

# Dear Padre,

## Who was John the Baptist?

What we know about John the Baptist comes from a combination of Scripture and Church traditions that evolved during and after the writing of the Scriptures of the New Testament.

John's parents were Zechariah, who was a priest in the Jerusalem Temple, and Elizabeth, who was related to Mary. The angel Gabriel told Zechariah that his wife would bear a son, even though she was quite old. It is believed that John was born in the region of Ain Karim, southwest of Jerusalem. When he was in his early twenties, he was a member of the Qumran community, and later was a hermit in the desert. John began his public ministry in his late twenties in the Jordan River Valley. His preaching followed the long line of Jewish prophets who preached against the evils of the day and demanded inner repentance and outer baptism as a sign of that repentance.



John continued his preaching in the Jordan Valley even after encountering Jesus. Eventually John was arrested by Herod Antipas and imprisoned at Machaerus Fortress by the Dead Sea. He was beheaded at the request of Salome, the daughter of Herodias, and buried at Sebaste, in Samaria. After John's death, many of his disciples followed Jesus, including Andrew and John.

John, whose name means "God is gracious," is usually represented in pictures holding a long slender cross with a small lamb partially hidden behind him.

—Fr. Paul J. Coury, CSSR | [Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org](mailto:Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org)



### A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

*Anxieties, difficulties, and sufferings permeate our lives, and so many times the reality around us seems to be inhospitable and arid, like the desert... But the words of [John] the Baptist reveal that our joy rests on the certainty that this desert is inhabited: "Among you there is one whom you do not know."*

—ANGELUS GAUDETE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2017

## Calendar

**Monday**  
DECEMBER 14  
Advent Weekday  
Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a  
Mt 21:23-27

**Tuesday**  
DECEMBER 15  
Advent Weekday  
Zep 3:1-2, 9-13  
Mt 21:28-32

**Wednesday**  
DECEMBER 16  
Advent Weekday  
Is 45:6c-8, 18, 21c-25  
Lk 7:18b-23

**Thursday**  
DECEMBER 17  
Advent Weekday  
Gn 49:2, 8-10  
Mt 1:1-17

**Friday**  
DECEMBER 18  
Advent Weekday  
Jer 23:5-8  
Mt 1:18-25

**Saturday**  
DECEMBER 19  
Advent Weekday  
Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a  
Lk 1:5-25

**Sunday**  
DECEMBER 20  
Fourth Sunday  
of Advent  
2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16  
Rom 16:25-27  
Lk 1:26-38

# Our Parish COMMUNITY

December 13, 2020  
Third Sunday of Advent (B)  
Is 61:1-2a, 10-11  
1 Thes 5:16-24  
Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

## Who Are You?

So far the readings for Sundays in Advent have shown God leading the people into a new way of life—a way of righteousness and loyalty, of honesty and responsibility. Today the readings show the people beginning to see that the accomplishment of this transformation would come through the leadership of one individual. Who might that person be?

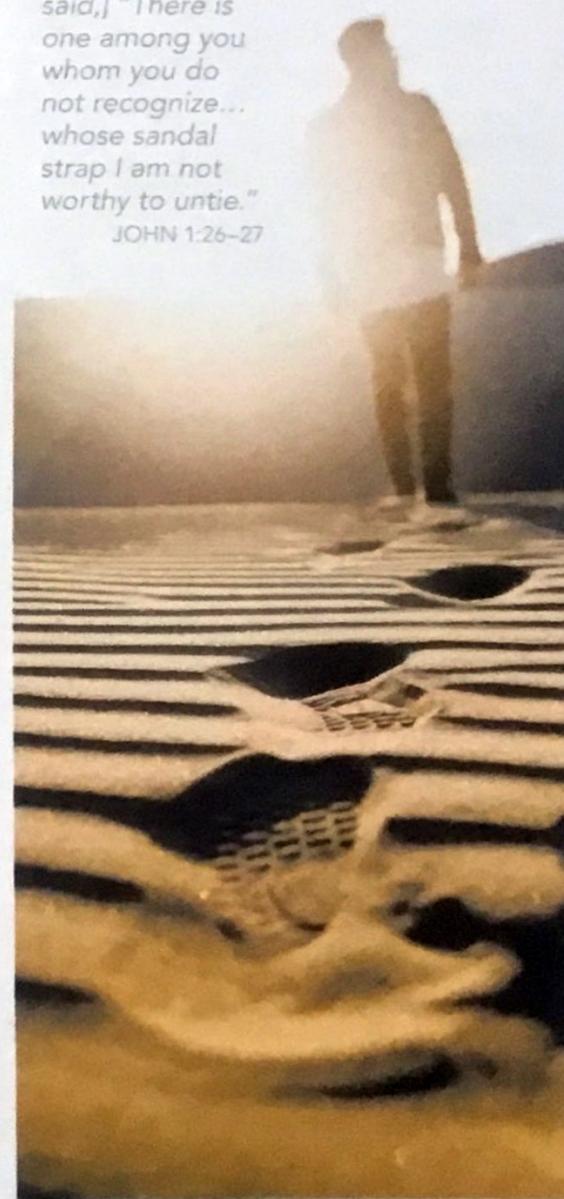
The passage from Isaiah describes a prophet, one anointed by God and bringing good news to the poor. When the Baptist appears on the scene in John's Gospel, people wonder if it might be him. He insists he is not the one, nor is he a prophet. Then, "Who are you?" (John 1:19) Recalling the passage from Isaiah read on the First Sunday of Advent, John tells them he is the one repairing the road, getting it ready for the long-awaited one to arrive. He adds that his baptism is a baptism of repentance. He is readying them to be what Paul describes as "perfectly holy...blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

We now see that these readings are preparing us for salvation. We are now told that such divine graciousness will be inaugurated by an individual, one who has not yet been identified. Will it be a powerful king? A mighty warrior? A spectacular prophet? Those in the time before Christ didn't know. We now know that it will be someone powerful enough to initiate a revolutionary change in the lives of the entire people. Now waiting gets exciting.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

[John the Baptist said,] "There is one among you whom you do not recognize... whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie."

JOHN 1:26-27



### FOR *Reflection*

- How might you envision this long-awaited one? What do you think the nation needs in a leader?
- What kind of revolutionary transformation do you think we need today?



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**MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK**

<b>Monday, Dec. 14</b>	<b>8:00 a.m.</b>	<b>LaVera Strecker</b>
<b>Tuesday, Dec. 15</b>	<b>8:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Thanksgiving</b>
<b>Thursday, Dec. 17</b>	<b>8:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Special Intention</b>
<b>Friday, Dec. 18</b>	<b>8:00 a.m.</b>	<b>For the Sick &amp; Thanksgiv-</b>
<b>Saturday, Dec. 19</b>	<b>4:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Guebelle Families</b>
<b>Sunday, Dec. 20</b>	<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Betty Williams +</b>

**VOCATION VIEW**

Rejoice always! Our Savior is near! The call to priesthood and/or religious life is a source of great joy to those who embrace their call with their whole heart, mind and soul. (1 Thes 5:16)

**STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT**

All of the people in today's readings – the prophet Isaiah, the Virgin Mary, St. Paul, St. John the Baptist – seemed to understand clearly and rejoice in what God was calling them to be and to do. Do I?

December 12, 3:00 p.m.	Teresa Beltran
December 13, 9:00 a.m.	Mike Broeckelman
December 19, 4:00 p.m.	Gwen Waechter
December 20, 9:00 a.m.	K of C Members
December 24, 4:00 p.m.	Volunteer
December 26, 4:00 p.m.	Debbie Frederick
December 27, 9:00 a.m.	Steve Sullivan
December 31, 6:00 p.m.	Volunteer
January 2, 4:00 p.m.	Tom Bachman
January 3, 9:00 a.m.	Karen Burden

*Thank you so much for your ministry!*



**A FEW WORDS FROM THE PASTOR**

My Dear Parishioners: Greetings in the Lord on this Third Sunday of Advent. If you've ever been around people who are always cheerful and happy and enthusiastic, you know that it usually can go one of two ways. Sometimes, those types of people can lift our spirits and help us feel good about ourselves. And they can make us laugh and give us a positive outlook for the day ahead. But it doesn't always work out that way. In fact, for me, it almost never works out that way. Maybe that says more about me than it does them. You see, when I am around someone who is always cheerful, it kind of drives me crazy. Most of the time I just want someone to commiserate with me about whatever difficulties I might be having in my life or even just that day. If I'm complaining or moaning about someone or something, I want them to "take my side" and say, "How could they? That's just awful!" I don't want them just to look at me and smile from ear to ear and act as if I just told them I won the lottery. That just seems a little weird or creepy to be quite honest. Maybe that's just me. However, whether or not you are attracted to people who are happy and cheerful all the time, or whether or not these types of people drive you crazy, it does make me wonder --- Is this really the kind of person God is asking me to be? Or more broadly --- Are these the kind of people God is calling all of us to be? In other words, is this sort of attitude part and parcel of what it means to be a Christian? Let us reflect on some words of St. Paul in today's second reading, "Rejoice always....In all circumstances give thanks." (1Thessalonians 5:16)

What exactly does that mean? Am I supposed to be "happy" and "sunny" no matter what? Am I supposed to always be smiling? Am I supposed to act as if I don't have a care in the world? Am I supposed to never feel sorrow or pain or disappointment? Or if I do, am I never supposed to show it? I don't know about you, but if that's the case, I'm in trouble.

Why should we be joyful? What is there to be joyful about?

My friends, what we are preparing for this Advent is to once again welcome our God into our lives, our hearts, and our world. And that's what real joy is all about. And this kind of joy is a joy that doesn't falsely replace our other emotions, doesn't try to cover-up all of the authentic feelings we might have. Rather true joy is the kind of joy that infuses every aspect of our lives, every thought, and every action. And that's because true joy comes from only one place, from our living God dwelling within each human heart. That's the reason to rejoice! Not because all of our problems and crosses are going to magically disappear. But because the difficulties and disappointments of our lives will never win, never get the best of us. God wins. Every time.

Have a blessed Advent everyone. Fr. Peter

**COLLECTION** for December 6, 2020: Envelopes: \$950.00; Loose: \$60.00; Online Giving: \$11385.62; Total \$2385.62; Average Weekly Expense: \$1,989.55. Income over/under (+406.07) *Thank you so much to our faithful stewards for supporting our parish, diocese, and worldwide Church.*

**ADVENT –SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION** Due to the spreading of the Covid-19, our parish penance service will not be held this year, instead Fr. Peter will be available to hear confessions every Saturday from 3:00 pm – 3:50 p.m.; every Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:50 a.m.; and every Thursday from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. If those times do not work for you, please call parish office number (355-6405) for an appointment. Please make an effort to be reconciled with God and with others in this sacred time in order to celebrate the birth of the Lord.

**CHRISTMAS FLOWERS IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE** If you would like to donate flowers in memory of A LOVED ONE FOR CHRISTMAS, please put your donation in envelope marked to whom you want them to go to, plus your name and put in with the regular collection or send it to our office. Deadline date is December 22.

**CHRISTMAS CHURCH DECORATION** We plan to decorate the church on December 15 at 5:30 pm. Your help would be appreciated.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

Christmas Eve Mass, December 24, 4:00 p.m. in Lakin and 5:30 p.m. MT in Syracuse

Christmas Day Mass, December 25, 9:00 a.m. in Deerfield and 12:00 p.m. Vietnamese in Garden City

New Year's Eve mass - Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, December 31, 6:00 p.m in Lakin, 6:30 p.m. MT

New Year's Day Mass—Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, January 1, 8:00 a.m.

**DECEMBER CONFIRMATION & FIRST COMMUNION CLASSES** Confirmation Class today, **December, 13.** First Communion class will be cancelled until after the Christmas Break. Please keep our First Communion and Confirmation students, their parents, and their Catechists in our prayers for their safety and perseverance.

**MASKS AT MASS & CHRISTMAS MASS** Due to spread of Covid –19 and possible more attendance at Christmas Eve Mass we would like to encourage you, if you are physically capable, to wear your mask during this time of an upswing in reported cases of Covid-19 in our community. Please do whatever you be able to help us reduce the anxiety level of people entering our parish church. Thank you.

### **UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL OF THE WEEK (John 1:6-8,19-28)**

**Taking the stand** This Gospel is like a courtroom drama in which Jesus is on trial. At issue is the following question: is Jesus the light? People must judge whether Jesus truly brings salvation to a world in darkness. The first witness in this trial is John the Baptist (vv.6-8).

John is interrogated twice in vv.19-28, first by representatives of the Sadducees then by some Pharisees. The Sadducees and eventually some Pharisees ultimately reject John's testimony and reject Jesus himself. They do not recognize the light that is among them (v.26).

**Giving testimony** The other three Gospels present John the Baptist as calling people to repentance. The writer of our fourth Gospel downplayed this aspect of John's ministry. Since this Gospel reads as one long trial, the Gospel-writer instead presents John as the first witness to take the stand in defense of Jesus. This Gospel shifts our attention from preparation to the one for whom we are preparing.

**Not the One, nor anyone** In Malachi 3:23 we hear that Elijah will return to prepare people for God's coming. In Deuteronomy 18:15-22 Moses promises that God will send another great prophet to his people. Here representatives of Judaism ask John if he thinks he is the fulfillment of such prophecies.

Although John helps to fulfill such prophecies, he denies that he himself is important. His only role is to point to Jesus. The other Gospels present John as an Elijah-like figure, but here John rejects that association in order to focus attention on Jesus. <https://oursundayreadings>

### **PRAYER OF THE WEEK (Prayer for the third Sunday of Advent)**

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever faithful to your promises and ever close to your Church: the earth rejoices in hope of the Savior's coming and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts and remove the sadness that hinders us from feeling the joy which his presence will bestow, for he is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

### **CRYING IN A MANGER (The Most Rev. John Brungardt)**

Soon "the Magi will find crying in a manger the one they have followed as he shone in the sky. ... As they look, they believe and do not question, as their symbolic gifts bear witness: incense for God, gold for a king, myrrh for one who is to die" (St. Peter Chrysologus). Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri write a beautiful reflection of the birth of Jesus in The Gospel of Matthew, in the Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture series. Matthew 2:1-12 describes the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child, Mary, and Joseph. (Luke 2:1-20 is the other account of the miracle at Bethlehem.) Matthew's version is a favorite of mine since my middle name is Balthasar, traditionally the name of one of the Magi. Do we stop and worship our Newborn Jesus? Do we put Him first in our lives? Do we turn to him in our joys and in our sorrows? Do we recognize and cherish Him in the Eucharist? "Through the eyes of our bodies we see what appears to be only bread, with the eyes of faith we know it to be the very body of our Lord" (Mitch & Sri, 54). The Magi had these eyes of faith to recognize this infant lying in a manger as God. Let us ponder these truths of our Catholic Faith the next time we receive Holy Communion, or worship our Savior in adoration, or seek Him in private prayer. Let us be comforted by our Lord Jesus. Many blessings to you and your loved ones on Christmas, as well as on the great feasts of the Holy Family: Mary Mother of God, Epiphany, and the Baptism of our Lord. Be assured of my prayers for you. Trust in the Babe Jesus, He loves you more than you can ask or imagine! Trust in the Babe Jesus, He loves you more than you can ask or imagine!

## QUESTION & ANSWER



Q: How can I be happy?

Happiness is the stick by which we tend to measure the success of our lives, isn't it? Even Saint Augustine admitted, "We all want to live happily; in the whole human race there is no one who does not assent to this proposition." Yet many people seem to think that happiness is an accident of birth, or tied to particular circumstances or acquisitions, or even a goal to be pursued in itself. Scripture teaches that happiness is not a goal; it is a gift. God offers this gift through the works of creation, and we discover it ultimately in coming to know the Creator behind it all.

The biblical idea of happiness is linked to the word beatitude (Latin for "bliss"). We think first of the Beatitudes Jesus offers in his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. Sometimes the primary word of each beatitude is translated as "blessed," but a more literal rendering would be the cry, "Happy you!" The eight choices noted in Matthew's list—including being just, pure of heart, merciful, a peacemaker—already find the chooser in a happy state. Because God is the source of human happiness, doing as God does automatically places us in the condition of bliss.

So the short answer to the question is: Happiness comes from living according to God's will. Following God's will, in fact, is the only thing that does; or as Saint Thomas Aquinas put it, "God alone satisfies." It's not for nothing that the word gospel literally means "good news." Like any good news that comes to you, the gospel ought to make your day—or in this case, your lifespan and then some.

Saint Paul also lists joy as one of the nine fruits or by-products of the Holy Spirit. As Christians we carry the Spirit's joy within us, and one way to tell is how joyfully we experience our lives. Saint Francis de Sales went so far as to warn against giving in to excessive sadness because it was counter to the life of faith.

That doesn't mean that sadness is never appropriate; as the Book of Ecclesiastes says, there's a time for everything under heaven. But clinging to moods does mean that we miss opportunities to demonstrate to others that the news of Christianity is, in fact, as good as advertised. (Alice Camille)

### **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT DISCERN THE SPIRIT**

Often we get an intuition, a burning in the heart that feels motivating. It may tell us to speak up or shut up; to reach out or keep our hands off a situation; to admit we need help or to stop leaning on others. Do we obey the prompt, or ignore it? The problem with following what may be a divine nudge is that we can't always discern the Holy Spirit from a lesser kind. Discernment involves prayer, familiarity with scripture, consultation with faithful others, and sometimes spiritual direction. Above all, it needs to be practiced. Befriend the Spirit! (Prepare the Word)

### **TERCER DOMINGO DE ADVIENTO Discernir el espíritu**

A menudo tenemos una intuición, un ardor en el corazón que sentimos que nos motiva. Puede decirnos que hablemos o que callemos; que extendamos o mantengamos las manos fuera de una situación; que admitamos que necesitamos ayuda o que dejemos de apoyarnos en los demás.

¿Aceptamos el mensaje o lo ignoramos? El problema de seguir lo que puede ser un impulso divino es que no siempre podemos discernir el Espíritu Santo de uno menor. El discernimiento implica oración, conocimiento de las escrituras, consulta con otros fieles, y a veces dirección espiritual. Sobre todo, necesita ser practicado. Hazte amigo del Espíritu!