

ST. MARY PARISH

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

Newsletter: Dec 9, 2021

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www.maryicjoseph.org

LIVE THE LITURGY Inspiration for the week: A Pearl of Great Price

"From silly devotions and sour-faced saints, good Lord, deliver us!" ~St. Teresa of Avila

We've all heard the adage, "Laughter is the best medicine." In many ways, it really is. When was the last time you really laughed? The gift of imagination allows us to see possible things that are yet to be. Imagine a world filled with laughter. We take life too seriously sometimes. Fear, uncertainty, pressure, negativity, disappointment, and myriad other human experiences can rob us of the joy needed for laughter. God never promised us an easy road, and we do have to take the course of our lives seriously. However, there is a balance to be sought and a possible joy that can be brought even to the darkest and most challenging of encounters.

St. Therese of Lisieux reminds us that, "Joy is not found in the material objects surrounding us but in the inner recesses of the soul. One can possess joy in a prison cell as well as in a palace." Falling in love with God, who is present in all of creation, allows us to bring a depth of understanding to everything we do and experience. We can more easily see above and beyond things while pursuing the only One who can truly satisfy our hearts. When we realize that God, the king of Israel, is in our midst and with us, there is no further misfortune to fear. We can celebrate the wonder and beauty of God's gift of joy. It is no wonder that many saints radiate joy and have no reservations expressing laughter. They are happy because they have found a pearl of great price.

We celebrate with joy today with hearts filled with expectation, wonder, awe, and beauty as we ready ourselves, even more excitedly, for the coming of our Savior. Do not fear and do not be discouraged. If you haven't laughed in a while, why? Something is preventing you from expressing the magnificence of your soul and the presence of God who dwells within. God's power and presence within us assures us that we are loved and kept in that presence. What more is really needed? Rejoice and laugh in the presence of God! It really is the best medicine and a most perfect way to convince others that God is really with us. "Go ahead, laugh! Live your life with joy and serve the Lord with laughter! Joy, with peace, is the sister of charity. Serve the Lord with laughter." (St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina) ©LPi

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE:

(No children's Mass this year due to covid)

Fri., Dec., 24, 4:00 P.M. - Garnavillo
6:00 P.M. - N. Buena Vista

Sat., Dec. 25, 9:00 A.M. - Guttenberg
(will be live streamed)

SPECIAL MASS SCHEDULE:

Sat., Dec. 25 - 4:00 P.M. - Garnavillo
(no 5:30 P.M. at Guttenberg)

Sunday, Dec. 26th, Masses as usual

2022 Budget Envelopes are available at the back of church.

Reminder: The Internal Revenue Service requires all contributions to the parish must be **contributed/postmarked by December 31, 2021** to receive charitable credit for 2021. Please note the CARES act allows **taxpayers who don't itemize deductions** to take a charitable deduction of **up to \$300** in 2021.

St. Mary Finance Council meeting on Mon., Dec. 13 at 6:30 P.M. & Pastoral Council meeting at 7 P.M. Packets for members will be on back table of church weekend of Dec. 11 & 12.

Mass Schedule: Dec. 13 - Dec. 19, 2021

Mon., Dec 13: [No Mass Scheduled]

Tues., Dec 14: 8:30 A.M. St. Joseph, Garnavillo, Mass

Wed., Dec 15: No Mass due to SMIC Christmas Concert at 6:00 P.M. in St. Mary's Church

Thur., Dec 16: 10:00 A.M. - Guttenberg Care Center
Dorothy Eglseder//Bill & Kay Vogt

Fri., Dec 17: [No Mass Scheduled]

Sat., Dec 18: Vigil of Fourth Sunday of Advent
4:00 P.M. - St. Joseph, Garnavillo, Mass
Jack & Norma Eulberg
5:30 P.M. - St. Mary, Guttenberg, Mass
People of the Parish

Sun., Dec 19: Fourth Sunday of Advent
8:30 A.M. - Immaculate Conception, N. Buena Vista
10:00 A.M. - St. Mary, Guttenberg, Mass, *Live Streamed*
Rita McGuire

SPECIAL COLLECTION FOR RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT FUND: Envelope in your budget boxes.

GOSPEL REFLECTION: Purification by the Fire of God

John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." [Luke 3:16-17](#)

Again, this Sunday, we are given the glorious witness of St. John the Baptist. In this sermon of John, he says that Jesus will come and baptize "with the Holy Spirit and fire." The image of being baptized "with fire" is a good one to reflect upon. It especially reveals to us the deep purification Jesus desires for our souls.

What does it mean to be purified? For one thing, purification of our soul hurts. But it hurts in a sweet sort of way. Turning from sin and growing closer to God requires great sacrifice and surrender. And it requires that we allow God to do powerful things within us. And the most powerful thing God wants to do is purify us.

Our Catholic faith reveals to us the reality of Purgatory after we die. Purgatory is said to be a place of much spiritual pain, but again, in a sweet sort of way. It's painful in the sense that we are stripped of all that we hold on to that God wants us to let go of. It's painful in the sense that we endure a complete transformation of who we are and what we love. We learn to love God and God alone. And in the embrace of our love of God, we come to love all people. It's also sweet because, as we are purified, we grow infinitely closer to God and grow in holiness. This lifts the burden of sin and frees us to love as we ought.

But our purification ought not start only in Purgatory. We are all called to enter into that process of purification here and now. We are called to heed the words of John the Baptist today and repent of all that keeps us from holiness of life.

Reflect, today, upon the purification to which God may be calling you. What is it that you hold on to that He wants you free of? Commit yourself to the purifying fire of God's love and let that love cleanse you in this Advent season.

Lord, I do long to have my soul purified by You. I do desire holiness of life. Help me to begin this process here and now so that I can begin to experience the joy and freedom You have in store for me. Jesus, I trust in You.

source: mycatholiclife.com

St. Mary Social Justice Committee's 3rd annual CHRISTMAS CLOTHING MISSION



Please select a tag from the Giving Tree in the back of church. Each tag will identify an item for a child or adult in need. After you purchase the item, please return it with the tag attached, and place it in the container at the back of church. There is no need to gift wrap.

Items need to be returned by December 19.

Save the Date!

Saturday, January 29, for the Beauty in Christ Women's Conference. Gather at St. Mary's from 8am-1pm to experience this awesome virtual event together. Stay tuned for more information!

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 Flowers: If you would like to donate a poinsettia in memory of loved ones or in thanksgiving, please bring to the church by Dec 22. Monetary donations may also be given. Place your donation in an envelope marked "Christmas Flowers" and drop it in the collection basket.

A Stewardship Moment

Today's Gospel provides a blueprint for good stewardship: "Let the man who has two coats give to him who has none. The man who has food should do the same."

From the KCs.....Thanks for your support of our fundraising efforts!!

- * We raised \$970 at our Nov. breakfast and will donate \$1,000 to the Veteran's Angles for making the Quilts of Valor.
- * We raised \$1,556 during our annual Tootsie Roll drive and will donate that to Imagine the Possibilities in Guttenberg.
- * The next KC breakfast will be Jan. 9th and proceeds will go towards the handicap ramp replacement

Upcoming Parish Events

- Dec 12: Clayton Ridge High School Christmas Concert, 7pm; St. Mary church, **will be Live Streamed**
- Dec 13: Finance Committee Mtg 6:30pm
Pastoral Council Mtg, 7pm
- Dec 15: SMIC Christmas Concert, 6pm; **will be Live Streamed**
- Dec 15: Youth Ministry, 6:15-8pm, Brinkmann Hall
- Jan 9: KC Breakfast

Please submit newsletter items by Tuesday night to:
churchlady@smic.pvt.k12.ia.us