

The Third Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2014

Please pray for those in special need of prayer:

Joseph Tubridy, Aldana Katinas, Barbara, Melissa, Peg Torma, Betty Porterfield, Alec Hitt, Ernie Nichol, Thomas Waters, Travis, Carol O'Dowd, Amber Hoyt Phraner, Angel, Carmen, Raymond Bivens, Jr., Helen Pratti, Agnes Henry, Rose Gunderson, Ronnie Hunter, and Robert Bivens.

Please pray for the souls of Raymond Schick and Vabina Meyers. May they rest in the peace of our Lord.

St. John Ministry Christmas Sign Up

If you are interested in volunteering for one of the Christmas Masses, sign-up sheets are on the Sacristan side of the Sacristy.

Advent Reconciliation Dates

Communal: December 17 at St. John, 7 pm
Individual: December 18 at St. John, 7 pm

Advent Mass Schedule

	St. Peter	St. John
Monday, December 15:		7 pm
Tuesday, December 16:	8 am	9:30 am & 7 pm
Wednesday, December 17:	8 am	9:30 am & 7 pm
Thursday, December 18:	8 am	9:30 am & 7 pm
Friday, December 19:		7 pm

St. Ambrose's Parish, Latham Advent Series

*Preparing for Christ, Preparing for Our Families,
Preparing to Evangelize*

December 18: *Reach Out to Others with Your Faith*, Father Anthony Barratt, 7 pm

✦ **OFFERINGS** ✦

	Offertory	Fuel
St. John:	\$ 1,800	\$ 472
Holy Family:	167	74
St. Peter:	1,565	556

Please don't forget to note your offertory on your envelope.

Advent Adoration

Try to put aside a few minutes to stop by one of our weekly Adorations this Advent to spend some quiet time in the rest of our Lord and contemplate the miracle of His birth:

St. Peter: Tuesdays ~ St. John: Thursdays

🕯️ ***Advent Contemplation*** 🕯️

There is a great deal of artificial joy in the world; frivolity and merriment mas-querading as happiness. True joy is a deep-seated happiness that carries one through a crisis. The joy Christ brings to the world is not seasonal or fleeting, like the melancholy we feel at the end of the holidays. Gaudete Sunday urges us to "rejoice in the Lord always" not just when life feels good. If it were not for the gift of such deep joy, angels might not celebrate the birth of a poor child in a lowly manger.

Christmas teaches us to look beyond appearances for our joy so that we can welcome the Lord, who came to bring us the most authentic happiness of all.

Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

It is hard to believe Christ is present in a family with crazy schedules, suppers that start too late and end too early, cars repairs, misunderstandings, frustrations, piles of laundry, unmatched socks, and stretched budgets . . . the list is endless. The words spoken at Mass, "The Lord is with you" are not a hope, they are a fact.



Christmas Tree Blessing

Dear God,

Two thousand years ago, you brought your son, Jesus into this world to teach us the power of love and sacrifice. As we raise this tree, we remember His birth and the meaning of His life for us. Bless this tree as a symbol of our celebration of Jesus' birth and our gratitude for His sacrifice. May the joy this tree brings and the gifts we place under it remind us of the many gifts You have given us. We ask your blessings upon our loved ones this day and always.

Amen

God's Empty Vessel

Why was Mary chosen as the mother of the Messiah? Certainly part of the reason is Gabriel's assertion that Mary is so full, 'full of grace.' Yet implicit in that complement is the equally vital recognition that Mary is so exquisitely empty. Mary is the empty vessel into which God saw fit to pour the living water in which the Savior of the world would be born.

We are mistaken if we view ourselves as mere observers of this miracle rather than participants. The truth is that Mary is a model for all of us ~ showing us how to empty ourselves so that the Lord may be conceived within us and born into the world each Christmas.

The Season of Advent

St. John the Baptist, dressed in camel's hair and dining on locusts, announced to the people that Jesus, the Messiah, had finally come and now was the time to change their lives. John had the appearance of a wild man rather than an envoy for the King of kings. While some thought John might be the Messiah, he knew clearly that he was only the messenger and Jesus was the promised one:

I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, "Make straight the way of the Lord. I baptize with water, but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.

John's prophetic words ring true and clear as he prepares the way for the true voice of God. John the Baptist only concerns himself with drawing the proper amount of respect from us for the one who comes after him: "He must increase; I must decrease."

When we look carefully at our lives and those of others, we learn what we must change to follow Him. We live in an age of self-importance and by the standards of our appearance-obsessed culture, but our voices can still resonate as clear and effective heralds of God's coming.

Lord Jesus,

*Master of both the light and darkness,
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations
for Christmas.*

*We who have so much to do seek quiet
spaces to hear your voice each day.*

*We who are anxious over many things
look forward to Your coming among us.*

*We who are blessed in so many ways
long for the complete joy of Your kingdom.*

*We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy
of Your presence.*

*We are your people, walking in darkness,
yet seeking the light.*

To You we say, "Come, Lord Jesus!" Amen