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V. *And the Word was made flesh.*
R. *And dwelt among us.*



*Hail Mary,
full of grace.
The Lord is with thee.*

SPONSOR OF THE WEEK: H & H FEED & GRAIN INC.

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ST. MARTIN OF TOURS

5855 East W Avenue, PO BOX 264, Vicksburg, MI 49097
 (269) 649-1629 St. Vincent DePaul Ext 1010
 www.stmartinvicksburg.org

Mass Schedule: Sat 5:30p Sun 8a & 11a Wed & Fri 9a
Reconciliation ever Sat 10-11a
Office Hours: Mon—Fri 9a-4p
Live-Stream Masses: 12/13-8:00a 12/20-9:30a 12/24-6:00p
Pastor: Msgr. Thomas A Martin

Third Sunday of Advent

Reading 1

IS 61:1-2A, 10-11

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vindication by our God. I rejoice heartily in the LORD, in my God is the joy of my soul; for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of justice, like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, like a bride bedecked with her jewels. As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord GOD make justice and praise spring up before all the nations.

Responsorial Psalm

LK 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54

My soul rejoices in my God.

Reading 2

1 THES 5:16-24

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what

is good. Refrain from every kind of evil. May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.

GOSPEL

JN 1:6-8, 19-28

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who are you?" He admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Christ." So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?" He said: "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'make straight the way of the Lord,'" as Isaiah the prophet said." Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?" John answered them, "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." This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

BACKGROUND ON THIS WEEKS READINGS

Have you ever been a witness? This question usually sets up an uneasy feeling because it implies a trial, a court and lawyers and judges. However, this isn't always the case. For example, if we have been to a new restaurant and enjoyed a superb meal, we will want to tell our friends about it. If we have been to the theater and heard a new singer thrill us with his or her talents, we will want to remember that experience and share it with others. The Readings for today are about witnessing the great things that God has done for us.

The First Reading is from the Prophet Isaiah (61:1-11). The prophet is speaking to the people of Israel soon after the end of the Babylonian Exile, (late 6th century BC). The Israelites are struggling to rebuild their lives, their cities and the temple. The Prophet Isaiah is sent by God to give witness and a message of hope to the people that their struggles are not in vain and that they will receive a "year of favor from the Lord." Jesus quotes Isaiah's same words in Luke's Gospel and says, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:21)

The Responsorial Hymn is from Luke (1:46-54). This hymn is not from a Psalm as is the norm. Rather, it is the great Magnificat of the Virgin Mary (also from Luke's gospel). Here Mary is witnessing to the greatness of God and pointing out the favor bestowed on her, a lowly servant. We should consider Mary as a role model of great humility and follow her lead in witnessing to those around us about the wonderful graces and blessings received from God.

The Second Reading is from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians (5:16-24). Here also, Paul is witnessing to the greatness of God and exhorting his flock to lead not just good lives but exemplary lives in preparation for the "coming of the Lord Jesus Christ."

The Gospel Reading is from the beginning of the Gospel of John (1:6-8, 19-28). John the Baptist is the central figure. John the Evangelist positions the Baptist as the chief witness to Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ. This was the Baptist's role and he fulfilled it well. We should not only try to understand John the Baptist's role, but we should also try to imitate it.

Witnessing, or evangelizing, is not easy for most of us, but it is what we are all called to do - some more than others. One of our top responsibilities as Catholic/Christians is to bring someone into the fold who might otherwise be lost. Wow! That is quite a responsibility! Yes, but look at the joy in heaven over one sinner that is saved. So, have you witnessed to someone recently about Jesus and His Church?

INSIDE OUR PARISH

USHERS: New schedules are being prepared. Any changes in availability between Jan 2-Mar 14 please call the parish office to let us know no later than Dec 16. You may also fill out a change of status form that's located in the narthex and drop it in the collection basket.

USHERS NEEDED: We are in a real need of ushers for all of the Masses. Please call the Parish office if you are interested or you may fill out a Call for New Volunteers form that's in the narthex. New volunteers will receive on the job training.

RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS Make a difference. "Every dollar makes a difference in covering our expenses," says a Trappist abbot. Hundreds of U.S. religious communities struggle to provide for aging members because most senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests served for little pay. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious helps these communities bridge the gap, offering support for medications, nursing care, and other necessities. Please be generous.

WORD OF LIFE

"O St. Bakhita, assist all those who are trapped in a state of slavery; Intercede with God on their behalf so that they will be released from their chains of captivity. Those whom man enslaves, let God set free."
USCCB, "Prayer to St. Josephine Bakhita"

*He will baptize you with
the Holy Spirit*

MATTHEW 3:II

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

December 24

4:00p St. Martin
6:00p St. Edward
10:00p St. Martin

December 25

8:00a St. Martin
9:30a St. Edward

December 31

4:00p St. Martin

January 01

9:00a St. Edward



MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK

December 12 5:30p †Tom Kelley
This week the Sanctuary candle burns for †Tom Kelley
December 13 8:00a †Most Reverend James A Murray
11:00a For the people of St. Martin
December 16 7:00p †Most Reverend James A Murray
December 18 7:00p †Dr. James Simonds



PLEASE PRAY FOR: Jody Cunningham, Fr. Frances Faracl, Judy Hansford, Gina Hygema, Betty Lowe, Jennifer Stocki, Leo Swiat. To add names here email bulletin@stmartinvicksburg.org or call the church office at 649-1629.

FOR IMMEDIATE AND CONFIDENTIAL PRAYERS

please call our parish prayer line at 269-303-8016 or email deena.christine@yahoo.com

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Tim McNamara 269-649-1629 ext 1003
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YOUTH MINISTER:

Shannon Sheets 269-649-1629 ext 1001;
ym@stmartinvicksburg.org

Wednesday, December 15: Middle School Night . Please visit our website for more information or email Shannon to be added to the mailing list.



PARISH SUPPORT NOV 29

Envelopes: 62 Weekly Goal: \$6,730
Collection envelopes: \$3,079
Mailed in envelopes: \$4,102
On Line Giving: \$0
Total Collection \$7,181

Scrip can be purchased in the church office M-F 9a-4p
10 families participated in scrip this week adding \$57.88 to our building grounds fund.