

## Week of December 17, 2017

### MONDAY

Jer 23:5-8 \* Ps 72:1-2,12-13,18-19 \* Mt 1:18-25

### TUESDAY 8:00am Word & Com.

Jgs 13:2-7,24-25 \* Ps 71:3-6,16-17 \* Lk 1:5-15

### WEDNESDAY 8:00am Mass

Is 7:10-14 \* Ps 24:1-6 \* Lk 1:26-38

### THURSDAY 8:00am Mass

Sg 2:8-14 \* Ps 33:2-3,11-12,20-21 \* Lk 1:39-45

### FRIDAY

1 Sm 1:24-28 \* 1 Sm 2:1,4-8 \* Lk 1:46-56

### SATURDAY 4:30pm Mass

Mal 3:1-4,23-24 \* Ps 25:4-5,8-10,14 \* Lk 1:57-66

### SUNDAY 9:30am Mass

➔ NO Children's Liturgy of the Word & Nursery

2 Sm 7:1-5,8-12,14,16 \* Ps 89:2-5,27,29 \* Rom 16:25-27 \* Lk 1:26-38

**6:00pm Christmas Eve Mass**

**8:00pm Christmas Eve Mass**

Is 9:1-6 \* Pa 96:1-3,11-13 \* Ti 2:11-14 \* Lk 2:1-14



## Parish Activities

Mon., Dec. 18	6:30pm	Choir Practice
	6:30pm	RCIA
	5:45pm	Hand Chimes Practice
Tues., Dec. 19	6:30pm	AACS Christmas Pageant
	6:30pm	Quilters-United Methodist
Wed., Dec. 20	6:30pm	School Committee Meeting
Thurs., Dec. 21	7:00pm	Communal Penance Service
Fri., Dec. 22		Parish Office & AACS Office Closed



**Giving Trees: THANK YOU** to everyone who participated in our Giving Trees this year! The organizations who received your gifts were so appreciative! Thank you for making someone's Christmas a little brighter this year!

**Adopt-a-Family:** As in past years, we are again adopting two disadvantaged families from Bay City Western for Christmas! If you are interested in participating by buying a gift, adopting one of the children, or contributing financially (parish staff will use the money to purchase gifts), call the parish office at 662-6861 by **December 19**.

**Blood Drive:** Michigan Blood Banks are most in need of blood donations around the holidays. Help prevent blood shortages by giving blood at our next blood drive on **December 20, 1:30-6:30pm** at the **Auburn Area Branch Library**. To make an appointment, please sign up on the sheet at the main church entrance.

**PBS will be featuring The Sultan and the Saint** on Tues., Dec. 26 at 8pm. Explore how St. Francis of Assisi and the Sultan of Egypt, Muhammad Al-Kamil, risked it all to end the Crusades. A simple Christian friar and a mighty Muslim leader met on a bloody battle field 800 years ago. What happened next changed world history.

**The Great Adventure Bible Timeline** will begin Monday evening, January 8. This timeline is a fascinating bible study that will take you on a journey through the entire bible. Additional details can be found at the Café kiosk. Sign-up sheets are available at the church entrances or call the parish office for more info.

## The Parish in the Community

Catholic Federal Credit Union's **Monsignor Forbes College Scholarship** applications available at [www.cathfcu.com/scholarship-program](http://www.cathfcu.com/scholarship-program).

## Education/Formation

### Family Talk Time

Sunday for Catholic Families, Sara McGinnis Lee

Can you think of a time when you clearly felt your actions and words were a reflection of Christ?

► **Reflecting on the Word:** John clearly shows us that we are not meant to be the light ourselves, but rather reflect the light of Christ. Even as great as John was at the time and for all the followers he had, he knew that it was not he but the one he spoke of that attracted people. The realization of our unworthiness ensures our message and actions are in service to God. Coming back to this again and again will enable us to help others along the way. If you speak Christ's words, people will listen.

► **Living the Word:** To reflect on the ways family members can be light to each other and reflect the love of God in all they say and do, the family can create a collage of light. In these final days leading up to Christmas, dedicate a space in your home where family members can hang or place paper candles with the deeds or words of others that bring warmth and light. There is no limit to the number that the family can put up in a day. Ask your children how the candles make them feel.

► **Symbols of the Season** "Take Out", Dec. 2017, *Family Faith on the Go*  
**The Nativity Scene** in your home is a wonderful way to keep your family's focus on Christ. If your set is made of child-friendly pieces, it is also a great way to learn the Christmas story through play. Most kids love the animals, the angel and the Magi, and there can become a natural reverence for the baby Jesus and his parents. **Family Faith idea:** Leave your Nativity up long into January as a way to reinforce the message that the Christmas message does not end when the last presents have been opened. There is more to the story!

## Auburn Area Catholic School

► **AACS's Christmas Program will be Tues., Dec. 19 at 6:30pm. Come and see "Little Star".**

► **Spirit Hockey Tickets:** AACS has free Saginaw Spirit tickets in the form of vouchers, available in the school office. Their home game schedule is available at <http://saginawspirit.com/schedule/60/34>. You may stop by the school office and pick up vouchers any time during school hours or call the office at 662-6431.

► **Scrip Cards** will be available in the school office through Thurs., Dec. 21.



## Stewardship

Weekly Target: \$11,538.47 \* Offering: \$8,280.01  
 Christmas Flowers: \$162.00 \* Christmas Offering: \$40.00  
 Food Pantry: \$30.00 \* Religious Retirement: \$2,346.00  
 Campaign for Human Development: \$20.00

### Children's Good Deeds: My Good Deed was...

...shoveling the driveway ...being brave at the doctor's office  
 ...help my Grandma fold clothes ...helping Momma wrap presents

► **Reminder: The Christmas Offering** which used to go to the diocesan Clergy Retirement Program, **now stays within the parish**. It is an opportunity to give a special Christmas gift to your parish!

**Religious Give Thanks:** "When we see the generous response of so many thousands of persons in order to help us, religious men and women, we are left speechless." Senior sisters, brothers and religious order priests across the country send heartfelt thanks for your donation to last week's Retirement Fund for Religious collection.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Patricia Sanchez, [Celebration](#)

John the Baptizer is featured in today's Johannine Gospel. His identity, his role, his mission and the character of his baptism are clarified yet again. The fourth evangelist attests that John was a witness to the light who is Jesus. As living light, Jesus dispelled the darkness of the human condition in order to empower humanity to find its joy in God.

As we celebrate the God of our joy who comes into our lives, our liturgy might seem out of touch with a world so darkened by war, poverty, famine, injustice and natural calamities of every kind. As we come to this holy place and join this holy gathering, our hearts might be cynical, jaded, devoid of a sense of eager expectancy. It might seem heartless and unsympathetic to give ourselves over to joyous celebration when so many have no reason to smile, let alone rejoice. Perhaps some of us are looking for the "sugar-coated pill" we swallow during this celebratory time to make us feel better and the world look better. But the church has a different cure for this condition. We call it hope.

By virtue of the gift of hope, we are able to see and to move beyond present difficulties because we are grounded in the reality that Jesus, who came once in the form of humble humanity, will come again in glory and power. In the meantime, we press forward to the future by anticipating here and now the gifts we have been promised. We hope and rejoice and deal courageously with the present because we know that the future does not simply consist in more of the same, but is an eternal communion with "One whom we have heard, whom we have seen with our eyes...and touched with our hands...the Word of Life, Jesus" (1 Jn 1:1).

## The Baptist's Call

[Celebration](#)

While he denied that he was the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, the Baptizer did claim a title that had validity only in reference to Jesus. "I am the voice in the desert," admitted John, thereby affirming that the prophecy of Isaiah (40:3) was being realized in him. In his *Sermons* on this text and on the mission of John, Augustine wrote that John was "a voice who cried out for a time, but Jesus is the eternal word from the beginning." In his crying out, John the Baptizer called for the preparation of a straight way for the Lord who comes.

Perhaps the Johannine evangelist, like his predecessor Isaiah, was borrowing a page from his own culture. In his time, when dignitaries were to visit, roadways were repaired in order to offer as hospitable a welcome as possible. Similar measures are taken today to prepare for the visit of political or religious officials.

But when John preached about making straight the way, he did not expect Rome to send a work crew to improve the Palestinian infrastructure. This was not what the Baptizer had in mind. Rather, through his baptismal washing and preaching of repentance, John challenged his contemporaries to a religious and moral transformation so the crookedness of sin would be replaced by straight-arrow integrity.

Each Advent, John's voice resounds with a call for holiness and justice so the God of our joy might find a worthy welcome within us. When John first issued this challenge, he fully intended that his words would make a difference. Hearing these same words and same call year after year can become merely part of the traditional sounds of yet another Advent. Therefore, we pray not simply to grasp these words but to allow ourselves to be grasped by them.

## Called to Evangelize

Patricia Sanchez, [Celebration](#)

When all the graced visionaries have prophesied, when the healers have soothed every pain, when all the fettered are set free, when the

naked and the shamed are clothed with justice and dignity (Isaiah), One will come among us – One in whom hope and healing, freedom and salvation will find their most eloquent expression (John). He is the One for whom we wait with joy (1 Thes). On this, the third Sunday of Advent, Isaiah, Paul and the two Johns (the evangelist and the baptiz-er) call the assembly to cultivate that joy and allow it to sustain us. Ours is good news.

Pope Francis knows all the evils that plague our planet. Nevertheless, he encourages believers to live and to preach the joy of the Gospel. In his exhortation of that name, Francis has admitted, "The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures and blunted conscience" ("The Joy of the Gospel." Nov. 24, 2013). Those who follow Jesus need to evangelize in the face of this with a fierce and unrelenting joy; as Francis says, "an evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!" Isaiah's year of favor has already been announced. It devolves upon believers to bring the blessings of God's favor to bear on all who still suffer physical, economic and spiritual need.

## Paul's Way (Thessalonians)

[Celebration](#)

Anyone who thinks of Paul as a dour rule-giver has never meditated on this reading. Paul's first injunction is "Rejoice always." Paul says "always." That indicates that rejoicing is not a mood or a fiesta activity, it's not a prayer after communion, but an attitude. We can't engender our own rejoicing, but we can cultivate it. Joy is not the same as pleasure. Pleasure is a fleeting sensation of liking something that generally "pleases" us. Pleasure is rooted in our senses: We can relish or appreciate what we hear, taste, smell, see or touch. Joy is a state of the soul. Joy is deeper than happiness or contentment. Happiness is always vulnerable to sorrow, loss, even pain. Contentment speaks of satisfaction with what is. Joy can coexist with sorrow and discontent.

The joy of which Paul speaks is a fruit of faith in Christ and God's great love. Joy is an attitude that knows that no matter the circumstances of the moment, God's love is the one constant. If we want to think about joy, we might think about the way the Gospel of John presents Jesus' understanding of the events of his passion. Jesus speaks of his cross as "being lifted up," of death as the fullness of his vocation (12:32-33). What carried Jesus through the horror of those events was his inner awareness of God's faithfulness and profound delight in knowing God's love. That's what engenders the sort of joy Paul is talking about. We can "rejoice always" to the extent that we are aware of the power of God's love to give meaning to everything in our life.

## Advent Activity

Karen Johnson, [Celebration](#)

This is no ordinary time in the church year – there are 34 Sundays reserved for that. Advent is an extraordinary time, a time when the church asks us to pray, repent and wait with joyful anticipation. Take some time this coming week and prayerfully reflect on the gift of your own life. Remember the miracle of your own birth. Your vocation, your *raison d'être*, is written on your heart. Have the courage to ask close friends and family members what they most appreciate about you. Often what is written on our hearts remains hidden to us, but is clearly visible to others. In this Advent season, recognize your gifts, and even more importantly, recognize from where these gifts flow. You are a beloved child of God, a person with a unique and essential purpose.

***"Lord, help me to rejoice always."***

*Love is a wonderful thing. You never have to take it away from one person to give it to another. There's always more than enough to go around.*