

Fourth Sunday of Advent

FROM SCANDAL TO HONOR

The meeting of Mary and Elizabeth follows a strong tradition of women in their culture, to come together to support each other during pregnancy. Mary likely carried a shadow of scandal in her pregnancy, since it began before her marriage. Elizabeth, having carried her own burden of social disapproval after many years without children, sees only cause for celebration. Elizabeth sees beyond the social shame of Mary's situation to observe how God is working, and how Mary has accepted joining in this work.

Unlike Elizabeth's husband Zechariah, who thought it unbelievable that God could bring them a son, Mary believed the angel's message. Elizabeth honors Mary, in part, for simply being able to imagine that God could do this extraordinary thing through her. Perhaps God had been preparing Mary's heart throughout her young life, so that she could be fully receptive to God's specific call when the time was right. Mary opened herself to an uncertain future, trusting that God would accompany her in the joys and sorrows of being the mother of Jesus.

PREGNANT WITH GOD

Advent, as a time of preparation for Christmas, echoes the pregnancy of Mary. Something is stirring within us, and we await the coming of Jesus. Although we the Church have observed Advent and Christmas many times, God is always offering something new to us. Like the angel asked Mary, God is always asking us to allow Christ to be born in and through us. Christ wishes to make himself at home within us, and increase his presence in our hearts.

Like pregnancy, at times God's activity within us can be disorienting and confusing. The story of Elizabeth and Mary reminds us that however uncertain we may be about what God is up to in our lives, we have cause to rejoice—because God is indeed good, and will truly bring blessing to us. And through the fruit of our own wombs, God will bring blessing to the world.

Today's Readings: Mic 5:1-4a; Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45

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DEL ESCÁNDALO AL HONOR

Cuando María e Isabel se reúnen, siguen una tradición importante femenina de su cultura, se juntan para apoyarse mutuamente durante sus embarazos. María muy probablemente iba cargando algo oscuro acerca de su embarazo, pues el embarazo empezó antes de su matrimonio. Isabel también llevaba una carga social de desaprobación después de muchos años sin haber tenido hijos, pero ella ve un motivo de celebración. Isabel ve más allá de la vergüenza social de la situación de María para observar cómo Dios se hace presente y cómo María aceptó unirse al trabajo que Dios está haciendo.

A diferencia de Zacarías, el esposo de Isabel, que pensaba que era inconcebible que Dios pudiera darles un hijo, María creyó en el mensaje del ángel. Isabel honra a María, en parte, simplemente por ser capaz de imaginar que Dios pudiera hacer esta acción extraordinaria por medio de ella. Quizá Dios ya había preparado el corazón de María durante su juventud, para que pudiera estar plenamente receptiva a esta llamada específica de Dios cuando fuera el tiempo preciso. María se abrió a un futuro incierto, confiando que Dios la acompañaría en las alegrías y tristezas por ser la madre de Jesús.

EMBARAZADA CON DIOS

Adviento, un tiempo de preparación para la Navidad, repite el embarazo de María. Algo está conmoviéndonos dentro de nosotros, y esperamos la llegada de Jesús. A pesar de que nosotros, la Iglesia, ya tenemos celebrando el Adviento y la Navidad muchas veces, Dios siempre está ofreciéndonos algo nuevo. Al igual que el ángel pidió a María, Dios siempre está pidiéndonos permitir que Cristo nazca en y por medio de nosotros. Cristo desea sentirse en casa dentro de nosotros, y fortalecer su presencia en nuestros corazones.

Al igual que el embarazo, a veces las acciones de Dios dentro de nosotros pueden ser desorientadoras y confusas. La historia de Isabel y María nos recuerda que por muy poco seguros que podamos estar de lo que Dios hace en nuestras vidas, tenemos motivo de alegría, porque Dios efectivamente es bueno, y ciertamente nos bendecirá. Y por medio del fruto de nuestros propios vientres, Dios traerá la bendición al mundo.

Lecturas de hoy: Mic 5:1-4a; Sal 80 (79):2-3, 15-16, 18-19; Heb 10:5-10; Lc 1:39-45

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Please Pray for the Sick

Prayer List Updates



Anselmo A. Perales
Mario Andres Perales
Martha Lucy Vega & Children
Jesse Vega
Jesse Mario Vega
Orlando L. Vega & Children
Roxsandra Gallardo
Paul Sifuentes
Lucy Clare Treviño
David Santoyo
Lupita Gomez
Irene Perez
Katelynn Rae Ramirez
Louie & Estefana Reyes
Frances Ramirez
Alex Hernandez
Jesse Diaz

John Ruiz
Pastor Stuart Julee
Victoria Cepeda
Mario Moreno
Arturo M. Moreno
Annmarie Vasquez
Roland Martinez, Sr.
Roland Martinez, Jr.
Olivia Ibarra
Baby Violet Flores
Connie Flores
Philip Saldaña
Linda Davila
Elva Benavides
Marco Mermea
Robert Campos
Petra P. Chavez
Sister Louise - OLLU
Aurora Perez

Frances Lozano
Alfredo M. Moreno
Celina Herrera
Yolanda Verastegui
Amy Gomez
Virginia & Jose Ponce, Jr.
Daniel Rogers
Santos Aguilar
Olivia Lopez
Hortencia Rodriguez
San Juanita Sanchez
Douglas Montey
Cecilia Espinoza
Estela De La Vega
Diana Ledesma
Suzanne Gutierrez
Jerry Ramirez

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.

YOUR STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

December 15 & 16, 2018

5:00 PM	-\$ 598.15	(106)
8:00 AM	-\$ 338.99	(067)
10:00 AM	-\$ 1,157.91	(129)
12:00 NOON	-\$ 800.42	(150)
Guadalupana 7:00 PM	-\$ 201.40	(146)
School Mass	-\$ 209.78	
Altar Flowers	-\$ 435.43	2nd Collection
2018 Gift of Giving	-\$ 200.61	3rd Collection
Mail In	-\$ 276.00	
TOTAL	-\$ 4,218.75	

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF OUR CHURCH
SECOND COLLECTION

Sunday, December 23 - Good Samaritans of SJB

2018 GIFT OF GIVING

Contributions 12/15-16, 2018	\$ 200.61
RUNNING BALANCE TOTAL	\$17,496.80

Announcements

www.stjohnberchmans.com

Mass Intentions FOR THE WEEK

Saturday, December 22

5:00 p.m. † Richard Muñoz - Muñoz Family
† Tillie Hernandez - Mary
† Arturo F. Salinas - Family
† Leticia Ann Salinas - Family
† David Solis - Thomas & Olga Diaz

Sunday, December 23

8:00 a.m. † Guadalupe Treviño - Nora Treviño
† Victor Garcia - Willie Garcia
10:00 a.m. † Eloy Alvarado - Family
† Daniel C. Arzola - Family
† Ryan Sanchez - Sanchez Family
† Albert Sr. & Albert Jr. - Family
12:00 p.m. For the People of our Parish Community

Monday, December 24

6:00 p.m. † George Hernandez - Wife & Family
† Jose Louis Gonzalez - Family
12 Midnite Louis Jaramillo - Family
† Pablo Luna - Family
† Drew Luna - Family
† Nasario & Estella Jaramillo - Family

Tuesday, December 25 - CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00 a.m. † Juan C. Velasquez - Daughter Stella
† Margaret & Martin Burrell - Family
† Ryan Sanchez - Sanchez Family
† Melissa Herrera Jenkins - Family
† Robert Mata - Family
† M/M Thomas Torres, Sr. - Richard & Sarah Sustaita
In Thanksgiving Natividad Cruz - Family
In Thanksgiving Jose & Jesus Castillo

Wednesday, December 26

12:00 p.m. † Justin Rey Martinez

Thursday, December 27

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

Friday, December 28

12:00 p.m. † Delia Riojas

Saturday, December 29

5:00 p.m. † Mary Jane Felan - Rosemary & Lupe
† Tillie Hernandez - Mary
† Melissa Herrera Jenkins - Family
† Gloria & Raul Solis - Thomas & Olga Diaz

Sunday, December 30 - HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS

8:00 a.m. † Guadalupe Treviño - Nora Treviño
† Delia Riojas - Clara Perez
† Margaret & Martin Burrell - Daughter
10:00 a.m. † Daniel C. Arzola - Family
† Manuela Hinojosa - Maria
† Ryan Sanchez - Sanchez Family
12:00 p.m. For the People of our Parish Community

In Loving Memory

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

† Gloria P. Gutierrez



Sanctuary Light

† Jacinta Weddel
† Benito P. Castro



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Parishioners:

I would like to wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas! May the second coming of our Savior bring us Love, peace and justice. May His presence transform us and make us better people. May His presence also bring us together as the people of God rooted in love, kindness, forgiveness and compassion. We pray that the kingship of Jesus Christ of humility, understanding, service, acceptance, mercy and love characterize this Christmas season. Please make a particular effort to view our parish bulletin for a complete Christmas schedule and take time to participate in these special celebrations.

Our Annual Christmas letter has been inserted in your bulletin for your information. Thank you for your generosity and cooperation.

I thank each one of you for your generosity and continued support for the needy of our community. Our Christmas Gift of Giving has been successful. Each family and individuals that submitted the application have been served. The number of the families and individuals who received Christmas Gift of Giving will be revealed after Christmas including the money used and the balance. God bless you for your generosity.

I am proud to announce to you that we have secured three major projects in our community for the purpose of enhancing the infrastructure of our Church. The projects are: 1) new ramp in the formation house, 2) eight video cameras surrounding the perimeters and interior of the church and 3) interior acoustical panels. The ramps will facilitate the entrance to the Formation House especially for those struggling to climb the stairs. The cameras will improve the security of our property and make us safer. The acoustical panels will have better control of the sound and allow the community to hear the Word of God better. We hope these additional projects will improve the infrastructure of our community and expect them completed by Christmas. Thank you for your generosity in accomplishing these projects.

Each of my parishioners is cordially invited to join me next summer on my annual pilgrimage to Italy from June 10th thru 20th, 2019. We will be visiting Venice, Florence, Padua, Assist and Rome. Experience firsthand the opportunity to visit beautiful Basilicas, ancient roman ruin, the Vatican Museum and an audience with Pope Francis. A brochure is readily available on request at the church office.

May God bless you always,

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

Announcements

www.stjohnberchmans.com

TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading - From Bethlehem-Ephrathah shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel (Micah 5:1-4a).

Psalm - Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved (Psalm 80).

Second Reading - We have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Christ once for all (Hebrews 10:5-10).

Gospel - Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken by the Lord would be fulfilled (Luke 1:39-45).
The English translation of the Palm Responses from *Lectioy for Mass* © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Mon: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79
Tue: **Vigil:** Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-29; Acts 13:16-25; Mt 1:1-25
Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14
Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20
Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18
Wed: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3-17; Mt 10:17-22
Thu: 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Fri: 1 Jn 1:5-2; Ps 124:2-5, 7b-8; Mt 2:13-18
Sat: 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:22-35
Sun: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Ps 128:1-5

Events of the Week ~ December 23 - 30, 2018

Sunday, December 23

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

Monday, December 24 - PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

6:00 p.m. Children's MASS
11:00 p.m. Christmas Carols
12 Midnite **Bilingual Mass**

Tuesday, December 25 - PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

10:00 a.m. **Bilingual Mass** - Church

Wednesday, December 26

12:00 p.m. **Mass** - Chapel

Thursday, December 27

12:00 a.m. **Mass** - Chapel

Friday, December 28

12:00 p.m. **Mass** - Chapel

Saturday, December 29

5:00 p.m. **Mass** - Church

Sunday, December 30

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



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2018
9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Please join us every Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in our Chapel. Exposition of the Holy Eucharist is the REAL presence of our Lord and Savior. Just as you can't be exposed to the sun without receiving it's rays, neither can you come to Jesus exposed in the Blessed Sacrament without receiving the divine rays of His Grace, Love and Peace.



In observance of Christmas the Parish office will be closed on **Monday, December 24 and Tuesday, December 25, 2018.**

We will return on Wednesday, December 26 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. It takes a lot of work and assistance from many individuals to prepare our church for Mass. We thank you for your commitment to our place of worship and to our community.

Cleaning Schedule of Ministries

December 29, 2018 - Youth & Young Adults

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

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



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 210-434-3247 to fill out a registration form.

Announcements

www.stjohnberchmans.com



THE FOURTH AND LAST SUNDAY OF THE ADVENT SEASON is on Sunday, December 23rd, 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 saw joy as being regarded by God, and knowing that our difficult circumstances were not the entirety of our lives, of knowing that God regards us, and 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.

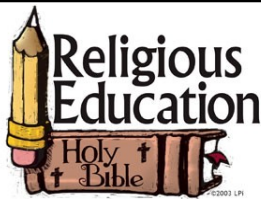
REMINDER FOR CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

If you ordered poinsettia/s in memory of a loved one, please come by the Parish office on Wednesday, December 26 to pick up your poinsettia.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT LITURGICAL EVENTS:

Monday, December 24, 2018 - 6:00 p.m. - Children's Mass (English)
11:00 p.m. - **Christmas Carols**
12 Midnite - **Bilingual Mass**

Tuesday, December 25, 2018 - 10:00 a.m. - Bilingual Mass



REMINDER TO ALL PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Due to our Christmas break there will be **no** Religious Education classes held on **Sunday, December 23 and Sunday, December 30, 2018.**

Classes will resume on **Sunday, January 6, 2019!** On behalf of the Religious Education staff we wish you a joyous holiday season!

MASS INTENTIONS

Whenever a priest celebrates Mass, he has at least two intentions.

The first intention is to celebrate Mass according to what the Church does. The second is to apply the grace of that Mass towards a specific need, or whether it be a person(s) living or deceased, baptized or not, or a special need or occasion.

Parishioners who are interested in requesting a mass for the 2019 year are encouraged to come by or call our Parish office at 210)434-2347. There is a \$5.00 donation for each mass intention. Thank you!

MEMORIES AND DREAMS

Throughout our lives, we retain the language and habits of our native region and family of origin. Should we return to our home after a long absence, we quickly revert to its familiar speech and practices. Our deep memory is reflected in old stories and words and speech patterns. This familiarity runs like an underground river and accompanies us wherever we go.

Not only do we remember, we are incorporated into and made part of a greater memory. In remembering and recollecting, we are in turn gathered up and re-collected.

Today we remember Mary, a small figure travelling the country roads to visit Elizabeth. All the great pronouncements and dreams of the prophets point to this time when the Lord's words to Mary would be gathered and fulfilled. The memories of her people are alive in her, and memories of her nourish our own living faith. Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Do I, like Elizabeth and her baby, realize that I am in the presence of the Lord here today? Do I react with joy?