

St. John the Evangelist Church

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The Nativity of the Lord

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Message from the Pastor

Peace to all of you!

This Sunday we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent. We are very close to the coming of the Lord in Christmas. The First Reading, from the Book of the prophet Isaiah, gives us the announcement of the coming of Immanuel, God with us. King Ahaz, king of Judah, is afraid that Jerusalem is under siege. To avoid being conquered, he wants to make an alliance with Assyria. However, God assures him to trust in God that He will take care of his land. He distrusts God and the prophet offers him a sign of hope saying that a young woman will bear a son, Immanuel. This sign is also given to us so that we can place our hope and trust in the Lord. He comes to share our weaknesses and fragilities so that He can help in time of need. The Second Reading, from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans, offers us the background that the Messiah who we are waiting is coming from the lineage of King David. We are called to welcome Him with faith and to rely in the marvelous deeds that He wants to accomplish in our lives. He comes to live among us so that with his help we find support and fullness of life. The Gospel, from St. Matthew, gives us the account of the annunciation to St. Joseph. He has been engaged to Mary and he was waiting to consummate the marriage by living together. In this period, he received the unexpected news that Mary is pregnant, and he does not know how this happened. According to the Jewish law, she should be dismissed and stoned to death because of her adultery. However, Joseph does not want to put Mary to such a penalty. He enters a great dilemma in what to do: whether to continue and formalize the marriage or abandon her and divorce her. In this very difficult situation, the angel of the Lord reassures him that the baby that Mary is waiting comes from the Holy Spirit. Joseph believes in this news and welcomes Mary into his home and becomes his wife. There are situations in our lives that we do not expect or understand, and we tend to reject them, but even through these events God can bring out salvation, peace, and life. God asks us to trust in Him because all the events that God allows in our lives come from the Holy Spirit that He will give us the grace to accept them. Let us wait with a joyful heart and through the intercession of St. Joseph let us welcome Jesus in our hearts!

This Sunday, December 18th at 7pm we will have several priests available to hear our confessions. Come and experience God's mercy in our lives!

I really want to encourage you to come and worship with us during the time of Christmas. Jesus is coming soon to give us life to the full!

Fr. Francisco Fernandez, Your servant, and your Pastor

Pope Francis' Homily on the Fourth Sunday of Advent (December 18, 2016)

The liturgy for today, the Fourth and last Sunday of Advent, is characterized by the theme of closeness, God's closeness to humanity. The Gospel passage (cf. Mt 1:18-24) shows us two people, the two people who, more than anyone else, were involved in this mystery of love: the Virgin Mary and her husband, Joseph. A mystery of love, the mystery of God's closeness to humanity.

Mary is presented in the light of the prophet who says: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son" (v. 23). Matthew the Evangelist recognizes that this happened in Mary, who conceived Jesus through the Holy Spirit (cf. v. 18). The Son of God "comes" into her womb in order to become man, and she welcomes him. Thus, in a unique way, God drew near to mankind, taking on flesh through a woman: God drew near to us and took on flesh through a woman. To us too, in a different way, God draws near with his grace in order to enter our life and offer us the gift of his Son. What do we do? Do we welcome him, let him draw near, or do we reject him, push him away? As Mary, freely offering herself to the Lord of history, allowed him to change the destiny of mankind, so too can we, by welcoming Jesus and

seeking to follow him each day, cooperate in his salvific plan for us and for the world. Mary thus appears to us as a model to look to and upon whose support we can count in our search for God, in our closeness to God, in thus allowing God to draw close to us and in our commitment to build the culture of love.

The other protagonist of today's Gospel is Saint Joseph. The Evangelist highlights that alone, Joseph cannot explain to himself the event which he sees taking place before his eyes, namely, Mary's pregnancy. Just then, in that moment of doubt, even anguish, God approaches him — him too — through his messenger and [Joseph] is enlightened about the nature of this maternity: "the child conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (cf. v. 20). Thus, in facing this extraordinary event, which surely gave rise to many questions in his heart, he trusts totally in God who has drawn near to him, and after his invitation, does not repudiate his betrothed, but takes her to him and takes Mary to wife. In accepting Mary, Joseph knowingly and lovingly receives Him who has been conceived in her through the wondrous work of God, for whom nothing is impossible. Joseph, a just and humble man (cf. v. 19), teaches us to always trust in God, who draws near to us: when God approaches us, we must entrust ourselves to him. Joseph teaches us to allow ourselves to be guided by Him with willing obedience.

These two figures, Mary and Joseph, who were the first to welcome Jesus through faith, introduce us to the mystery of Christmas. Mary helps us to assume an attitude of openness in order to welcome the Son of God into our concrete life, in our flesh. Joseph spurs us to always seek God's will and to follow it with full trust. Both allow God to draw near to them.

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel", which means, God-with-us" (Mt 1:23). Thus the angel says: "the child shall be called Emmanuel, which means God-with-us", in other words, God near to us. And to God who draws near, do I open the door — to the Lord — when I sense an interior inspiration, when I hear him ask me to do something more for others, when he calls me to pray?

God-with-us, God who draws near. This message of hope, which is fulfilled at Christmas, leads to fulfilment of the expectation of God in each one of us too, in all the Church, and in the many little ones whom the world scorns, but whom God also loves and to whom God draws near.



Suggested Daily Readings

Leader: The Lord is our faith and our life.

All: May the Lord's peace be with us all.

Leader: And may his love shine in our hearts.

All: Our hope is in the coming of the Lord.

Light the candle(s). During the week, relight whenever the family gathers together.

Scripture Reading

Leader: Let us pray that our faith may be strengthened for the coming of the Lord.

All: Amen

4th Week – All four candles are lit.

4th Candle is the Angel's candle - Peace

Suggested Scripture Readings:

Sunday	Isaiah 11:1-10
Monday	Zephaniah 3:14-17
Tuesday	Matthew 1:18-25
Wednesday	Luke 2:8-20
Thursday	Matthew 4:14-16
Friday	Isaiah 2:1-5

Replace purple and pink candles with White Candles as we enter Christmas Season:

Saturday Night – Christmas Eve: Luke 2:25-33

Sunday Morning – Christmas Day: John 1: 1-18

DECEMBER 18, 2022

SACRAMENT PREPARATION PROGRAM

2022-2023

**FIRST EUCHARIST
(Grade 2)**

PARENTS' MEETING in the Church (parents only)
Tuesday, January 24, 2023, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

****NEW DATES FOR RITE OF ENROLMENT****

at the Church (children & families)
Saturday, January 28 at 5:00 pm OR
Sunday, January 29 at 9:00 am OR 11:00am

**CONFIRMATION
(Grade 7)**

Sessions 1 – 5
February 4, 11, 25 and March 4 in the Parish Centre
(date for Session 5 to be determined)
9:00 am – 10:30 am or 11:00 am – 12:30 pm (as scheduled)

ATTENTION ENGAGED COUPLES!
MARRIAGE PREPARATION CLASSES
Our next Marriage Preparation Course at St. John the Evangelist will be held on 6 Monday evenings from April 10 to May 15, 2023 at 7pm in the Parish Centre. Call 668-3676. Fee is \$250 per couple.



Masses For The Week

Sat Dec 17 – 5:00pm

+Dorothy Schroeder
req. by Barry Schroeder

Mon Dec 19 – 8:20am

+Yesudass Anthoniamma
req. by Yesu Naveen

Tues Dec 20 – 8:20am

+
req. by

Wed Dec 21 – 7:00pm

+George Myers
req. by Sarah Francis

Thurs Dec 22 – 8:20am

+Andrew Marioselva
req. by Christine Marioselva

Fri Dec 23 – 8:20am

In Thanksgiving for Prayers Answered
req. by Vicki Morgan

Sat Dec 24 – 5:00pm, 8pm, 11pm

NO INTENTIONS

ShareLife Collection Update, Goal \$137,000

Collection to date: \$141,188

THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO GAVE GENEROUSLY!



Christmas Flower fund – envelopes are available at the back counter for your donation this Christmas

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Food donations are requested for the following:

Canned fruit, canned salmon, juice boxes and drinks, canned ravioli and alphaggetti, side dishes ie/rice, potatoes and pasta, baked beans, peanut butter, crackers

Please check the expiry dates on all donations. Leave your donations in the gray bin provided in the foyer of the church. Thank you for your support.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2022

VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

5PM, 8PM, 11PM

5PM CHILDREN'S CHOIR

8PM ADULT CHOIR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2022

NATIVITY OF THE LORD

9AM, 11AM, 2PM SPANISH

MONDAY DECEMBER 26, 2022

ST STEPHEN, FIRST MARTYR

9AM

TUESDAY DECEMBER 27, 2022

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

8:20AM

OFFICE CLOSED MONDAY & TUESDAY

Gift Giving to our Migrant Workers

Envelopes are available on the back counter, to make cash, cheque (or gift card donations) to the Migrants Workers in our parish area for their Christmas in lieu of the annual Christmas dinner this year. Your cash or cheques will be used to purchase gift cards for them. Thank you!

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