

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2017

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POSSIBILITIES

“What could happen?” That question affects each of us differently. Some of us are thrill-seekers, diving into unfamiliar territory with no regard for obstacles or dangers; others have learned from painful experience that the future may hold suffering or disaster. This last, brief Sunday of Advent emboldens us. Our readings remind us that our God is the God of possibilities. And while God’s care does not guarantee that we will not encounter suffering, we can absolutely count on God’s power to raise us to glory.

GLORY BE!

Truly, God creates us for glory. The burdens of daily life can shrink our hopes, but we must remember that we are made for nothing less than infinite glory. Who could have believed that the beleaguered Israelite nation could defeat all of its enemies? And yet our first reading today proclaims that God gave David “rest from his enemies on every side.” Who could hope to unify the entire world in obedience to one Messiah? And yet Saint Paul insists that the “only wise God” has revealed salvation through Jesus to all people. Who could expect one young woman to decide the course of human history? And yet the angel tells Mary that her yes will establish a kingdom to endure forever.

We know, of course, that Israel did not maintain its peace. Even today, that area of the world is far from stable. We also recognize the wide variety of world religions that do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the true savior. Though God has set us on the path to fullness and glory, we are still broken. Our danger lies not in hoping for too much, but in trusting too little in God. God can resurrect any darkness—replacing terror with peace, healing ancient wounds, uniting families, bringing stability to chaos. This is the message of Christmas. God can, and will, do everything to cover the world in love.

Today’s Readings: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38

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POSIBILIDADES

“¿Qué podría pasar?” Esa pregunta nos afecta a cada uno de nosotros de manera diferente. Algunos de nosotros somos buscadores de emociones, sumergiéndonos en territorios desconocidos sin considerar los obstáculos o el peligro; otras personas han aprendido de experiencias dolorosas que el futuro puede tener sufrimientos o desastres. Este último y breve Domingo de Adviento nos enaltece. Nuestras lecturas nos recuerdan que nuestro Dios es un Dios de posibilidades. Y mientras el cuidado de Dios no garantiza que no encontraremos sufrimiento, podemos absolutamente contar con la fuerza de Dios para levantarnos en gloria.

¡GLORIA SEA DADA!

Verdaderamente, Dios nos crea para la gloria. Las cargas de la vida diaria pueden hacer pequeñas nuestras esperanzas, pero debemos recordar que estamos hechos para nada menos que la gloria infinita. ¿Quién pudo haber creído que la asediada nación israelita podría derrotar a todos sus enemigos? Y todavía nuestra primera lectura de hoy proclama que Dios hizo a David “descansar de todos sus enemigos”. ¿Quién podría esperar unir el mundo entero en obediencia al Mesías? Y sin embargo, san Pablo insiste que Dios “infinitamente sabio” ha revelado la salvación a todas las personas por medio de Jesús. ¿Quién podría suponer que una joven mujer decidiría el curso de la historia? Y todavía, el ángel le dice a María que su sí establecerá un reino que perdurará para siempre.

Sabemos, desde luego, que Israel no mantuvo la paz. Aún hoy día, esa región del mundo está muy lejos de la paz. También reconocemos la amplia variedad del mundo de las religiones que no reconocen a Jesucristo como el Salvador. Aunque Dios nos ha puesto en el camino de la plenitud y la gloria, todavía no estamos unidos. Nuestro peligro radica no en esperar demasiado, sino en confiar muy poco en Dios. Dios puede resucitar cualquier oscuridad, reemplazar el terror con la paz, sanar heridas antiguas, unir familias, traer la estabilidad del caos. Este es el mensaje de Navidad. Dios puede, y hará, lo que sea necesario para cubrir al mundo con amor.

Lecturas de hoy: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Sal 89 (88):2-3, 4-5, 27, 29; Rom 16:25-27; Lc 1:26-38

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Please Pray for the Sick

Prayer List Updates



Baby Alexander Gonzalez	Norma Morgan	Arleen Soliz
Alejandro De Leon	Laura Reyes Gutierrez	Alfredo Moreno
Delia Riojas	Mary Garza	Delia Lopez
Petra Chavez	Jose A. Ponce, Jr.	Abigail Rodriguez
Joe & Cecilia Espinosa	Elisa Casanova	Rose Loa Gallegos
Pablo Rodriguez	Alexander Hernandez	Roxanne & Linus Joseph
Dolores Gonzalez	Pedro Caballero	Rocky Aranda
Joe Moreno	Eric Nave	David Colbath
Clara Perez	Sofia Olivarez	Victims of First Baptist
Rick Contreras	Deacon Jesus Rodriguez	Church of Sutherland
Brandon Rivas	Rosalinda Rodriguez	Springs, Texas
Liz Quintero	Connie Cardenas	Lisa Marie Rodriguez
Justin Rey Martinez	Rosalinda Esparza	Linda Davila
Antonio Aguero	Cynthia Sandoval	Ray & Christine Rosales
Elvia Diaz	Ismael Montañez	Yvonne Neilon
M/M Margarito Compean	Estella De La Vega	Ricky Lopez
Roberta Bobbie Garza	Diana Calderon	Yamil Traspeña
Frances Ramirez	Susan Perez	John Ruiz
Alex Tapia	Guadalupe Huerta	Evelyn Parra

We thank God for the healing of so many sick parishioners. Please be courteous and call the Parish Office if your loved one is no longer suffering or sick. Thank you.

CONTRIBUTION REPORT THIS WEEK

DECEMBER 16 - 17, 2017

5:00 PM	-\$1,133.00	(091)
8:00 AM	-\$ 582.50	(112)
10:00 AM	-\$1,176.00	(155)
12:00 NOON	-\$1,072.00	(267)
School Mass	-\$ 66.38	
Children’s Basket	-\$ 15.00	
Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass	-\$ 317.00	
Dikete Foundation	-\$ 818.76	2nd Collection
2017 Gift of Giving	-\$ 255.99	
Mail In	-\$ 653.74	
TOTAL COLLECTED	-\$6,157.27	

12/23 - 24 **SECOND COLLECTION:** Good Samaritans of SJB

2017 GIFT OF GIVING

Contributions 12/16 - 17, 2017	\$ 255.99
RUNNING BALANCE TOTAL	\$15,124.46

Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, December 23

5:00 p.m. † Eloy Alvarado - Family
† John Garza - Family
† Martin C. Molina - Sara M. Olivarri

Sunday, December 24

8:00 a.m. † Guadalupe Treviño - Nora Treviño
† Victor Garcia - Willie Garcia
† Romana Gutierrez - Familia Alvarado
† Cesar S. Lopez - Wife & Family

10:00 a.m. † Eloy & Mary Lou Alvarado - Family
† Joe Riley - Mom & Dad
† Aurelia Garai - Family
† Ryan Sanchez - Family

In Thanksgiving Natividad Cruz - Cruz Family

6:00 p.m. † Candelario & Mercedes Lopez - Olivia Lopez
† Irene Tello & Mercedes Soto - Olivia Lopez
† Nieves Barrientes & Mary B. Martinez - Oliva Lopez

12:00 Midnite For the People of Our Parish Community

Monday, December 25 - CHRISTMAS MASS

10:00 a.m. † Joe & Cora Castillo - Linda & Dora
† Juan C. Velasquez - Daughters
† Yvonne Forde - Tillie Hernandez
† Ryan Sanchez - Family

Tuesday, December 26

8:15 a.m. † Yvonne Forde - Michael Forde

Wednesday, December 27

12:00 p.m. † Benito P. Castro - Family

Thursday, December 28

12:00 p.m. † Aurelio Banda

Friday, December 29

12:00 p.m. † Frank & Mary Lou Barrera

Saturday, December 30

5:00 p.m. † Mary Jane Felan - Friends

Sunday, December 31

8:00 a.m. † Guadalupe Treviño - Nora Treviño

10:00 a.m. † Aurelia Garai - Family
† Ryan Sanchez - Family

12:00 p.m. † Yvonne Forde - Tillie Hernandez

In Loving Memory

We pray for the souls of our dearly departed who have passed from our parish community:

† Cesar Samuel Lopez
† Jose Francisco Lara

Sanctuary Light

† Frances Soikowski

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Parishioners:

Prophet Isaiah echoes the sentiment of Christmas when he said: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the lord and a day of vindication by our God." Isaiah 6

May we be the agents of love, hope compassion, understanding, healing and mercy during this holiday season. Our kind gesture, either spiritual or material, can embody the spirit of Christmas and allow us to be joyful in anticipation of the second coming of our Savior.

I ask each of my parishioners to kindly take the time to read my inserted letter in the bulletin and to join me in thanking God as this year comes to an end and to ask Him to allow us to enter into next year 2018. We are ultimately grateful to God for sharing his only begotten son Jesus Christ, our Savior. Merry Christmas and Happy New year 2018!

I congratulate all the Youth ACTS for a successful ACTS retreat held this past weekend. We pray for them and hope this unique experience has impacted them to become disciples of the Lord. I encourage each one of them to get involved in our community. Please serve your God in any capacity. We have been blessed with life, talents, resources and relationships to be used for the glory of God.

Our sanctuary has been greatly improved by the addition of a new wooden crucifix ordered from Italy that is placed in the center of the altar against the wall above the Tabernacle. Two new stands have been added, the Tabernacle is placed on one and the other upon which reposes the statute of St. John Berchmans. A special sanctuary lamp has been suspended beside the tabernacle. The crucifix, that previously hung above the altar, has been placed in the chapel. We, as parishioners, are requested to respect and care for our sanctuary especially by handling religious items that inspire us to get close to God with the ultimate of care.

As the year 2017 draws to an end and we prepare to welcome the incoming year 2018, it is time to reflect on what our parish community has accomplished in recent years. As your Pastor, I am most appreciative for the creation of a vision and accomplishing many campaigns with my leaders. You alone have inspired me to dream and to believe that anything is possible. I am extremely proud of our parish community and will always be honored to be your Pastor. Our community has raised more than \$15, 124.46 for the purpose of assisting individuals and families in need to receive a Christmas celebration.

May God bless you always,



Father Fidèle Okitembo Dikete, Pastor
fr.fidele@stjohnberchmans.com

Announcements

www.stjohnberchmans.com

TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading — I will fix a place for my people. I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance (2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16).

Psalm — For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord (Psalm 89)

Second Reading — To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory forever and ever (Romans 16:25-27).

Gospel — Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word (Luke 1:26-38).

The English translation of the Psalm Responses from Lectionary for Mass © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Mon: **Vigil:** Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27-29; Acts 13:16-25; Mt 1:1-25 **During the Night:** Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14 **Day:** Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6;
 Tue: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3-8, 16-17; Mt 10:17-22
 Wed: 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1-8
 Thu: 1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7cd-8; Mt 2:13-18
 Fri: 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5-6; Lk 2:22-35
 Sat: 1 Jn 2:12-17; Ps 96:7-10; Lk 2:36
 Sun: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Ps 128: 1-5 or Ps 105:1-9; Col 3:12-21 [12-17]

Events of the Week ~ December 24 - 31, 2017

Sunday, December 24

7:30 a.m. Divine Mercy - Church
 8:00 a.m. Spanish Mass - Church
 10:00 a.m. Mass - Church
 6:00 p.m. English Children's Mass - Church
 11:00 p.m. Christmas Carols
 12:00 midnite Bilingual Mass

Monday, December 25 - PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

10:00 a.m. Bilingual Mass - Church

Tuesday, December 26

12:00 Noon Mass - Chapel
 7:00 p.m. Spanish Prayer Group

Wednesday, December 27

9:15 a.m. Rosary Makers - Offsite
 12:00 Noon Mass - Chapel

Thursday, December 28

12:00 Noon Mass - Chapel
 6:30 p.m. Ultreya English - School

Friday, December 29

12:00 Noon Mass - Chapel

Saturday, December 30

5:00 p.m. Mass - Church

Sunday, December 31 - NO CCD CLASSES

7:30 a.m. Divine Mercy - Church
 8:00 a.m. Spanish Mass - Church
 10:00 a.m. Mass - Church
 12:00 noon Mass - Church



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2017
9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.



In observance of Christmas the **Parish Office will be closed on Monday, December 25, 2017.** Office will open for business on Tuesday, December 26, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

Fr. Fidele, his staff and volunteers wish all of you the blessings of Peace and Happiness this Holiday season.

CHURCH CLEANING MINISTRY

Our parish is always in need of a few good hands every Saturday morning to help us clean our beautiful church. **We are kindly reminding Ministries assigned for cleaning to please show up!** Stella Rico leads our parish in this important ministry and we meet at 8:00 am in the church foyer on Saturday mornings. Thank you!

Cleaning Schedule of Ministries

December 30, 2017 - St. John Berchmans School

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: Fourth Sunday of Advent
 Monday: The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)
 Tuesday: St. Stephen; Kwanzaa begins
 Wednesday: St. John
 Thursday: The Holy Innocents
 Friday: Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord; St. Thomas Becket
 Saturday: Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord

Fourth Sunday of Advent December 24, 2017

The child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

—Luke 1:35



BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

All requests must be sent by email to osantoyo1104@gmail.com and will be finalized for approval by Father Fidele. We ask that you submit your requests at least two (2) weeks in advance for placement in the bulletin.



NEW TO OUR PARISH AND WANT TO REGISTER AS A NEW PARISHIONER?

If you are interested in registering as a new parishioner at St. John Berchmans Church, please contact our Parish Office at 210434-3247 to fill out a registration form.

Announcements

www.stjohnberchmans.com

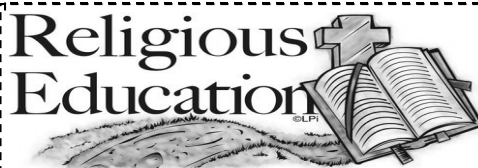


4TH SUNDAY OF *Advent*

The Fourth and last Sunday of the Advent season is on Sunday, December 24th, and the fourth candle is lit on this day along with the first three. It is the angel's candle reminding of the heavenly hosts that proclaimed Christ's arrival with, "Behold, I bring unto you the tiding of great joy!"

The culmination of the Advent season returns us to the announcement of Christ's coming and that God is with us. Mary's proclamation calls us to be reminded that our joy does not rest solely in our material comfort or discomfort but in a divine promise that has been fulfilled in the eternal Word becoming flesh and God becoming like us in the deepest sense of the word. In the previous week, we say joy as being regarded by God, of knowing that our difficult circumstances were not the entirety of our lives, of knowing that God regards us, that God sees us. And from this space of joy, we see our lives in new ways.

The advent celebration of love is to recall and celebrate how God has filled and is filling every gap in our broken lives and in our broken world.



Religious Education

REMINDER: Due to our Christmas Break there will be no Religious Education classes on **Sunday, December 24** and **Sunday, December 31st**.

Classes will resume on **Sunday, January 7, 2018**.



ATTENTION ALL PARISHIONERS

ACTS Core will be seeking new CORE members.

Qualifications: Must be an active parishioner and have served on two ACTS teams. Term will begin in February 2018.

If interested, please contact Richard Sustaita, ACTS Core Facilitator at 210.413.0065.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

If you would like to order a Christmas Poinsettia in memory of a loved one, please contact the Parish office. The altar will be decorated with the poinsettia's and you may pick them up after Christmas in the office. Questions? Call the parish office at 210.434.3247. We have only 14 poinsettias left to sell. Thank you!



PILGRIM CENTER OF HOPE 2018 UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENINGS WITH MARY: POWERFUL INTERCESSION FOR TODAY

Thursday, January 18, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. - St. Monica's Church. Evenings with Mary provide an opportunity to discover how the Rosary can lead individuals, couples and families to a deeper relationship with Christ, and facilitate healing and peace.

CATHOLIC SENIORS' CONFERENCE - Hallmarks of Aging and Wisdom. T

The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life. - Proverbs 13:14 Saturday, February 24, 2018 - St. Matthew Church

You are invited to our annual Catholic Senior's conference! Whatever your state in life, you are welcome to this day of prayer, learning, fellowship, and laughter. There is no minimum age to attend. Come join us and learn about God's calling for senior citizens; discover a message of joy and hope!

GOD'S PROMISE

The lengthy passage from Samuel is a wonderful exposition of God's promise to the house of David: that his throne would forever be gloriously occupied by his descendants. Hidden in the mystery of the prophecy is the promise of the Savior, the Messiah, Son of God and Son of David. The prophet Nathan, speaking in God's name, poetically turns around David's plan to build a house for God, and announces God's plan to build a "house," that is, a dynasty for David. From this house of David will come the Messiah, the Christ, not in kingly splendor as David ruled, but as a humble man, destined to rule forever and over all. When God gives a gift, it's amazing what we are given—so different from what we ever could have imagined. Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co., I

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

How can I take the gift of Jesus that I have been given and share this gift with others?