

Saturday, December 25

Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord

The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a dream and said,

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what the LORD had said through the prophet:

*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,
which means “God is with us.”*

Matthew 1:20B-23.

O God of David and Joseph, you speak to me in the people and events of my life. Help me to hear you, and to respond in faith when I do. Amen.

Bill Huebsch, Spending Advent with Mary, the Mother of Jesus



Daily Meditations
2021

Advent



St. Bernadette
Our Lady of Good Hope
St. Catherine of Alexandria Parishes



Sunday, November 28

First Sunday of Advent

*In those days, in that time, I will raise up for David a just shoot;
he shall do what is right and just in the land.*

Jeremiah 33:15

“A just shoot.” Offspring. You and me. Every Sunday we pray for peace and unity. Every minute of every day we wonder when peace in our land and hearts will take root, blossom and grow. Yet we continue to argue with our neighbor about petty property problems. We love to diss the politicians we don’t agree with. We admonish behaviors that are different from our own. We desire and pray for a collective peace while living on our own selfish branch; forgetting about the tree of us all. Advent begins with our personal obstacles toward peace and unity until it slowly honors the tree that Jesus shows us. Peace and unity are never silly pipe dreams. They are the seeds of our Judea/Christian faith.

Fr. Joe Jagodensky, SDS, St. Catherine of Alexandria



Thursday, December 23

*The counsel of the LORD belongs to those who fear him;
and his covenant instructs them.*

Psalms 25:14

I remember as a child being afraid of God! We must have heard more of the stories of the Old Testament growing up. However, in this verse I feel as if the word “respect” replaces the word “fear” for me. If we respect God and believe him to be our Loving and Just Father he has good counsel and advice for us. He will be with us and instruct us if we will only open our hearts and minds to his wisdom.

Linda Radder, St. Bernadette Parish

Friday, December 24

Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord

*O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death. O Antiphon*

The lights and the hope of the Christmas season fill the air today. The Christmas music the decorations, the anticipation are all signs that God has sent Jesus to be our sun, to brighten our dark times and to bring peace to our lives. May we keep the light of today in our hearts throughout the coming year.

Sandy Swanson and Richard Krueger, Our Lady of Good Hope

Wednesday, December 22

*My heart exults in the LORD,
my horn is exalted by my God.
1 Samuel 2:1a*

At the first reading of this passage, I was thinking that I might just have enough of an understanding for a reasonable reflection, and then, “my horn” is exalted (raised)? Okay so now, I am not so sure. How do I interpret this for my reflection? And then I remember to read the passages before as well as after the assigned passage. That will give me a better understanding of the context in which it was written. And of course, always read the notations at the bottom of the Bible page. This is where I learned that this passage is referencing the prophet Samuel’s mother, Hannah. She is praising (exulting) God for the gift of her son for she was thought to be sterile.

My horn? A bit of a stretch in today’s vernacular, but once we learn that “horn” refers to strength, power, glory, victory we can appreciate Hannah’s victory at the birth of her son.

This is a reminder to us that we too can raise “*our horn*” in victory for God’s many blessings.

Ginny Chmiel, St. Catherine of Alexandria

Monday, November 29

*O House of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of the Lord!
Isaiah 2:5*

“Be Watchful, Be Alert” (Mark 13:23) On this second day of Advent, Jesus is inviting us to open our hearts to prepare us to respond in large and small ways for his entering our hearts. We ask the Lord for the courage to face the difficulties of our time in order to increase our trust and confidence in his care.

Let us pray to God that, ‘each one of us can make his or her own gesture of love. No matter how small, love is always grand.’ (Pope Francis)

Sherry Moncher, St. Bernadette Parish

Notes

Tuesday, November 30

Feast of St. Andrew, Apostle

"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

Matthew 4:19

I think this passage can be interpreted in two very different ways:

Interpretation 1

After a long, unsuccessful day of fishing in their boats, Jesus tells his disciples to cast their nets overboard one last time. When they pulled them up, the nets were bursting at the seams with fish!

Trust in Jesus and He will give you everything you need. Everything is possible through Him.

Interpretation 2

Fishing was a vital occupation back in those times. When Jesus says, "I will make you fishers of men." He was referring to the vital job of prophesying and inspiring more followers to join the early church. In order for the church to survive and grow, they needed to spread the "good news" that Jesus was the Messiah, Son of God. Today, that is still a very important job for us to perform in our Christian ministry and outreach to our surrounding communities.

George Quisno, Our Lady of Good Hope

Tuesday, December 21

Our soul waits for the LORD,

he is our help and shield.

Psalm 33:20

Our lives seem to always be waiting for something; an easier life, better health, the next promotion, less financial and family worries, more money. These things are only temporary, things that don't fulfill the needs of our soul and can't shield us in time of spiritual needs. So, even knowing this Lord, I call out your name daily asking for help for my family, the people on the prayer list, a crisis happening in our city, country and the world. Without the trust and faith in Your Presence and Protection in my life, I would sink. Knowing You are always walking with me gives me the strength to pick myself up when I am stumbling.

Mary Jansen and Mike Jansen, Our Lady of Good Hope

Notes

Monday, December 20

*O Key of David,
opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom:
come and free the prisoners of darkness!
O Antiphon*

Lord, our life here on earth is short. We should always be looking toward our eternal home, heaven. Whatever pain or sorrows we endure here on earth is really to prepare us for the wonderful things to come.

Grace Stroik, St. Bernadette Parish

Notes

Wednesday, December 1

*On that day it will be said:
"Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us!
This is the LORD for whom we looked;
let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"
Isaiah 25:9*

This verse is one Isaiah's "Songs of Salvation." "Behold" asks us to look upon and grasp God, not with a casual gaze, but in continuous amazement. Jesus will be born on Earth to teach us better behaviors and relationships with people and God so that we might be saved to live trillions and trillions of years with Him in the best forever afterlife place, Heaven.

Bill Protz, St. Catherine of Alexandria

Notes

Thursday, December 2

*Trust in the LORD forever,
for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.
Isaiah 26:4*

On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

We have a strong city;

he sets up victory like walls and bulwarks.

Open the gates,

so that the righteous nation that keeps faith
may enter in.

Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace,

in peace because they trust in you.

Trust in the Lord forever,

for in the Lord God you have an everlasting rock.

For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height;

the lofty city he lays low.

He lays it low to the ground,

casts it to the dust.

The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor,

the steps of the needy. (Isaiah 26:1-6)

God builds things to last. We in turn build good things with his help and with faith in Him. He will always protect and bless us but if we turn our backs to Him, trying to be self-sufficient we can lose His blessings.

Phillip Aller, St. Bernadette Parish



Sunday December 19

Fourth Sunday of Advent

*"I come to do you will."
Hebrews 10:7b*

The author of the *Letter to the Hebrews* presents Jesus quoting a short prayer from Psalm 40. It states that God is not interested in sacrifices and sin offerings rather; God takes delight in the one who says: "I come to do your will."

Christ gave us the ultimate example of following God's "will" through the sacrifice of his body on the cross that freed all believers from eternal sin and death.

As we approach Christmas, may Mary's example of one who acceded to God's will strengthen our resolve to imitate her in word and action.

"Lord, through Mary's help, I come to do you will."

Fr. Joe Hornacek, St. Catherine of Alexandria

Saturday, December 18

*As king he shall reign and govern wisely,
He shall do what is right and just in the land.
Jeremiah 23:5b*

Oh, King of Kings, come and bestow your wisdom,
strength and justice upon us, your humble people.

We know that if we follow your teachings and example,
the path will be clear to our peace and salvation.

Provide wisdom to our leaders
so they may govern fairly
and wisely.

Provide wisdom to your people
so they may rise to justice and respect for all.

Carla Kohlschmidt, Our Lady of Good Hope

Friday, December 3

*On that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll
and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.
Isaiah 29:18*

What hope this promise of Isaiah brings!! In the meantime, how do we “hear” what God might be saying through Scriptures, Mass, conversations with a spiritual director or trusted friend? How do we “see” through the situations in our world, our country, our city, the pandemic and not lose faith that God knows and will show us the Way out of our personal and communal darkness and gloom? Trust God who is **always with us** and wants to hear our prayers.

Sr. Jane Mary Lorbiecki, Our Lady of Good Hope

Notes

Saturday, December 4

*Truly the LORD is waiting to be gracious to you,
truly, he shall rise to show you mercy;
For the LORD isa God of justice:
happy are all who wait for him!
Isaiah 30:18*

How gracious is the Lord who created our beautiful world to take care of and enjoy.

Take some tome today to look outside and see God in everything.

The Lord is kind and merciful.

Rick & Debby Korpela, St. Catherine of Alexandria

Notes

Friday, December 17

Justice shall flourish in his time and fullness of peace forever. Psalm 72:7

As we experience the injustices and violence in our world today, it is difficult to understand what we can do to bring about peace and justice in our daily lives. One thing that we can strive to do is be examples of God's love and desire for us. To reach out to all who are overlooked: The poor, depressed, lonely, sick and those who are suffering from addictions and prejudices. When we feel overwhelmed, sad, afraid, doubtful or angry we need to know God loves us deeply and that he is stuck to us like glue every moment of every day of our lives. He is with us always, whether we are the weak or the strong and his love accompanies us through our hardships and journeys. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we pray for the peace, the strength and the courage our prayers will bring us.

Claudia Spaulding, St. Bernadette Parish

This psalm refers to the time of Jesus Christ and the saving grace of God he offered to humanity. A sacrificial lamb, sent by his father and his death intended to free us from our ancestors' mistakes. Jesus was the messianic savior; the son of God born to save us from ourselves and bring justice to the world. Unfortunately, that justice, two millennia later, still has not been brought. Injustice and inequality are distinct parts of modern culture. Our messianic prophecy of eternal justice and peace has not yet come true, but someday it will. Enacting change and carrying out God's mission of love, kindness and justice is the best way to go in peace to love and serve the Lord and one another. Consider donating your time or money to a local food pantry, donate clothes and hygiene supplies to a domestic violence shelter, spend an afternoon picking up trash on the side of Good Hope Road--all of these are examples of ways someone can spread the Word of God and promote the messianic justice both the Father and the Son wanted to cultivate in human society. May you all have a blessed holiday and I implore each and every person reading this to act justly this season. Merry Christmas to all.

Peter Govern, St. Bernadette Parish

Thursday, December 16

*Hear, O LORD, have mercy on me. LORD be my helper.
Psalm 30:11*

IT'S SAFE TO COME OUT NOW!

Don't you love it when you see a rainbow after a thunderstorm? Even though I know, scientifically, what causes a rainbow, I still appreciate the beauty and mystery of a rainbow. After a storm, the rainbow says, "It's safe to go outside now!" In *ages old* (Psalm 25:6) God showed compassion and mercy toward Noah after the great flood by making it safe for Noah, his family, and all the animals to *go out* of the ark. God placed a rainbow in the sky to remind them that God was compassionate and merciful and would never again destroy the earth by flood (Genesis 9:8-15). God showed compassion and mercy toward Noah, his descendants, and all the animals on the ark and, now as in *ages old*, we can trust that *it's safe to go out now* because God continues to show compassion and mercy to all God's people.

Compassionate and merciful God, help us to make safe places for our family, friends, neighbors and guests so that everyone will know it's safe to go out now. Amen.

Lorrie Maples, St. Catherine of Alexandria



Sunday, December 5

*Up, Jerusalem! Stand upon the heights,
and behold the joy which comes to you from God.*

After reading this every day for a week, it dawned (morning) on me...think about the joys which come to me from God.

So every morning that is my first prayer. I think about the joys, say thank you and imagine the rest of my day. If we share this it will add to my joy!

Sue Morgan, St. Bernadette Parish

Notes

Monday, December 6

Say to those whose hearts are frightened:

*Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication;
With divine recompense he comes to save you.*

*Then will the eyes of the blind be opened,
the ears of the deaf be cleared;*

*Then will the lame leap like a stag,
then the tongue of the mute will sing.*

It seems today far more people have numerous reasons to be frightened. Health, life, death, finances, family, friends. It is difficult to tell someone to be strong at times like this. But it is the time when they need to hear that God is with them, supporting them or forgiving them for their sins. Hopefully with our support they will be able to remain strong and move beyond this aspect of their life and have a happy heart again.

Peg Harloff, Our Lady of Good Hope

Notes

Wednesday, December 15

*I will listen to what God, the Lord, has to say;
Surely he will speak of peace.*

"LISTEN"

Sometimes we hear the Word of God, but do we listen? Do we think about what God is saying to us or what God is asking us to do? At Mass when we offer each other the sign of peace, do we just go through the motion as if we're just saying, 'Hi'? Or do we really wish for peace and tranquility for those around us?

One definition of 'Peace' is: free from anxiety or distress. Another is a stress-free state of security and calmness...with everything coexisting in perfect harmony and freedom.

Perhaps we could each find some small way to make someone's life a little less stressful and a bit more tranquil and peaceful. Maybe by doing so, we can help bring about the day when "Kindness and Truth shall meet and Justice and Peace shall kiss." Surely, God is the God of Peace.

Penny Potter, Our Lady of Good Hope

Tuesday, December 14

Memorial of St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church

*The LORD is close to the broken hearted,
saves those whose spirit is crushed.*

Psalm 34:19

There may be times in our lives that friends, relatives, doctors, etc. cannot help us with our problems and we feel there is no hope. Wrong!

We can always turn to God. He may not make our issues disappear or heal us, but he will listen and he will alleviate the feeling of doom if we trust in Him.

Joyce Tomkowiak, St. Bernadette Parish

Notes

Tuesday, December 7

Memorial of St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord all the earth.

Psalm 96:1

TE DEUM (WE PRAISE YOU)

O God, we praise you. O Lord, we acclaim you.

Eternal Father, all the earth reveres you.

All the angels, the heavens and the Powers of heaven,

Cherubim and Seraphim cry out to you in endless praise:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts,

heaven and earth are filled with the majesty of your glory.

The glorious choir of Apostles sings to you,

the noble company of prophets praises you,

the white-robed army of martyrs glorifies you,

Holy Church throughout the earth proclaims you,

Father of boundless majesty,

with your true and only Son, worthy of adoration,

and the Holy Spirit, Paraclete.

You, O Christ, are the King of glory,

you are the Father's everlasting Son;

when you resolved to save the human race,

you did not spurn the Virgin's womb;

you overcame the sting of death

and opened wide the Kingdom of Heaven

to those who put their faith in you.

St. Ambrose, Te Deum laudamus, (Thee, O God, we praise), Latin hymn, AD 387.

Wednesday, December 8

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

*Coming to Mary, the Angel Gabriel said,
"Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."
Luke 1:28*

How afraid Mary must have been with this very royal greeting. Not until Verse 30, when the angel says, "Fear not," and explains God's plan, does her fear subside. Mary is elevated in this verse. She was to give birth to Jesus and was chosen by God to be Holy.

Mary should be an example to modern-day people. To be less afraid and more open to hearing the word of God.

Susan Dirk, St. Bernadette Parish

Notes

Monday, December 13

*Remember your compassion and your mercy,
O LORD, for they are ages old.
Psalm 25:6*

Prayer to St. Lucy
for the eyes of the body and those of the soul

O St. Lucy, you preferred to let your eyes be torn out instead of denying the faith and defiling your soul; and God, through an extraordinary miracle, replaced them with another pair of sound and perfect eyes to reward your virtue and faith, appointing you as the protector against eye diseases. I come to you for you to protect my eyesight and to heal the illness in my eyes.

O St. Lucy, preserve the light of my eyes so that I may see the beauties of creation, the glow of the sun, the color of the flowers and the smile of children.

Preserve also the eyes of my soul, the faith, through which I can know my God, understand His teachings, recognize His love for me and never miss the road that leads me to where you, St Lucy, can be found in the company of the angels and saints. St. Lucy, protect my eyes and preserve my faith.
Amen.

Saint of the Day, St. Lucy, Aleteia.org, 12/13/17



Sunday, December 12

Third Sunday of Advent,

*Shout for joy, O daughter Zion!
Sing joyfully, O Israel!
Be glad and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!
Zephaniah 3:14*

On this third Sunday of Advent, let us raise our voices together to sing joyfully in anticipation of our Lord's birth. I love to sing. Even if you don't, give it a try. It is a beautiful way to pray. Really contemplate the song's words as you sing them.

Let us shout with joy and sing to the Lord!

Erin Epping, Our Lady of Good Hope

Notes

Thursday, December 9

*The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger,
and of great kindness.
Psalm 145:8*

Grace, Mercy, Kindness.... these are wonderful attributes to aspire to, and truth be told, not too difficult to attain for most people. It can become an easy habit, to hold a door, forgive a fault, donate to a charity. It is "Lord-Like," "Christian," and admirable when we behave in this manner, but it is not like it takes all that much effort, most of the time.

"Slow to Anger" is a different story for me. Some say it's because I was born a redhead. Most of my life, anger has been an issue to be dealt with. Maybe it's because there can be a lot to be angry about. Sometimes nothing feels better than a little righteous anger. Anger can motivate change. It can right wrongs. It is reflexive and it provokes Thought and action.

However, if the Lord is slow to anger, maybe this is something to work at. Consider all the things anger can do, without actually being angry. See if things can change, if wrongs can be righted, by actions not motivated by anger. It won't be easy... but worth the effort... especially for this redhead.

Margie Kaczmarek, Our Lady of Good Hope

Friday, December 10

*If you would hearken to my commandments,
your prosperity would be like a river,
and your vindication like the waves of the sea. Isaiah 49:18*

OBEDIENCE: My uncle (Andy Scholz) wrote a book about the family and included this story about me from when I was a kid.

One day Johnny, a nephew of mine was told by his mother to sit on a chair as punishment for some minor rule infraction. He jutted out his chin like John Wayne talking to his army sergeant. "Make Me." This coming out of the mouth of a four year old son or not was just too much for my sister-in-law. A few minutes later my brother Louie walked in the room and saw Johnny sitting on a chair crying. Peanuts, what's the reason for these sad tears? Johnny slowed his crying, pointed to his tender back side and said, "Mommy make-d me!"

God wants us to be joy-filled people. God didn't give us the commandments to control us, or lord them over us, but to allow us to exercise our free will. We all have the free will to choose God (love) or to not choose God (sin). There can be no love without free will. And when we fall short and do not choose Love in our lives, the Catholic Church has the sacrament of Confession so that we can be vindicated and can be free once again to choose God.

Adam and Eve had it made. They had no restrictions except one... Don't eat from that tree in the middle of the garden. Why? So they could choose God in their lives. But they didn't obey... messed things up for all of us? Or did they? My uncle recorded at least one time when I disobeyed, but not the only time. I think we all have been guilty of committing our own first obedience infraction. So if not them, wouldn't any of us have committed the original sin. Christ obeyed the Father even to death. In reading Matthew 26:42, Jesus would have preferred some other way to save humanity, but not his will, but the Father's will was done. Let's ask ourselves this question? Do we want joy in our lives? Then, harken to His commandments.

John Scholz, St. Catherine of Alexandria

Saturday, December 11

*O Shepherd of Israel, hearken,
from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Rouse your power.
Psalm 80:2ac, 3b*

We ask God as our Shepherd to use his power to hear our prayers and guide us with his light in our life.

Alice Manthey, St. Bernadette Parish

Notes