

St. John the Evangelist

Father Michael Somers, SVD

Pastor

Deacon David Allen

Pastoral Associate

Ann Wiborg

Pastoral Secretary

David Scaia

St. Vincent de Paul

David Ames

Knights of Columbus

Worship Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:00 PM

Sunday Masses:

8:00 AM, 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

Spanish Mass: 2:00 PM

Weekday Masses:

Monday—Friday 7 AM

Weekday Adoration:

Every Friday following Mass

7:30 AM-8:30 AM

Holy Days:

Vigil Mass: 6:00 PM

Holy Day: 7:00 AM and 12:00 PM

Confession:

30 minutes before Vigil Mass

And anytime by request

all the other Masses

First Friday Adoration

7 AM - 5 PM

Mass, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction

First Saturday Devotion:

8:00 AM: Confession, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Rosary

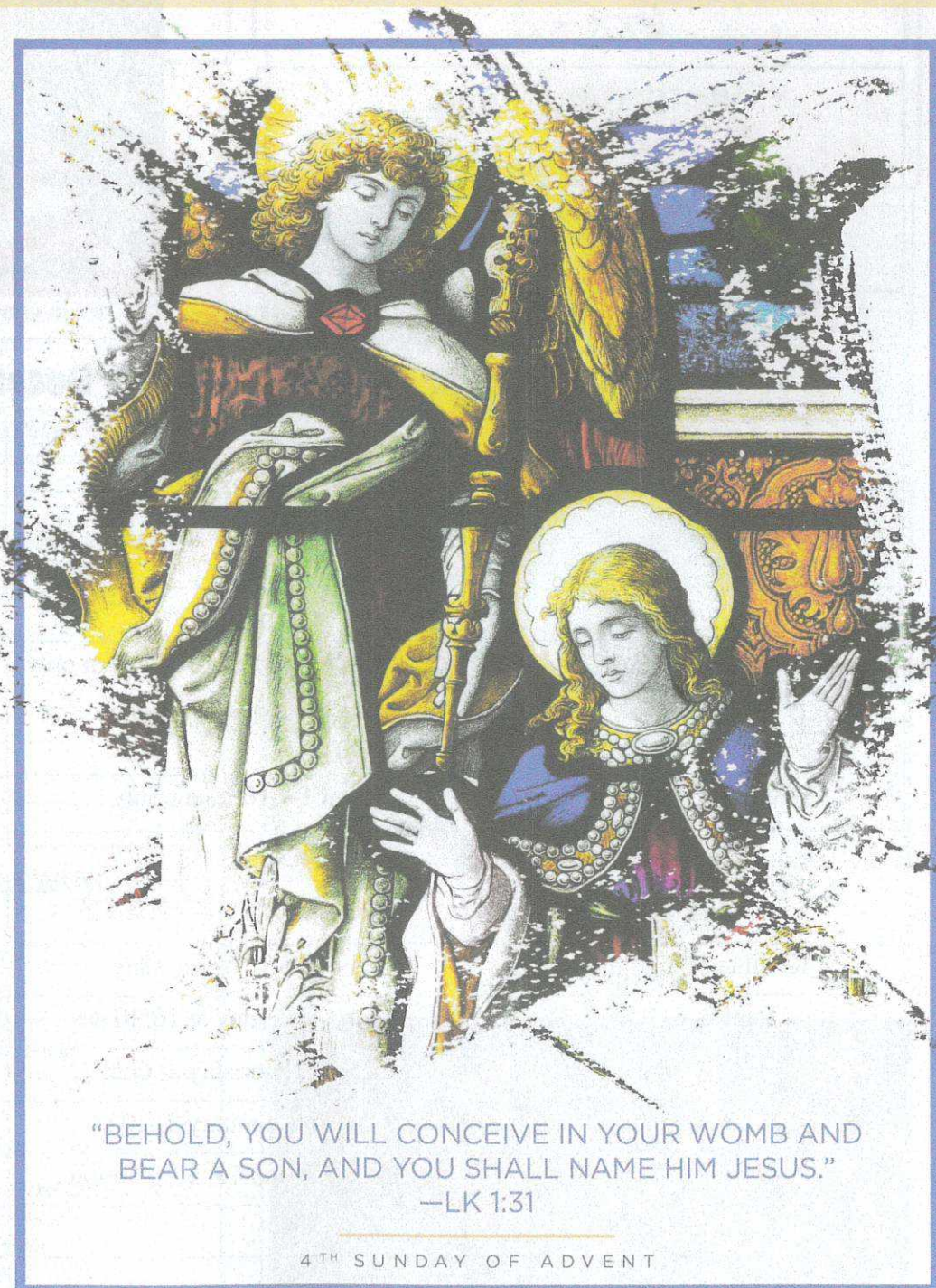
9:00 AM: Healing Mass

2414 Seventeenth Street, Gulfport, Mississippi 39501

Telephone: 228-864-2272

Email: stjohnthee@stjohnsgulfport.org

December 24, 2023



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Welcome to St. John the Evangelist!

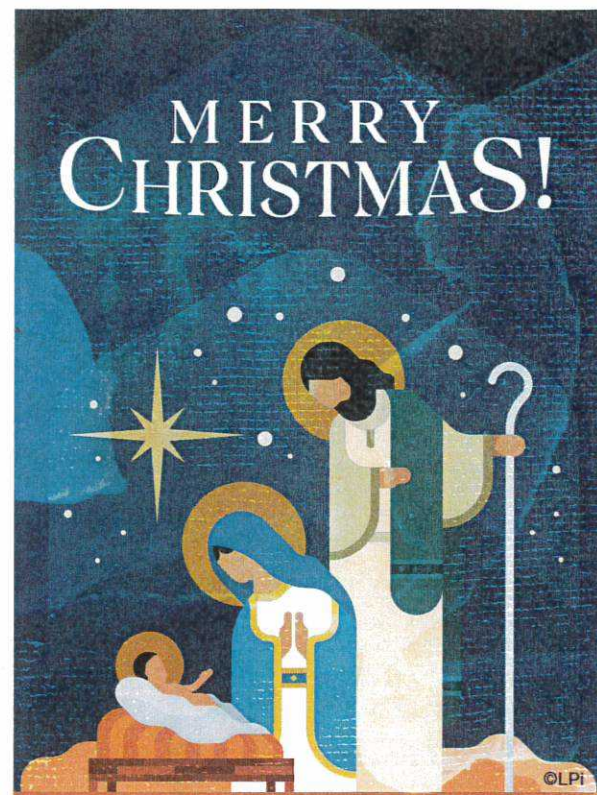
Whether you're just visiting for a brief time, looking for a new parish home, returning to the practice of your Catholic faith or interested in finding out more about the Catholic Church, we are happy you're here! To learn more about St. John, please visit stjohngulfport.org.

If you are new to the parish, please go to our website and click on the "New Parishioner" tab.



Parish Office Hours

Office hours are Monday thru Friday: 9 am to 3 pm.
Office phone number: 228-864-2272
Father Mike: 850-288-0155



Happy Birthday blessings this week are extended to:

Cleo Dossett, George Healy, Dec 24
Lindy Callahan, Patrice Meacher, Dec 25
Suzanne Shipaleo, Dec 25
Diana McNeil, Marie Pique, Dec 26
Payton Dedeaux, Dec 27
Mario DiRaimo, Joshua Faul, Dec 28
Anthony King, Dec 28
Joyce Dedeaux, Larry Dedeaux, Dec 29
May God grant them many blessings in the coming year!



**Congratulations
to Our Parishioners**



Wayne & Suzanne Bowles 64yrs, Dec 26
Dudley & Trish McAllister 65yrs, Dec 27
Matthew & Cindy Lou Serpa 44yrs, Dec 29

*May God bless them with many more
happy years together!*

✠ *We pray for all the sick, especially:* ✠

Peggy Ryland	Carl Necaie	Parishioners of St. John the Evangelist
Suzanne King	Alma Dedeaux	
John Cuevas	Julia Langford	
David McGuffie	Joe McCormick	
Joann Hoda	Chris Papania	
Monica Manuel	Ed Martin	
Naomi Patton	Tom Graves	
Melanie Renee	Billy Ruble	
Amy Wheeler	Betty Dedeaux	
Harriett Bowles	Anita McKnight-	
Dean Bowles	Hudson	

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Saturday	4:00 PM	✠ Mary Ann Bishop
Sunday	8:00 AM	✠ Jane Coffey
		✠ Kathleen Holley
	10:30 AM	✠ People of the Parish
	4:00 PM	✠ Dr. Harriet Murphy

CHRISTMAS DAY Monday: 11:00

Tuesday:	7:00 AM	✠ Mackie & Carolyn Fayard
Wednesday:	7:00 AM	✠ Kenneth O'Neal
Thursday:	7:00 AM	✠ Anna Schiffner
Friday:	7:00 AM	✠ Kris Allen

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Last Week's Collection:

Identified: (checks) \$3440.00 (cash): \$224.00
Loose: (checks): 3905.00 \$ (cash): \$999.00

ACH Direct Debit: \$1230.00 Egiving: \$601.45

Spanish Collection: \$784.00

Guadalupe: \$806.00

Total: \$11989.45

2nd Collection December 31st SVDP at St. John

Thank you for your generosity!

PARISH LIFE

Las Posadas



Calendar of Activities for December

ACTIVITY	DATE	LOCATION
Christmas	Christmas Eve Mass (24th) 4pm only Christmas Day Mass 11am only (bi-lingual)	Church
New Year's Day Mass	Jan 1—10:00am only	Church
REGULAR EVENTS		
Knights of Columbus	1st & 3rd Wednesday	KC Hall
Legion of Mary	Every Thursday at 10:30 am	Church dining room
OCIA classes	Every Thursday at 6pm	
Grief & Loss Support Group	Tuesday January 2, 2024	Church dining room
Young at Heart	Thursday Jan 18, 12:00 noon	Presentation Hall

4th Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 24

2 Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

Monday, December 25

Christmas Day

Isaiah 52:7-10
Ps 98:1-6
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18

Tuesday, December 26

St. Stephen

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59
Ps 31:3c-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17
Matthew 10:17-22

Wednesday, December 27

St. John, Apostle

1 John 1:1-4
Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12
John 20:1a, 2-8

Thursday, December 28

Holy Innocents, Martyrs

1 John 1:5-2:2
Ps 124:2-5, 7b-8
Matthew 2:13-18

Friday, December 29

1 John 2:3-11
Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6
Luke 2:22-35

Saturday, December 30

1 John 2:12-17
Ps 96:7-10
Luke 2:36-40

Mary began, and he is always trustworthy and dependable. There is nothing to fear, no reason to hold back from fulfilling our true destiny.

Everything that God does is always good, even when his plan

Today's Gospel shows us how the mission of Christ affected the Virgin Mary even before Jesus became human through her.

However, that is not when his salvation plan began. Jesus is God; he has always existed. His salvation plan impacted Mary in the moment of her own conception.

In the Nicene Creed we say that God "came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man." In other words, his Spirit bathed Mary in his pure, holy presence. Even though she could not understand how the Messiah could possibly be conceived within her, by the grace of God's Spirit she could know that God was the one who was asking for it and God was the one who was doing it.

All of us are called by God to carry the presence of Christ and birth him more fully into the world. What are you doing about it? How much are you fulfilling your divine destiny? Remember, he always empowers us to accomplish whatever he asks us to do. God knows what he's doing when he calls us to continue what



for our mission requires a journey through the cross. If we follow Christ, sooner or later we hang with him on the cross, persecuted for our faith.

With this in mind, when he asks us to do something for his kingdom, of course our answer is yes, right?

Why wouldn't it be? Of course we want to cooperate with his plan. Mary shows us that we can say yes to his plan even when we don't understand it nor see how God could possibly do what he says he'll do.

It's normal to feel inadequate, like he cannot fulfill his plan *through us*, because we know we are weak, sinful, and unqualified. Don't trust your feelings about it; trust God!

Reflect & Discuss:

- † When was the last time you said to God, "But how can this be? You want me to do WHAT? I don't understand why!" What were you afraid of?
- † How strong was your trust in God?
- † When God chooses you for a task or responsibility, what helps you move from uncertainty or confusion or reluctance into saying "yes"?
- † When the plans of God don't make sense or they seem unpleasant, how do you overcome your reluctance?

GOSPEL MEDITATION - ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

December 24, 2023

4th Sunday of Advent

Life is troubling. Who among us has not struggled with anxiety and difficulties, sometimes massive ones? I certainly have, as have many of my loved ones. If we do, does this mean that we don't trust the Lord or just need to toughen up?

I don't think so. How encouraging for us anxious and troubled souls to hear Luke describe the Blessed Mother Mary in these words, "**But she was greatly troubled at what was said.**" An archangel has visited her. An inconceivable promise has been made to her. Her life has become wildly unpredictable, perhaps more so than any person before or since. The first point for us: the Lord is with her *precisely when she is troubled*. Her anxiousness and God's presence are not mutually exclusive. Christianity is not about a trance-like robotic indifference. It's about the presence of divine love. Even in — especially in — troubled circumstances.

Our troubled soul can become our greatest treasure. What seems so troubling at first to Mary becomes the best possible thing, Jesus, the Savior and Lord, is now her son. All the difficulties and troubles remain, and yet her movement into the fullness of God is accelerated. What is troubling you right now? This scripture invites us now, this week, to hear the Lord's messenger say to us what he said to Mary, "**Do not be afraid! You have found favor with God.**" — *Father John Muir* ©LPi



Lighting Candles in Church

Question:

Why do Catholics light candles in church?

Answer:

Candles have been part of the Church's worship from the earliest times. In the days before electricity, candles and oil lamps were the ways that people lighted buildings. Even today, we often still depend on candles during power outages, relying on their flickering flames to bring light into the dark.

Like our ancestors, we also light candles on special occasions. Think about a festive family meal or a romantic dinner for two — there will often be candles on the table, special objects for a special event. We light candles on birthday cakes and carry them in processions. We also place candles at makeshift memorials that appear when there has been an accident or act of violence. In these moments, their light casts aside a different kind of darkness — the darkness of grief, fear, and death.

The custom of the early Christians lighting candles and lamps at the tombs of the martyrs gave way to the practice of having candles at Mass, honoring the sacredness of the celebration.

As Christians decorated their worship spaces with statues and icons, they would burn candles in front of sacred images and the relics of the saints, basically "shining a light" on what they held to be sacred. When pilgrims would visit these shrines, they would often bring candles to light before the image or relic. These candles came to be a symbol of the person, and their prayer and the burning these candles came to be understood as an extension and continuation of the prayer that was offered. What began as a practical way to provide light has come to be a symbol of the hopes, desires, loves, losses, fears, and faith of everyday Christians offering their prayers to God and his saints.

Article I

THE PROFESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH CHAPTER I

"I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH"

I. "I Believe in One God"

These are the words with which the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed begins. The confession of God's oneness, which has its roots in the divine revelation of the Old Covenant, is inseparable from the profession of God's existence and is equally fundamental. God is unique; there is only one God: "The Christian faith confesses that God is one in nature, substance, and essence." #200

CATECHISM of the CATHOLIC CHURCH (SECOND EDITION)