

SUMMONED BY GOD

As Christmas draws near, Advent's scriptures lure us into a world of dreams, signs, wonders, and the miracle of the virgin birth. Too often we allow the great stories of our faith, the ones that are most familiar, simply to wash over us. Today's Gospel account of the events leading up to the birth of the Lord reads like a present-day soap opera.

Yet Joseph's courage, even in the midst of what must have been an incredibly confusing time, provides a model for us. Each week, we are summoned by God to embrace the way of goodness and truth through the proclamation of God's holy word. Like Joseph, we are called to do as the Lord commands us. As we stand at the threshold of Christmas, let us have the courage to be open to whatever it is that the Lord will require of us as we celebrate the miracle of Bethlehem.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a; Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17; Lk 1:5-25
 Tuesday: Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-4ab, 5-6; Lk 1:26-38
 Wednesday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk 1:39-45
 Thursday: 1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8abcd; Lk 1:46-56
 Friday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14; Lk 1:57-66
 Saturday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79
 Sunday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27-29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]
Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14 Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; 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 [1-5, 9-14]

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Wednesday: St. Peter Canisius; Winter Solstice
 Friday: St. John of Kanty
 Saturday: The Vigil of Christmas
 Sunday: The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

SANCTUARY LIGHT

DECEMBER 17TH - DECEMBER 23RD

The Sanctuary Light at St. John will burn in memory of **Dr. Froilan Tolentino**.
 The Adoration Light at St. John will burn in memory of **Mary Theresa Terrio**.
 The Sanctuary Light at Our Lady will burn in memory of **Andrew Cambre**.

IN SYMPATHY

Our Communities of Faith extend our sympathy and prayerful support for the family of Charles Roberts, parishioner of SJB and husband of Mary Ann. May the Lord grant comfort and peace to this family and may he and all who sleep in Christ, find in His presence light, happiness, and peace.

CONGRATULATIONS and WELCOME
 to OUR NEWEST MEMBER



BAPTIZED IN THE LORD
 Saturday, December 10, 2016

Elizabeth May Patterson
 daughter of Chris & Emily Patterson

NEXT BAPTISM DATE

The next baptism date will be **Sunday, January 8th, 2017**. The seminar and paperwork must be completed and turned in by Tuesday, December 20th. Call the parish office for a Parents Packet AND email Lori Parmelee at bellelj@aol.com. In the subject line of the email, type "Baptism" with contact information to get parent and godparent seminar options.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 18, 2016

On this last Sunday before Christmas, we see that Jesus' birth is the fulfillment of the promise of Emmanuel, "God is with us" (Matthew 1:23). The Gospel refers to the first reading from Isaiah. There we see the king of Judah, Ahaz, under attack by the kings of Aram and Israel. He wants to ask the Assyrians for help instead of relying on God. He is afraid to admit his lack of faith. So the weakness of Ahaz gives us the wonderful prophecy of the birth of Jesus.

In the Gospel, Joseph also does not understand how Mary came to be pregnant. But unlike Ahaz, Joseph did have faith in God and the message of the angel. He took Mary as his wife and helped her through her pregnancy and in raising Jesus afterwards.

So now we have to choose whom to rely on. Do I act like Ahaz, relying on worldly powers, or like Joseph, who trusted the Lord? If I look at my actions and priorities, I might be more like Ahaz than I want to admit.

How much time do I spend watching television (especially now that it's in HD) compared to time in prayer? How much time do I spend reading the scriptures compared to the newspaper or magazines? If I really believe that "God is with us," which is what Christmas is all about, how much of God can people see in my actions? Maybe if we kept in mind that promise that God *is* with us—in the baptism we received and the sacraments of the Church, and in the love of our spouse or parents—we could see how close God really is, and let others see in our actions that Jesus is Emmanuel.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE



Saturday, December 24
(Christmas Eve)
4:00 pm at Our Lady
6:00 pm at St. John

Sunday, December 25
(Christmas Day)
9:00 am at St. John

Monday, December 26

The Office will be closed for Christmas holiday.

2016 SJB LIVING / GIVING TREE

The Living / Giving Tree at St. John is now set up in the entrance of the church. Please take an **empty envelope** from the tree and return the envelope with your donation by either dropping it into the box under the tree or into the collection basket at Masses. Please make your contribution by Christmas.



The funds from this program will be used by the St. Vincent de Paul Society here at St. John the Baptist. Our St. Vincent de Paul Society helps people throughout the year in the Zachary and Clinton area with financial needs. The Society volunteers work very hard to insure the money is spent wisely by following very strict guidelines, which includes home visits to those requesting assistance.

"Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you? He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'" Matthew 25:44



SPECIAL SECOND COLLECTION

THIS WEEKEND

We will have a special second collection this weekend for Christmas gifts for the Catholic Veterans at the Louisiana War Vets Home in Jackson, LA.

The funds from this collection will be used by our elves to purchase items for each of the 29 Catholic veterans we visit regularly in the home.



OUR LADY

OF THE ASSUMPTION

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday, December 24th

4:00 pm at Our Lady

6:00 pm at St. John

Sunday, December 25th

9:00 am at St. John

OLA THE LIVING / GIVING TREE

The annual program of the Living / Giving Tree continues again this year. Please take an ornament from the tree and add that person to your shopping list, OR attach the ornament to a monetary donation and one of our elves will do the shopping for you. It's that easy!



Please return the gifts (with the ornament attached) by **tomorrow, Monday, December 19th**.

"Whatsoever you did for one of the least of my brothers, you did for me." Matthew 25:40

2016 OLA CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Please join us this evening at **5:30 pm** for this year's Christmas Program presented by the children of the parish

OLA CHRISTMAS POTLUCK

Please join us following the Christmas Program this evening for our parish Potluck Dinner.

Contact Diane Rouchon for more details at 683-5192.

2017 CALENDARS

The calendars for 2017 are now available. Please take one for your home.

NURSING HOME CHRISTMAS PARTY

The SJB Religious Ed Department is collecting blankets and socks for the residents of our area nursing home.



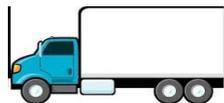
Everyone of the parish is invited to join them on Thursday, December 22nd at 10am as they visit and sing Christmas Carols for the residents.

Please drop off any donated blankets and socks to the Religious Ed Department by Monday, December 19th.

CAN YOU DONATE A BLANKET OR SOCKS?

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY OF SJB

Our **Fill-A-Truck** drive for SVDP has been rescheduled for Saturday, January 28, 2017.



Please begin saving gently used clothes, household items, etc. Our goal is to fill 2 trucks.

SJB SUNDAY BREAKFAST CLUB

Parishioners are invited every Sunday following 7am Mass to join us for coffee and pastries in the hall. This is provided by the volunteers of the Sunday Breakfast Club.

CAN YOU HELP?

We are in need of more volunteers. Please contact Dale Landry at 654-6730 or call the parish office.



25TH & 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Bishop Robert Muench will celebrate a liturgy honoring couples celebrating their 25th, 50th, and 65th or greater wedding anniversary in 2017 on:

Sunday, February 12, 2017
at 3:00 pm



at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church.

The families of the honored couples are also invited to attend the liturgy and reception afterward in the Our Lady of Mercy Parish Activity Center.

Please register by contacting OUR parish office.

24 HOUR ADORATION



Our monthly 24 Hours of Eucharistic Adoration begins tomorrow, Monday, December 19th at 8:00 am. Please contact the Religious Ed office or Suzanne Payne at suzanpayne@gmail.com to reserve your one hour spot.

Baton Rouge Catholic Men's Conference



A Call to Battle:
Challenging every man to fight for holiness
February 11, 2017
7:30 am - 4:00 pm Vigil Mass
Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Baton Rouge

Dynamic Speakers: *Dr. Brant Pitre, Fr. Michael Champagne, Sr. John Thomas, Mark Hartfiel*

Fellowship
Eucharistic Procession
Exhibitions
Register online: www.MenOfTheImmaculata.com
Adults \$50.00 / Students \$25.00

All Day Adoration
Vendors
Food by Chef John Folsie

2017 CALENDARS

The calendars for 2017 have arrived and are available at the entrance of church. Please take one for your home.

Pray for our Military and their families

Marvin Ashford, Jr., Army	Aaron Barr, USAF
James A. Benning, USMC	Matthew Boyd, Army
Cody Castello, USMC	Eugene Cazedessus, USMC
LeLand Crochet, III, USMC	Matthew Charlet Dart, USN
Chandler Derouen, Army	Patrick Deslatte, USN
Jacqueline Deslatte, USN	Stephen DiLorenzo, Army
Adam Foster, USN	Thomas Foster, USN
Christian Fuller, USAF	Brad Gautreaux, USMC
J. Michael Head, USMC	Joseph N. Jones, Jr., Army
Sabrina Jones, LaNG	Markus Kippers, USN
Dustin Knight, USN	Joseph L. LeBlanc Jr., Army
Stanley Mays, USAF	Andrew Metcalf, Army
Ben Gordon Morseth, USCG	Gordon Newman, Army
Robert Brett Parker, LaNG	Brian Plauche, USAF
Andrea Byrd Prosser, USCG	Mike Prosser, USCG
Jesse B. Richard, Army	Nicholas Richards, USN
Michael Roberts, USCG	James Rouchon, USMC
Jarrold Mason Sealey, USAF	David Welch, LaNG
Gordon M. White, USAF	Christopher Williston USAF

WEEKLY COLLECTION 12/11/2016**St. John the Baptist**

Identified Contributions (133 Families)	\$	11,294.00
Unidentified Contributions	\$	754.00
Regular / ONLINE Contributions (34)	\$	2,275.00
Immaculate Conception	\$	1,727.00
Building Maintenance (6)	\$	170.00
Building Maintenance / ONLINE (3)	\$	45.00
Youth Ministry (2)	\$	40.00
Christmas Flowers (22)	\$	332.00
Christmas Flowers / ONLINE (2)	\$	50.00
Retirement for Religious	\$	933.92
Retirement for Religious / ONLINE	\$	25.00
Legacy of Faith / Capital Camp (87)	\$	8,378.00
Legacy of Faith / ONLINE (25)	\$	1,627.00
CAMPAIGN TOTAL	\$	6,196,350.67

Our Lady of Assumption

Identified Contributions (31 Families)	\$	1,520.00
Unidentified Contributions	\$	449.00
Regular / ONLINE Contributions (3)	\$	100.00
Immaculate Conception	\$	472.00
Building Maintenance (3)	\$	100.57
Building Maintenance (1)	\$	10.00
Christmas Flowers (7)	\$	165.00
Retirement for Religious (10)	\$	595.57
Youth Ministry (2)	\$	20.00



“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about.” So begins Matthew’s narration of Mary and Joseph’s first adventure as husband and wife. The early Christians who were his audience must have been eager to hear the story of Jesus’ early years, and wondered if what they had heard about Mary was true. It must have been Mary who handed this story down to the apostles, which subsequently found itself in the scriptural canon. One would imagine that this was a rather private matter between Mary and Joseph, but so important that it needed to be shared later. It’s a tender and lovely story of a young couple in love and faced with a dilemma.

JOSEPH WAS A RIGHTEOUS MAN

Today’s Gospel is one of only a few stories that mention Joseph. It is clear from these Gospel accounts that Joseph was a man of good character and also a loving man, not willing to harm Mary, even though it appeared that she had betrayed him in the most hurtful way. He could have denounced her publicly and she would have been stoned to death. But he did not want that to happen to her. Did he and Mary have a conversation about the Annunciation events, and could that conversation have made him more open to the dream in which the angel appeared to him?

IN A DREAM

The Jews then, as today, looked for the Messiah to come. When the angel told Joseph that this child was conceived through the Holy Spirit, he readily believed that Mary would bear a son who would save people from their sins. They named him Jesus, which in Hebrew is “Yeshua.” It means “God saves.” Joseph was willing to believe that the prophecy from Isaiah, “*the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, / and they shall name him Emmanuel, / which means ‘God is with us’*” would be fulfilled in his own life (Matthew 1:23). When he awoke, he did not shake off the dream, but acted on it in a way that would change his life, and would change the world.

† ~ † NEXT WEEK AT A GLANCE † ~ †

Sunday, December 18th**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

- 7 am: Mass / Coffee & Pastries
- 9:15 am: K-5th Religious Ed
- 10 am: Divine Mercy/Rosary
- 11 am: Mass / Christmas Program
- 5 pm: Edge

-OLA

- 9 am: Mass
- 10 am: K-11th Religious Ed Class #8
- 5:30 pm: Christmas Program and Potluck Dinner

Monday, December 19th

- 8 am: 24 Hour Eucharistic Adoration Begins
- 6:30 pm: Charismatic Prayer Group
- 7 pm: N.A. Meeting

Tuesday, December 20th

- 5 pm: Children’s Choir
- 5:30 pm: Youth Choir
- 6 pm: Adult Choir

-OLA

- 6:30 pm: Mass

Wednesday, December 21st

- 7 am: Mass

Thursday, December 22nd

- 7:30 am: Mass

Friday, December 23rd

- 7:30 am: Mass / Divine Mercy / Coffee & Biscuits

Saturday, December 24th**Vigil of Christmas (Christmas Eve)**

- 4 pm: Mass at OLA
- 6 pm: Mass at SJB

Sunday, December 25th**The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)**

- 9 am: Mass



Youth Ministry

Please join us in praying for LIFE
Intercessory Prayers: Pro-Life Advocates

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of
the Holy Spirit, Amen.

For those who pray before abortion clinics,
who march for life,
or who witness to the rights of all human
beings:
that God might strengthen and guide them;
We pray to the Lord:

For those who long for the equality of all
persons:
that their dedication to the unborn, the old,
the condemned, and the forgotten,
may grow every day;
We pray to the Lord:

For all who work for an end to abortion:
that they might be strengthened by prayer,
and that God might reward them for their
goodness;
We pray to the Lord:

For all who teach the Gospel of Life:
that they might be driven by love alone;
We pray to the Lord:

For all who work to defend life:
that God might reward them for their
faithfulness;
We pray to the Lord:

For all who work for life:
and especially those who pray at abortion
clinics,
that God might reward them for their
prayers;
We pray to the Lord:

For all those who work to promote the
Gospel of Life:
that God might reward them for their
goodness;
We pray to the Lord:

For those who work to defend the lives of
the unborn,
the sick, the infirm, and the aged:
those who defend humanity's inalienable
right to life;
We pray to the Lord:

For all who work for an end to the culture
of death,
and especially for our brothers and sisters
from other churches, ecclesial
communities, and religions,
that love for the Gospel of Life might draw
us closer in Christ;
We pray to the Lord:

For all who work for life:
that they might be assured
of our gratitude and prayers
for the holy work they do;
We pray to the Lord:

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of
the Holy Spirit, Amen.