

ST. MARY PARISH

518 South 2nd Street; PO Box 847; Guttenberg, Iowa 52052

Newsletter: Dec 08, 2022 ~ Rectory: 563-252-1247 ~ Fr.'s Cell: 563-258-3958 ~ www.maryicjoseph.org

LIVE THE LITURGY Inspiration for the week: Being Surprised by Christ

Some people hate surprise parties. There are those who are uncomfortable with a last-minute vacation or even an unexpected travel upgrade. If it wasn't part of the plan, it's a cause for consternation.

There is a temptation to view these folks as curmudgeonly — sticks in the mud, obsessed with predictability. But I think if we're being honest, there's a little bit of the surprise-averse in all of us.

Deep within the very heart of the element of surprise is a kernel of shock. And shock, in the moment, can feel similar to trauma. If we reflect on the most traumatic occurrences of our lives — a loss, an accident, a calamity — it is likely that we will say this: "It was the shock more than anything that got to me." Grief or fear, those feelings were overwhelming as well, but they came later. In the first moment, all we knew was we were going about our lives on one path until we were thrust on a different one and then the whole future changed.

This is the natural rhythm of our life here on earth. We never know what is coming — which is to say, in a beautiful way, we always know what is coming. More importantly, we know Who is coming.

Like the early riser who sets the "pre-alarm" (the one on which he knows he's going to hit snooze just to take the edge off the disappointment of waking up), we are always being given a heads-up in Scripture. From the earliest prophecies of the Messiah to Jesus' reminders in the Gospel to the very last words of Revelations, God has communicated to His stewards: You know the time. The time is now. We are called to constant vigilance, perpetual renewal, steadfast accountability.

In the end, the coming of Christ may be the only event in history that was a surprise, but not a shock — and so it will only be beautiful, even for those who hate surprise parties. — *Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS*

Christmas Flowers: If you would like to donate a poinsettia in memory of loved ones or in thanksgiving, please bring to the church by Dec 21 or place a monetary donation in the collection basket. Please include the name(s) of those who you would like to remember or honor.

From the Choir Director . . .

I would like to invite anyone interested in singing in the adult choir to practice with us each Wed. evening at 6:30pm until Christmas. For more info text me at 563-213-9021. Also, at the Dec. 17th Mass, the Keystone Accapella chorus will sing selections prior to and during Mass. Thank you, Gina Dahlstrom.

Religious Retirement Fund Collection:

Senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests have devoted their lives to prayer, service, and works of mercy. Most ministered for little or no pay. Today, their religious communities do not have enough retirement savings. Your gift to today's Retirement Fund for Religious collection helps to furnish medications, nursing care, and other necessities. Please give generously.

Mass Schedule: December 12 – December 18, 2022

Mon., Dec 12: [No Mass Scheduled], "Our Lady of Guadalupe"

Tues., Dec 13: [No Mass], "St. Lucy"

Wed., Dec 14: 8:30 A.M. – St. Mary, Guttenberg
Ann Olinger & Kathleen Bockenstedt

Thur., Dec 15: 8:30 A.M. – Guttenberg River Living Center
People of the Parish

Fri., Dec 16: [No Mass Scheduled]

Sat., Dec 17: **Vigil of Fourth Sunday of Advent**
4:00 P.M.—St. Joseph, Garnavillo
Barb Mohning & Cindy Mueller
5:30 P.M.—St. Mary, Guttenberg
*Don & JoAnn Wille/Dorothy Knudtson/
Albert & Regina Schlueter*

Sun., Dec 18: **Fourth Sunday of Advent**
8:30 A.M. – Immaculate Conception, N. Buena Vista
10:00 A.M. – St. Mary, Guttenberg, Mass, **Live Streamed**
Jim & Lou Kuempel

GOSPEL REFLECTION: Are You the One Who Is to Come?

What Messiah are we making a way for this Advent Season? Is it one who only fits our limited expectations or the Savior of the World who fulfills the hopes of all peoples?

The question that John’s disciples pose to Jesus in [today’s gospel](#) is curious. How can he be unsure whether Jesus is the “One Who is to Come”? Didn’t he see the heavens parted and the Spirit of God come down upon Jesus at his baptism? Didn’t he point out Jesus as the “Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world”? What has changed that he now seems to doubt who Jesus is?

Though we cannot know for sure, many speculate that John, like many Israelites, was expecting a Messiah who would conquer all of Israel’s enemies. In particular, it seems that John the Baptist was expecting that the One to come after him would exact punishment on all evil doers. As we heard in last week’s gospel, he warned the Pharisees about “the wrath to come.” He prophesied that, “Every tree that is not fruitful will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

It could be that John, from his prison cell, heard that, instead of punishing sinners, Jesus was welcoming them and eating with them. Maybe Jesus was not the type of Messiah John was expecting, and so he wondered whether he should wait for someone else.

In his usual way, Jesus didn’t answer John directly. Instead, He quoted from the prophet Isaiah that the blind were regaining their sight, the deaf their hearing, and the lame were walking. In effect, He was telling John that he had come not to condemn the world but to save it. Like the rest of the people, John now had to make a decision. Could he believe in a Messiah who offered forgiveness to sinners and treated them mercifully? Or was he so attached to his ideas of what a Messiah should be that he could not accept Jesus?

God is always greater than our puny ideas about Him. If we are to find Him it is not going to be in the places where we feel most comfortable. Rather we will have to reach out to people we normally would not associate with in neighborhoods we would not normally visit. When he walked the earth, Jesus was found among the blind, the poor, the lame, and other outcasts. Today, He can be found among prisoners, drug users, migrants, and others who are at the bottom of the social ladder. Unless we are willing to go out of our comfort zones and to reach out to those we would otherwise ignore, we will miss out on all the graces that God is offering us.

This Advent season we celebrate a God who is close to us. Too often we lose sight of Him because of our rigid ideas and narrow expectations. Today we are being called to broaden our vision and raise our eyes to a God who is always greater than we can hope for or imagine. Though He is the One we have been waiting for, He has too often passed us by because we were looking the wrong way. Like John the Baptist we are being challenged to look for our Heavenly Father in the people, places, and situations we would otherwise run from. If through His grace we can find the courage to do so, then His coming among us will not be a nice thought or fanciful wish but a reality in our hearts, in our homes and in our world. — Douglas Sousa, S.T.L

On this third Sunday of Advent as we prepare for the coming of Jesus, we remember the joy that we have in Jesus. Light the pink candle on your advent wreath, the candle of Joy.

Christmas Mass Schedule

Saturday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve

4:00 P.M. – St. Joseph, Garnavillo, Children’s Mass

5:30 P.M. – St. Mary, Guttenberg, Children’s Mass

Sunday, December 25, Christmas Day

8:30 A.M. – Immaculate Conception, N. Buena Vista
Children’s Mass

10:00 A.M. – St. Mary, Guttenberg,
Mass with Adult Choir

A Stewardship Moment

Each of us has his or her own role to play in the coming of the kingdom of God. John the Baptist was called to be the herald of the Messiah, preparing the way of the Lord. To what is the Lord calling me?



Giving Tree: *select a tag from the Giving Tree, purchase the item & return it to church by December 18th with the tag attached. There is no need to gift wrap.*

Join us for **Sunday School**. Class will be held in the SMIC Faith Formation building on Sundays from 9:45am -10:45am for PK, K and 1st grade. Dec 11th & 18th.

Upcoming Parish Events . . .

Dec 11: Sunday School for PK, K, 1st; 9:45-10:45am
Clayton Ridge Christmas Concert, 7pm

Dec 14: Faith Formation, 6 pm
Youth Ministry, 6:15 pm

Dec 18: Sunday School for PK, K, 1st; 9:45-10:45am

Are you interested in possibly becoming a Deacon? Please join us at an informational meeting on the Permanent Diaconate on December 15 at 7:00 p.m in the Parish Hall (church basement) at St. Benedict Parish in Decorah, IA. Wives are encouraged to attend as well. Call Deacon Nick Francois if you have any questions at 563-379-8488.