

ST. MARY PARISH

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

Newsletter: Dec 15, 2022 ~ Rectory: 563-252-1247 ~ Fr.'s Cell: 563-258-3958 ~ www.maryicjoseph.org

LIVE THE LITURGY Inspiration for the week: How Much Is Enough?

I've got some great news for some of you: Jesus Christ doesn't care what name you bear. He doesn't care where you were born, and he doesn't care what your family tree looks like. He doesn't care where you grew up or where you went to school.

I've also got some bad news for some of you: See above.

It's so easy to take our salvation for granted. The mercy of God makes it so. Look at John the Baptist — he was pouring water on everybody who wanted it. Everybody but one group: those who expected it. Those who thought it was a given because of who they were, because of what they were. Those who had no intention of doing the work of repentance.

Sometimes, because God is so faithful, we make the mistake of forgetting that He is also just.

I am baptized, we think. I made my First Communion, and I was Confirmed. That's enough.

I went to Catholic school. I know all the Ten Commandments and I can tell you anything you want to know about the Popes. That's enough.

I'm on parish council. I put money in the basket, and I volunteer. That's enough.

None of it is enough. It would never be enough. And before we look upon the Pharisees and Sadducees with too much judgment, we need to remember: the work of repentance is ongoing. It is a process that we must commit to within ourselves, continuously.

God is the missing element to this equation. He is the one who raises children to Abraham from the stones. If we rely only on our own abilities, our own merits, our own offerings, it will never be enough. — *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.

A Christmas Gift: a book by Matthew Kelly, "**HOLY MOMENTS**", will be available **FREE** for you to take home and read. It is called, "A Handbook for the Rest of Your Life." This book is promoted through St. Mary's Parish Life Committee



PEACE BE WITH YOU

Mass Schedule: December 19 – December 25, 2022

Mon., Dec 19: [No Mass Scheduled]

Tues., Dec 20: [No Mass Scheduled]

Wed., Dec 21: 8:30 A.M. – St. Mary, Guttenberg
Janice & Donald Rohner & Jerome Troester

Thur., Dec 22: 8:30 A.M. – Guttenberg River Living Center
People of the Parish

Fri., Dec 23: [No Mass Scheduled]

Sat., Dec 24: Christmas Eve
4:00 P.M.—St. Joseph, Garnavillo, Children's Mass
Marion Moses
5:30 P.M.—St. Mary, Guttenberg, Children's Mass
Janice & Clifford Frommelt

Sun., Dec 25: Christmas Day
8:30 A.M. – Immaculate Conception, N. Buena Vista
People of the Parish
10:00 A.M. – St. Mary, Guttenberg, Mass, Live Streamed
Fritz/Rosemary/John & Joe Kann

GOSPEL REFLECTION: The Greatest Gift

If we have really been following the readings and other texts of the liturgy during the first weeks of Advent, we see that the Church has been inviting us to focus our attention on that day when, in the fullness of time, Christ will return in glory. In the final days of Advent, however, the focus shifts and we recall those prophecies, people, and events that preceded the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem more than two millennia ago. In the readings for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we hear God making a promise to King Ahaz — through the words of the prophet Isaiah — that virgin shall bear a child and how that promise was fulfilled in Mary, the betrothed of Joseph of Nazareth.

These are stories that we know well. Some of us learned the story of the Jesus' birth through Christmas pageants or holiday TV specials. For others, it was Bible stories, attending church services at Christmas, and in classic carols and hymns. In a sense, the Christmas story has become part of our spiritual DNA, and because of that, there is the risk that we lose sight of how shocking these events really were to those who were living those events and we miss what they reveal about the mercy and love of God.

However, if we are able to take time to pray with and reflect on the readings for this week, we begin to recognize a thread — a central idea — pulling these wonderful texts together: Gift.

In the first reading, God makes the promise of Emmanuel who will lead the Chosen People in freedom despite the king's unwillingness to even ask for anything from God. In the Gospel, God's angelic messenger interrupts Joseph's sleep, breaking into one of the most ordinary human acts with the most extraordinary news. And St. Paul names the grace and call that he himself received and which he, in turn, shares with the Christians of Rome (in the second reading). In each instance, we are being confronted with the truth that God offers us deliverance, grace, and mercy freely, simply out of love for us.

In an Advent reflection, spiritual writer Loretta Ross-Gotta remarked: Jesus observed, "Without me you can do nothing," (John 15:5). Yet we act, for the most part, as though without us God can do nothing. We think we have to make Christmas come, which is to say we think we have to bring about the redemption of the universe on our own... "Oh, but nothing will get done," you say. "If I don't do it, Christmas won't happen." And we crowd out Christ with our fretful fears.

How much time and effort do we waste holding our breath, treading water as we navigate wave after wave of expectation and responsibility? Rather than trying to hold on to some semblance of control or the sense that we have to keep things moving forward, God is inviting us to let something new come to birth within us.

Exhale.

Remember: the one who is both Giver and Gift asks us only for open heart and a willing spirit. Dwell in the mystery that is being made present to us in the liturgies of Advent and Christmas: Grace to you and peace from God our

On this fourth Sunday of Advent as we prepare for the coming of Jesus, we remember the love that we have in Jesus. Light the last purple candle on your wreath, the candle of Love.

Father / and the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 1:7).
— Bro. Silas Henderson, SDS



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.

Teens Encounter Christ, or TEC, is a Catholic experience designed for high school juniors and seniors taking place January 14th- January 16th at Beckman High School. Cost is only \$5! Registration is due by December 30th. Please contact Katey Simon at youthministry@smic.pvt.k12.ia.us for more info.

SAVE THE DATE . . .

Saturday, January 28, 2023, for the Beauty in Christ Women's Conference: Fiat! Saying Yes to God! Gather at St. Mary's from 8am-1:30 pm to experience this awesome virtual event together. Stay tuned for more info!

Upcoming Parish Events

Dec 18: Sunday School for PK, K, 1st; 9:45-10:45am
Jan 4: Faith Formation/Youth Ministry, 6 and 6:15pm
Jan 11: Faith Formation/Youth Ministry, 6 and 6:15pm
Jan 14-16: TEC at Beckman High School
Jan 28: Beauty in Christ Women's Conference, 8-1:30

A Stewardship Moment

When he discovered that Mary was with child, Joseph resolved to end their engagement with as little disgrace as possible. But obedient to the voice of God, he changed those plans and became instead the protector of the child Jesus and His mother, Mary. God grant that I may be as open to the leading of the Holy Spirit!

2023 Budget Envelopes have been delayed at the printers and hopefully will arrive by the end of the year. Please email OfficeOfStMary@gmail.com if you no longer need a budget box due to online giving or you simply use your own envelope. **Reminder:** The Internal Revenue Service requires all contributions be **contributed/postmarked by Dec. 31, 2022** to receive charitable credit for 2022.