looks principally to the glory of the children, of these innocent victims, whom she shows us in heaven following the Lamb wherever He goes.

Prayer: O God, whom the Holy Innocents confessed and proclaimed on this day, not by speaking but by dying, grant, we pray, that the faith in you which we confess with our lips may also speak through our manner 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: Many ask why God did not prevent this slaughter. Human suffering is indeed a mystery. No explanation seems to satisfy our human craving to understand. These innocent children and their parents suffered for Christ. Suffering, persecution, and martyrdom are the lot of all who chose to follow Jesus Christ. There is no crown without the cross. It was through Jesus' suffering, humiliation, and death on a cross, that our salvation was won. His death won life – eternal life for us. And his blood which was shed for our sake obtained pardon and reconciliation with our heavenly Father.

The Holy Innocents: "Blessed are you, Bethlehem in the land of Judah! You suffered the inhumanity of King Herod in the murder of your babes and thereby have become worthy to offer to the Lord a pure host of infants. In full right do we celebrate the heavenly birthday of these children whom the world caused to be born unto an eternally blessed life rather than that from their mothers' womb, for they attained the grace of everlasting life before the enjoyment of the present. The precious death of any martyr deserves high praise because of his heroic confession; the death of these children is precious in the sight of God because of the beatitude they gained so quickly. For already at the beginning of their lives they pass on. The end of the present life is for them the beginning of glory. These then, whom Herod's cruelty tore as sucklings from their mothers' bosom, are justly hailed as 'infant martyr flowers;' they were the Church's first blossoms, matured by the frost of persecution during the cold winter of unbelief." —Saint Augustine

Friday, December 29 ~ Fifth Day in the Octave of Christmas **Optional Memorial, Scripture: Saint Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr**

Holy Gospel: Matthew 16:24-27 Then Jesus told His disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life? For the Son of man is to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will repay every man for what he has done.

Meditation: Let's get back to basics and ask ourselves this foundational question: What is the most important investment any of us can make with our life? Jesus poses some probing questions to challenge our assumptions about what is most profitable and worthwhile. In every decision of life we are making ourselves a certain kind of person. The kind of person we are, our character, determines to a large extent the kind of future we will face and live. It is possible that some can gain all the things they set their heart on, only to wake up suddenly and discover that they missed the most important things of all. Of what value are material things if they don't help you gain what truly lasts in eternity. Neither money nor possessions can buy heaven, mend a broken heart, or cheer a lonely person.

Prayer: O God, who gave the Martyr Saint Thomas Becket the courage to give up his life for the sake of justice, grant, through his intercession, that, renouncing our life for the sake of Christ in this world, we may find it in heaven. 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: Jesus basically asks the question: What will a person give in exchange for his or her life? Never forget that everything we have is an out-right gift from God. We owe him everything – our gifts, abilities, talents – our very lives. It's possible to give God our money, but not ourselves, or to give him lip-service, but not our hearts. A true disciple gladly gives up all that he has in exchange for an unending life of joy and happiness with God. God gives without measure. The joy he offers no sadness or loss can diminish. The cross of Christ leads to victory and freedom from sin and death. What is the cross which Jesus Christ commands me to take up each day? When my will crosses with his will, then his will must be done. Christ is forever – remember that!

Scripture passages (NAB translation) courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops;
prayers are from *The Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing, 2011;
information about saints, solemnities, feasts and memorials courtesy of the Catholic Culture web site.

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What to say when your young child doesn't want to go to Church

by Theresa Civantos Barber

"I hate going to church! It's boring!" Sound familiar?

My young kids say things like this now and then. Here's how I respond to them.

Does this sound familiar?

"I hate going to church! It's boring!"

My young kids say things like this now and then. My oldest just turned 9, so these ideas are intended for children younger than that. I think my response to those kinds of comments would be different if I were speaking to an older child or teenager. But when my kids say stuff like that, as my six-year-old did just last Sunday, here's how I have responded.

1. Church is non-negotiable

Some parents let the child choose whether or not to go to Mass, but to me, that makes as much sense as letting a young child choose whether or not they want to wear a seatbelt, brush their teeth, or eat their vegetables.

We like to remind our children of the Ten Commandments – #4: “Keep Holy the Sabbath,” and #1: “I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before me.” It’s an opportunity for us to explain how to embrace what God wants of us, to “live” the Commandments.

We go to church on Sunday. It's just what we do in our family, and we are intentional about building this weekly habit into a non-negotiable part of our family culture and family life – a “desire” from within to want to go to Church, as opposed to the attitude of “do I have to go to Mass...”; there is a difference.

But that doesn't mean we have to be stern or harsh with our kids about it. Quite the opposite! Here's what I do.

2. Acknowledge and describe how they are feeling

A really important part of helping a child feel understood and seen is affirming what they are feeling. So I usually say something like this:

"I hear you. You don't want to go to church. Church feels boring to you right now. It's normal to feel that way when you're a little kid. I used to think church was boring when I was your age too."

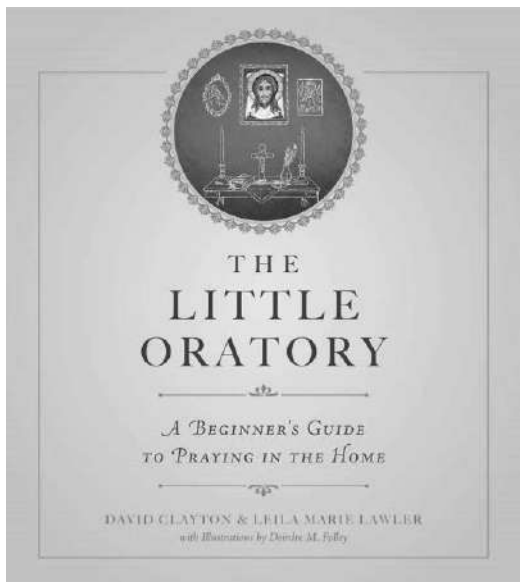
I want to make sure my child knows that I understand and care about how they are feeling. But of course, I don't stop there.

3. Explain why we go to church

Then I explain, *"I thought church was boring when I was your age, but now, going to Mass is my favorite thing in the world. So I know you are going to love it as you get older too."*

When this conversation came up with my six-year-old last week, I told her, *"God gave us all the days and hours and minutes of our lives. Thousands of hours to have fun and play and enjoy life. He just asks us to give him one hour a week to go to Mass on Sunday. Don't you think we should do that?"*

She thought about it for a minute and then said, "Yeah, I guess so."



A few hours later that day, I was amazed to see her kneeling by a statue of Mary in our garden. "I'm playing that I'm going to church, Mom!" she said. What a complete transformation from that morning!

4. Share our witness

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches us that parents are called to be the first evangelists for their children:

Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children. Parents should initiate their children at an early age into the mysteries of the faith of which they are the "first heralds" for their children. (CCC2225)

We can begin by sharing our love for Christ with our children.

When my kids don't want to go to church, I tell them, "I really love going to church. I love going to see God, who made us, and

being there with all the saints and angels, and worshiping God with our friends."

Another way I unite home and church is that I set up a little prayer table in our homeschool room, and we often light candles and read from the Bible at ***"The Little Oratory."***

I want them to understand that we don't just go to Mass because we have to, but because we want to.

5. Educate at other times

While we are running out the door to Mass is not the best time to teach my kids why we value Mass. So I try really hard to educate them about it at other times of day.

I have to recommend this book, ***"The Holy Mass: On Earth As It Is In Heaven."*** Whenever we start reading it, my kids become fascinated and have even asked to go to Mass after seeing what's in it!

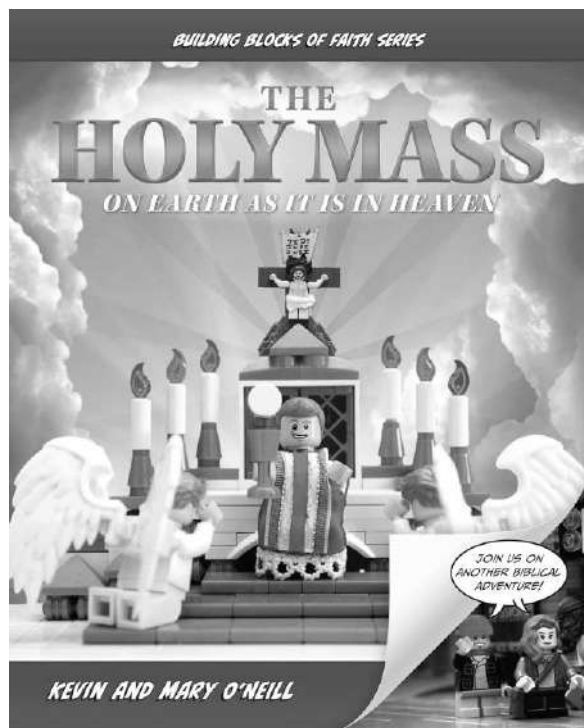
At one point, one of my kids was in a defiant stage and was refusing to kneel during Mass. So at a different time, later in the day, I pulled him onto my lap and asked, "Why do we kneel down at Mass? What does it mean about where we are and who is present there?"

We discussed how kneeling is a sign of honor and reverence, and I said, "Do you think that the God who made heaven and earth, and you, and everyone you love, is someone you should kneel before?"

He nodded his head slowly as I could see him start to understand why we kneel, instead of just going through the motions. He hasn't ever refused to kneel at Mass since that conversation.

So that's my system for responding when my little stinkers don't want to go to Mass on Sunday. While reminding them that going to Mass is not up for debate, I acknowledge how they feel, explain why we go to church, share why I love going to Mass, and make a point to educate them later in the day about what's going on at Mass and why it's so important.

I hope this helps. I'd love to hear what works for your family, too!



AROUND THE PARISH

SPEND TIME IN ADORATION

As we look to the end of 2023 and the beginning of 2024, there is no better way to spend an hour of your week 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 can also visit the Church on Wednesdays for our weekly Holy Hour with Confessions from 6:30-7:30 p.m. each week.

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

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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



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.



Attention Live Wires!

Join us on Tuesday, January 9th from 11:30 - 1:30 for lunch at Villa Nova in Worthington.

We will need a firm headcount for reservations so please RSVP with John Provanzana at 614-397-3125 or jprovanze@outlook.com

Come join the fun!
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MEN'S FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP

There is no meeting for Saturday, December 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.

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 a.m. to 7:45 a.m., Monday-Friday. Students arrive at 7:00 a.m., so the start time for the position could be discussed if applicant wishes to attend the 6:30 a.m. Mass.

Requirements:

- Current satisfactory BCI & 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.



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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It's true! As an Ohio taxpayer, when you make a donation to the Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund, you could receive a dollar-for-dollar credit* against your state income tax liability while creating scholarship dollars for students to attend St. Michael School. Even with the recent expansion to Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship program, financial need still exists for many families. Your gift helps bridge the gap between state scholarships and the cost to educate a child while reducing your Ohio tax burden. Use the QR code to donate today! **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.*

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.

AROUND THE DIOCESE



ST. PADRE PIO RELIC AT THE COLUMBUS CATHOLIC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Just announced, the glove of St. Padre Pio will be displayed for veneration at the upcoming Columbus Catholic Women's Conference in February. Early registration for the conference extends through January 1, 2024. Scan the QR code to register for the conference

UNDONE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Ladies, do you desire to live in greater freedom? Are you longing for an authentic encounter with your true feminine identity? Join us for the **Undone Women's Conference** where you will experience a weekend of truth, beauty and transformation, as the knots of Eve's disobedience are "undone" through Mary's model of radical receptivity. Bring yourself, your mother, your sister, your adult daughters and friends. This is a weekend you won't want to miss! **Undone: Freedom for the Feminine Heart** will be held at St. Francis de Sales in Newark on January 25, 26 and 27. This event is being offered in person OR virtually via livestream! Register online for either experience at www.jpilhealingcenter.org. Scholarships, student and missionary discounts available. Contact Heather Stasel at hstasel@stfrancisparish.net for more information.

JOIN NEEDS YOUR HELP!

JOIN (Joint Organization for Inner-city Needs) is often a "stop-gap" for our brothers and sisters who are doing their best to provide and succeed in life. We all come upon unexpected obstacles. For our neighbors who live paycheck-to-paycheck that can be something as simple as missing work due to illness or something bigger, like a car repair. Basic supplies like toilet paper, soap, shampoo, conditioner, multi-purpose cleaning solutions, dish soap and laundry soap are items that people request at JOIN daily. Kelsey is a mom that came to JOIN to get assistance with bus passes for a new job she had. When she learned that we also had cleaning supplies and personal care items, especially toilet paper, she was overwhelmed that she could get those items as well. Meeting these most basic needs, when you don't have them, is a relief that is not measurable to a parent. Try to imagine running out of something, with no hope of getting it yourself for another week or so. If you would like to organize a collection or even donate an item or two on your own, it would be a gift to the neighbors we serve at JOIN. Feel free to contact Lisa Keita at 614-241-2530 or lkeita@columbuscatholic.org to get further information or just discuss what all JOIN does provide.

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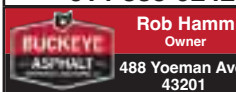
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