

ISSUE NO. 68

9 DECEMBER 2018

2nd

Sunday
OF ADVENT

Cathedral
WEEKLY

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PREPARE THE WAY | FR. CHRISTOPHER HOUSE
EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP | TRACY EARL WELLIVER, MTS
WHY ALPHA? | VICKI COMPTON

Cathedral WEEKLY

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oh shoot, I forgp - CATHEDRAL OFFICE
SPICATHEDRAL.ORG

MASS TIMES: SAT 4PM, SUN. 7AM, 10AM, 5PM
WEEKDAY MASSES: MON. thru FRI. 7AM, 5:15PM and SAT. 8AM
RECONCILIATION (CONFESSIONS): MON-FRI 4:15PM- 5PM, SAT. 9AM-10AM, 2:30PM-3:30PM, and SUN. 4PM-4:45PM

Diocesan Victim Assistance is available. For the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, please contact: Patricia Kornfield at 321-1155.

Welcome to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception!

On behalf of our bishop, the Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki, our parishioners, deacons, and priests, I welcome you to the mother church of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.

The seat of the diocese was moved to Springfield from Alton in 1923. In the same year, "Old St. Mary's" church of Immaculate Conception Parish was named as the pro-cathedral of the new diocese until this cathedral church was built and dedicated in 1928. Currently, our diocese comprises twenty-eight counties in central Illinois, serving over 140,000 members of the Catholic faithful.

I hope that your visit to our Cathedral is one of grace and beauty and that you feel at home in the mother church. I also hope that you will find this edition of the *Cathedral Weekly* to be both informative and spiritually enriching. May God bless you and yours!

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE UPCOMING WEEK



Very Reverend Christopher A. House
Rector

Monday 10 December

7 AM -John Montgomery (John Busciacco)

5:15 PM - Mathias Bates (Bates Family)

Tuesday 11 December

7 AM - Mary Ann Midden (William Midden)

5:15 PM - Paul Lannan (Bill & Wilma Sinnott)

Wednesday 12 December

7 AM -Delbert Fairweather (Andrew & Cheryl Klein)

5:15 PM - Anna Eleyidath (Lou Ann & Carl Corrigan)

Thursday 13 December

7 AM - Ann Gustafson (Jeannette Giannone)

5:15 PM - Ann Hall (Lou Ann & Carl Corrigan)

Friday 14 December

7 AM - Peter Thomas (Sarah Jones)

5:15 PM - Michael Edward Schmitz, Sr. (Cathedral School Staff)

Saturday 15 December

8 AM - Ben Garde (Family)

4 PM - Becky Morgan (Bill Vogt)

Sunday 16 December

7 AM - Mary Ann Midden (William Midden)

10 AM - For the People

5 PM - Bart Rotherham (Rotherham Family)

Like the Cathedral Weekly? Share this copy with a friend!



Prepare the Way

I am sitting down to write this on Tuesday morning of the past week. It is exactly three weeks until Christmas Day; are you ready? By the time you actually read this it will be just over two weeks until Christmas Day; are you ready? The secular world is working itself into its yearly frenzy of pre-Christmas hysteria while the

Church in this holy season of Advent is inviting us to keep our focus on that which is most important: that the Lord Jesus will come again in glory with salvation for his people.

Are you ready?

This Sunday's first reading from the Prophet Baruch gives us a wonderful vision of the full establishment of the Kingdom of God. Yes, the language is vivid and the imagery is mystical and, if we are not careful, we may find ourselves saying

"isn't that nice" with either a tongue-in-cheek cynicism or ultimately dismissing the vision as romanticized and something that is out of reach. Baruch was preaching to a people in exile, a people who were not where they wanted to be, a people who were not where God ultimately wanted them to be. Baruch wanted to remind the people of Israel that God was not done with them. Is it not the same for us?

Honestly, are we really where we think we should be, where God wants us to be as a people, as a society?

In the midst of our struggles, God wants us to know that greater things are still coming and that he is not done with us.

Being that this is the Second Sunday of Advent, enter John the Baptist. He always makes his appearance on this Sunday each year, whether we are hearing from Matthew, Mark, or Luke. This Sunday's Gospel account from Luke does not give us the fire of John's message, at least not yet this Advent season, but rather Luke presents John as the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Prophet Isaiah. The message is one that we know: fill in the

valleys, bring the mountains low, make the rough plane smooth, and prepare a highway for the Lord. We know it. Do we own it? The work that needs to be done within, the conversion that Isaiah and John proclaim, is not easy but God will do his part if we let him.

Are you ready and willing?

As we hear from Paul's Letter to the Philippians, Paul wants to remind us that God is at work in us and that his own divine life is still being made manifest in each of us. This is how the vision of

Baruch and the other prophets will be fulfilled. The Kingdom of God will only be made fully manifest once it has fully arrived in each and every heart. The valleys, hills, and planes of Isaiah are wonderful reminders of the work that needs to be done in my life and in yours.



May this Advent season shake us out of our complacency and renew our trust in the fact that, yes, the grace of God is seeking to work in each of us and that same grace can do great things, even the impossible, if we fully surrender ourselves to God's power to save.

If we are waiting to see the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God, each of us must make sure that we are first allowing God to establish it in our own lives.

Father Christopher House is the Rector of the Cathedral and serves in various leadership roles within the diocesan curia, namely Chancellor and Vicar Judicial.

STEWARDSHIP



Stewardship Activity

Stewardship of Time

How is your relationship with Jesus? Take time this Advent to reflect on how you can deepen your relationship with Him.

Stewardship of Talent

The Advent Season presents many service opportunities. At Cathedral, consider the upcoming Alpha program to serve within!

Stewardship of Treasure- December 1st & 2nd

Envelopes: \$5,947.50

Loose: \$5,684.27

Maintenance: \$2,042.00

Total: \$13,673.77

November EFT (\$17,504.45)

Sacraments

Are you looking for sacramental information? Please contact the Parish Offices at 522-3342.

Scripture Questions

First Reading: BAR 5:1-9

The prophet Baruch offers words of encouragement and hope to the Israelites held in captivity in Babylon. How do you seek divine guidance in moments of despair and distress?

Second Reading: PHIL 1:4-6, 8-11

St. Paul offers a prayer for the Philippians so that they may "discern what is of value." What do you value most in this life?

Gospel Reading: LK 3:1-6

Luke is careful to place the preaching and activities of John the Baptist in its political and religious historical context. Why do you think this information was so important to Luke and his community?

Gospel Reflection

"In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar...and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee...and Lysanias was tetrarch of?" Did you need to pinch yourself awake during the first few lines of this Sunday's Gospel? John the Baptist received quite a prelude today as Luke described the religious and political leadership of the time period. Scripture is divinely inspired, and we believe that everything that made it into the Bible is there for a reason. These lines remind us of an important truth. The Christmas story isn't a fairy tale or nursery rhyme. It's not a parable we say to give meaning to the holiday. At Christmas, God's presence is made tangible in a precise moment in time. The birth of Christ is a historical event. As precursor to Jesus' preaching, the ministry of John the Baptist is also a historical event.

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." John's call to repentance and the forgiveness of sins happened in a particular time and place. But that does not mean it is limited to first century Palestine! God continues to move in our daily lives. What we hear in today's Gospel - and what we anticipate at Christmas - occurs in our daily lives. God works in concrete ways in time and space. He did that 2,000 years ago, and He continues to do so today!

This Sunday, examine your own Christmas preparations. Is there anything you need to repent of before the Christmas season? Are there low points in your life, valleys to "be filled" by the love of God? Are their mountainous obstacles in your spiritual life? How can they be "made low"? Are you making decisions that have moved you away from God? This Advent season is the time for them to "be made straight and made smooth." Prepare the way in your heart for Christ today!

Everyday Stewardship

I remember growing up in Catholic school and having to make construction paper Advent wreaths every single year! The little yellow flames would be cut out and held until each new candle was lit. Great idea, except for the fact that the chance you could find the flames greatly diminished as each week passed. I will bet over 50% of the wreaths never received a 4th flame! Of course by then, most kids in elementary school had moved on to Christmas. Christmas was not a day. It was an entire experience of vacation from school.

You may or may not have an Advent wreath in your home or office, but those flames are rather insignificant to the flame that should be burning in our hearts during this season. How are you finding ways to light your fire? How are you preparing the way for

Christ to come into your life and the lives of those around you in a more profound way?

The ritual of an Advent wreath is a good idea for anyone. But don't think that your preparations are done simply because you have one. You are called to be a flame to others during this season, reminding them of why we celebrate this time at all. Each person is a candle to be lit, and you have the gifts, given to you by God, to light them. At Christmas, you want God to look at you and see all the light generated by those He lit through you. Now is the time. Don't wait until Advent is almost over. You might not be able to find your own flames if you wait too long.

-- Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

*Both of the above reflections are provided with permission by Liturgical Publications, Inc.



Why Alpha?

Those of us who have been hanging around the Church for a few decades have noticed a disturbing trend: fewer people are in the pews. Fewer couples are getting married in the Church and fewer parents are baptizing their children. How has this happened and what are we going to do about it? There are

many reasons for the decline in faith and participation in parish life, but I think much of it boils down to the fact that many people have not had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, despite devout parents who took them to Mass and sent them to Catholic schools or religious ed.

Too many of us have thought a relationship with the Church was the same as a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Statistics show that most Catholics do not believe a personal relationship with God or Jesus Christ is even possible, and few Catholics ever speak about their relationship with Christ to another person! But the Church is not the same as Jesus Christ. And a disciple cannot be a relationship without a relationship with Jesus.

Our recent scandalous history has made it easy for some to walk away from the Church. But those of us who have felt the loving presence of an attentive God or who have encountered Christ in the Sacraments cannot easily walk away. Those of us who remain have the responsibility for reversing the trend. We must speak of Jesus to others!

We must tell our great stories of answered prayer and redemption from sin in a way that invites others to their own experiences of Christ in His Church. We must find ways to introduce people to Jesus Christ, and Alpha is one way for us to do this.

Alpha is a series of sessions that explore the basics of Christianity in a way that makes faith relevant to modern life. Each session starts with a meal, because food has a way of bringing people together and creating community. After the meal is a video talk on an aspect of Christianity like "Who is Jesus?" or "How Can I Have Faith?". Finally, after the video, participants have a chance to share their thoughts and ideas on the topic through discussion in an honest, friendly and open environment.

For a people unused to evangelization, Alpha is a tool we can employ to help others begin a relationship with Christ in the context of the Catholic Church.

explore

life
faith
meaning

Alpha

Looking for more information?

Please contact

Vicki Compton at vcompton@cathedral.dio.org or at 522-3342.

spicathedral.org/alpha/

Alpha is highly relational and deeply dependent on the Holy Spirit to guide both the hosts and guests to an experience of God. At the end of the Alpha series, guests are invited to continue to explore and deepen their relationship with Christ by being involved in RCIA or other faith formation opportunities at the Cathedral.

So, Why Alpha? Because we need to do something different, something evangelizing, something that can help us grow disciples!

Evangelization is the task of every Christian disciple, and we need volunteers to plan and cook meals, serve as table hosts, and do the clean up. We need you to

help launch the next Alpha in January. To volunteer contact Vicki Compton at vcompton@cathedral.dio.org or at 522-3342.

Alpha Witness Stories



*"I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ."
Pope Francis*

Alpha epitomizes this very quote from the Pope. In a safe, hospitable environment, you can find Jesus. No matter where you are in your life, this 12 week course will take you as far or farther in your journey to have that personal relationship. At each session, through video and discussion we are led toward a deeper understanding of just who this Jesus is and how He can become a part of our lives. During this past summer, I was part of the hospitality crew; we greeted everyone who came making each one feel welcome and prepared food that we shared. There is no better way to get to know someone than thru food and conversation. I meet people I would have never met and shared my own concerns and desires about how to be more open to Jesus. I felt safe and secure sitting around a table that I would be heard and understood. I ask that you consider coming and seeing for yourself—over 50 people took a chance at our first Cathedral Alpha and came. It may well be the beginning of that encounter that the Pope encourages us to have.

~Bev Smith



I converted to Catholicism in 2011 and Alpha interested me because I thought it might challenge my belief system, and it sounded fun. The course did help me rethink some topics, but mostly I developed a stronger social network. Before Alpha, I went to mass and knew very few people. Now when attending, I have more people that I am acquainted with and have made a few new friends. I have experience with facilitation, and since Alpha was such a fun time, I decided that I would offer to volunteer at a table as a group helper.

~Leza Ulrich



I've been attending mass at Cathedral off and on for 20 years and this year became a registered parishioner. Alpha was my first opportunity to get to know people from the church at a deeper level. Over 12 weeks I grew closer to my table members by sharing knowledge, insights, laughter, tears, gifts, food, and plans for friendship in the future. I didn't want Alpha to end, so am happy it will be offered twice a year at Cathedral. Watching the inspiring videos and discussing them helped me understand myself as a spiritual being and articulate my relationship with God. This program is for everyone regardless of where they're at in life. It gave me a new meaning of church as an inclusive, rather than exclusive, place. I'm grateful to serve and be served in this ongoing program.

~Mary Frances

Sharing the Gospel

Have you ever played a game where you asked for a "do-over" so you could try again? When John told his neighbors to be baptized, he wanted them to have a second chance, A "do-over." He wanted to give them a fresh, clean start with God.

LK 3:1-6

Let Us Pray

Dear God,

When I find myself doing or saying things that you would not like, help me to stop and start over.

Amen.



Puzzle

Circle these words from today's Gospel:

BAPTIZED	JOHN	CROOKED
FORGIVEN	DESERT	SMOOTH
ISAIAH	STRAIGHT	ROUGH

C I F O R G I V E N
R O U G H L O Y U L
O N B D I F T S M V
O I A S M O O T H E
K C P T W S H R I J
E Y T O U M Y A S O
D U I L I S A I A H
R J Z O C E T G K N
O Y E M K Y I H I W
H A D E S E R T O U

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Mission for the Week

When you catch yourself being selfish, not following directions, or using hurtful words, stop. Say you're sorry, ask for forgiveness, and then try again.

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Growing with the GOSPEL

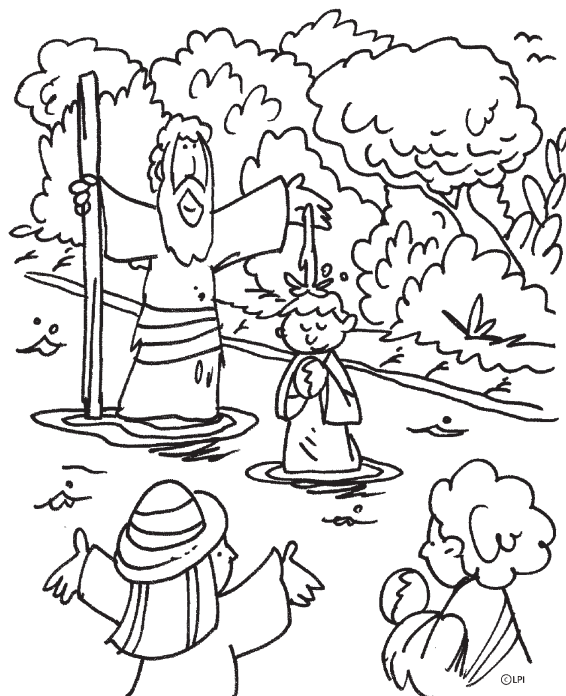
My Church,
My Family and Me

Luke 3:1-6 ■ 2nd Sunday of Advent

CYCLE C



Read the Gospel and Color



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