

Week of December 24, 2017

CHRISTMAS DAY 9:30am Mass

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

TUESDAY →NO Word/Com

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 * Ps 31:3-4,6,8,16-17 * Mt 10:17-22

WEDNESDAY →NO Mass

1 Jn 1:1-4 * Ps 97:1-2,5-6,11-12 * Jn 20:1-8

THURSDAY 8:00am Mass

1 Jn 1:5-2:2 * Ps 124:2-5,7-8 * Mt 2:13-18

FRIDAY

1 Jn 2:3-11 * Ps 96:1-3,5-6 * Lk 2:22-35

SATURDAY 4:30pm Mass

1 Jn 2:12-17 * Ps 96:7-10 * Lk 2:36-40

SUNDAY 9:30am Mass

→NO Children's Liturgy of the Word & Nursery

Sir 3:2-6,12-14 * Col 3:12-21 * Ps 128:1-5 * Lk 2:22-40



Parish Activities

The Parish Office will close at noon on Friday, December 29.

Adopt-a-Family: Thank you to everyone who participated in our Adopt-a-Family project this year. Because of your contributions, we were able to buy some great gifts for seven Western students (from two families). Their parents and the staff at Western are so appreciative of your generosity! Thank you!

A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP...

God, our Lord and King, has visited His people and continues to visit us each day. He gives Himself to us in the person of His only Son, Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate and who brings us words of joy and encouragement.

I extend to each of you a heartfelt greeting of love and appreciation. To those of you who, for whatever reason, have not felt drawn to Mass or the Sacraments for quite some time, I invite you to return to the Church so that you may know and celebrate more deeply the Lord's presence in your lives.

May our Lord continue to bless you, your families and loved ones; and, may Mary, Mother of the Child Jesus and our Mother, watch over you always.

Sincerely yours in Christ, Bishop Cistone

Education/Formation

► Christmas Dinner Prayer

<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu>

God of all gifts, we thank you for the many ways you have blessed us this day. We are grateful for each of those who are gathered around this table. We ask you to bless us and our food and to bless those we love who are not with us today. In our gratitude and love, we remember your humble birth into our lives and pray for those who are without enough to eat. We remember the stable in which you were born and pray for those who have no place to live. We remember your challenging message of caring and giving and we pray for peace in families and nations throughout the world. We bless you and give you thanks in your Spirit who brings our hearts to life this Christmas Day and forever. Amen.

► Did you know... "The Twelve Days of Christmas":

In England, for almost 275 years from 1558-1829, Roman Catholics were not allowed to publicly live out their faith. In order to instruct children in the ways of the Catholic faith, a song rooted in symbolism was created to keep the beliefs of the church alive among Catholics in England.

The symbols from the **Twelve Days of Christmas** are: *My true love* (God), *Me* (any baptized Christian); *a partridge in a pear tree* (Jesus Christ); *2 turtle doves* (Old & New Testaments); *3 French hens* (faith, hope & charity); *4 calling birds* (4 Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke & John); *5 gold rings* (first 5 books of the Old Testament - the Torah or Pentateuch); *6 geese a laying* (6 days of creation); *7 swans a swimming* (7 gifts of the Holy Spirit); *8 maids a milking* (8 Beatitudes); *9 ladies dancing* (9 fruits of the Holy Spirit); *10 lords a leaping* (the Ten Commandments); *11 pipers piping* (11 apostles who were faithful to Jesus); *12 drummers drumming* (12 statements established in the Apostles' Creed)

What Every Catholic Needs to Know about Advent and Christmas, Kevin McGloin

Auburn Area Catholic School

► To Our Parish Family:

"May the Christ of Christmas be born in your hearts, held in your love, and shared this special season."

The Staff & Students of Auburn Area Catholic School

► **Script cards** will be available in the Parish Office Dec. 26 – Jan. 2.

Stewardship

Weekly Target: \$11,538.47 * Offering: \$13,393.20
Christmas Flowers: \$45.00 * Christmas Offering: \$410.00
Food Pantry: \$35 * Religious Retirement: \$850.00
Campaign for Human Development: \$20.00

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

-help Mama make cookies & take good care of Bennett.
-clean bathrooms.
-made a homemade gift and gave it to a stranger.
-helped my brother when he was hurt
-helped Carson with her homework
-helped dad shovel the driveway.

4th Sunday of Advent

Margaret Michaud, OSB, Collegeville MN

Today we are only a few hours away from celebrating once again the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the message our liturgy impresses upon us is powerful. God keeps promises! When we grasp this eternal truth and let it get inside us, we are overwhelmed with gratitude and joy. Our responsorial psalm, Psalm 89, provides us with a fitting response: "Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord." Our loving God promised to send a savior to redeem us from our sins. We are now ready to celebrate the fulfillment of that promise.

The reading from the Gospel of Luke tells the story of the actual event when God kept the promise. The author is careful to impress upon us how God's fidelity is carried out. This is how it happened. The angel Gabriel is sent to Nazareth, a backwater town in Galilee. One might think such wondrous news should be announced in the splendor and elegance of Jerusalem. It's very clear, however, that this divine child is to be born in solidarity with all people, ordinary people, not only the rich and famous. Through his foster father Joseph he is to be of the house of David as the prophets had foretold. But it is Mary who receives the message. A woman. Women had status in that ancient society only because of their connection with a man. They were recognized as a daughter or wife, rarely as an individual person with autonomous identity. And Almighty God sends an angel to Mary with the news that will change the world forever.

The Lukan account of the annunciation provides a powerful evidence of the Holy Spirit's inspiration to the evangelist. The angel's message is so shocking, and Mary is so human. She is greatly troubled and has understandable misgivings. She asks one very pertinent question: How can this child be conceived, if her virginity is to be preserved? When she receives Gabriel's answer, she gives her fiat. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." The incarnation happens. The promise has been kept.

Our Invitation

Sr. Mary McGlone, Celebration

This year we have the shortest Advent season possible. Our last week of Advent can begin no earlier than the first anticipated Mass on Saturday afternoon and it will come to an end with the first Mass of Christmas Eve on Sunday afternoon. This "week" of 24 hours or less seems to be a trick of liturgical time. Perhaps it's also a reminder that God doesn't wear a watch or carry a Day-Timer. God's time is as different from ours as God's thoughts are bigger than our imaginations. Only God would dream up a plan to save the world by starting with young Mary of Nazareth. Only God would keep turning to us, hoping for obedience. The angel said to Mary, "The Lord is with you." The angel also said, "Do not be afraid." The message that God is with us can be very troubling. If we allow ourselves to be vulnerable to God's presence, everything can change and that's not always comforting.

The message we are invited to ponder today during this 24-hour, final week of Advent, is that the Creator of the universe wants to be with us. When we are invited to ponder all that could be, the angel reminds us "nothing will be impossible for God." The mystery of Christmas that we celebrate with lights and crèche scenes, gifts and shared food, is not just a historical commemoration. Luke wants us to listen for Gabriel's wings approaching our town. The angels will tell us, "Do not be afraid." Heaven is hoping we will respond with the obedience of faith.

"Pray, Lord, you be born anew in me."

Do you Hear?

Celebration

Just as the Fourth Sunday of Advent leads directly into Christmas Eve, these readings are a preparation for the stories we will hear and see depicted for Christmas. The stable, not the temple, was Christ's first house on Earth. God didn't come to the family of a king or priest, but invited a simple girl, nobody to notice, to be the mother of Jesus.

God's timing is not ours, and although we often avoid sharing God's values, that has never stopped God from seeking us out. What it all comes down to is that God is looking for listening hearts. Can that be our gift this Christmas?

Annunciation to Incarnation Grace Works, Dallas TX

Christmas has nothing to do with producing a feeling or mood and everything to do with embracing God's purpose for life. That purpose, woven into this story about an angel and a teenage girl, is to bring us to the place where, with Mary, we say to God, "Let it be done to me according to your word." When the living of our days devolves into struggle, ambiguity, suffering, loneliness, and pain, the "how can this be?" questions almost crush the life from our souls. We look at our resources, the time and health given us, the family and friends around us, the decisions staring us in the face and simply wilt before the stress of it all.

In that crucible of unanswered questions and difficult circumstances, God is with us ready to awaken in us the resources of faith. Like Mary, our Lord Jesus Christ can be born in us and live through us even in the most difficult hours of our lives. Like Mary, we may have no idea how we are going to work through the issue or difficulty or opportunity staring us in the face. But the One who made us in God's image is the very One who is with us in Jesus our Lord. How can this be? How can it NOT be when we yield our wills to his will and our lives to his life? And when we do, what a very merry Christmas it will be!

Amen Corner

The Parish Planning and Building Committee members received great feedback on the proposed new worship facility and site improvements. The vast majority of people supported the project, and gave us great suggestions to consider as we finalize the plans. We had good clarifying conversations about how the plans address the needs of the Parish (a modern, energy efficient worship facility which incorporates items from our current sites; additional multipurpose rooms for meetings, religious ed. and school; a full-sized gym/social hall and plenty of additional storage). We shared your suggestions with the architect and are in the process of getting initial feedback about estimated cost. We will meet again in early January to continue to refine the plans. Please continue to engage the committee members to give your feedback or submit your suggestions to the parish office.

The Planning Group/Building Committee

Greetings: On behalf of the entire parish staff we offer each of you Best Wishes for this holiday season:

May the Peace and Joy of the Savior's Birth be born in you, and through you in our Parish Family!

