

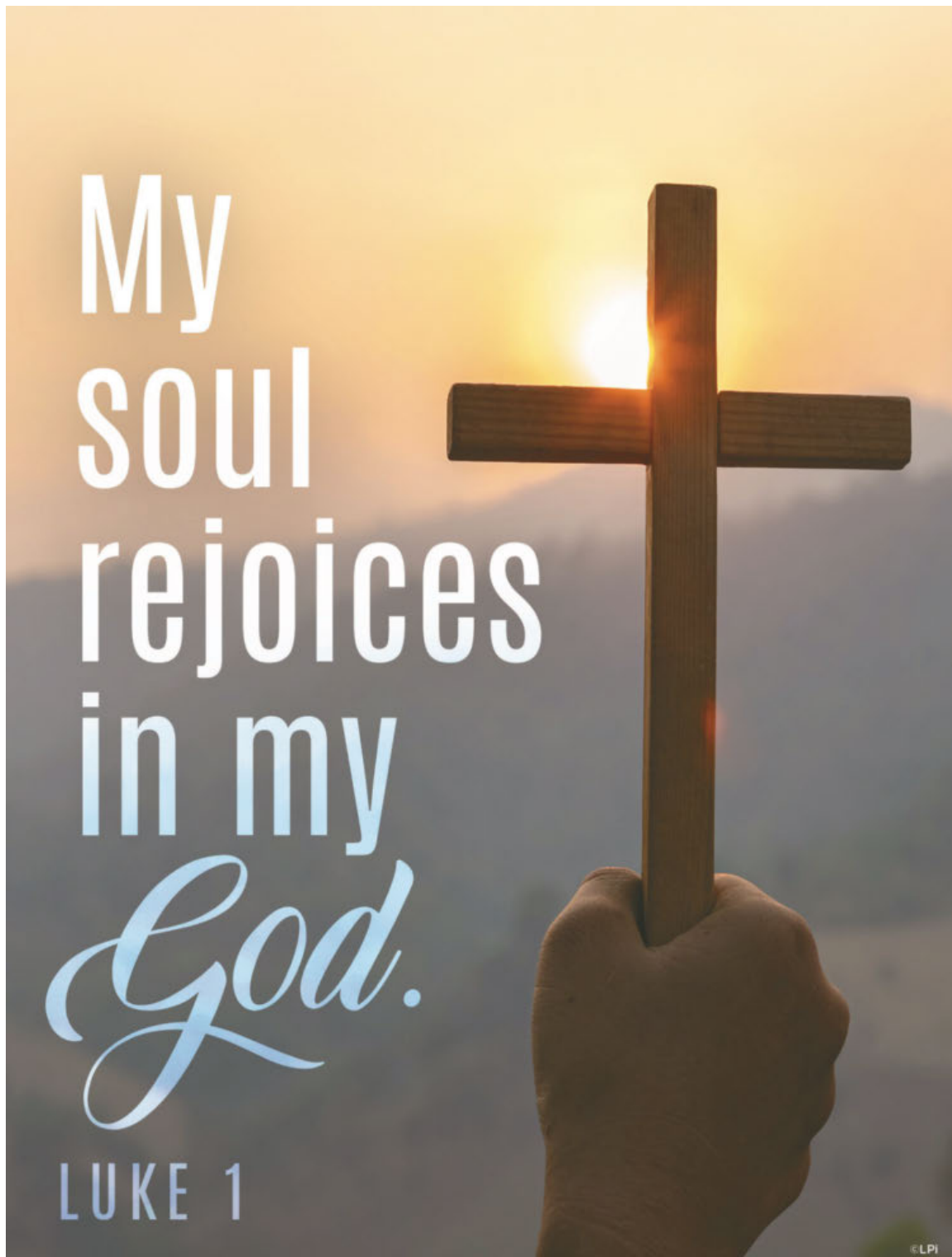


THE CHURCH OF SAINT BONIFACE

817 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
LUNENBURG, MA 01462



DECEMBER 17, 2023



THE LITURGY OF THE DAY

DECEMBER 17, 2023 / THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11 / Thessalonians 5:16-24 / John 1:6-8, 19-28

May we be as bold as John the Baptist, who testified to the light but declared that he himself was not the light. Even if we have the light within us, we did not create that light, we did not produce that light. That light comes above and we merely direct it in the way that we live. May we bear witness to the light by directing it upon the darkneses in our world, producing glimmers of goodness.

Question of the Week: How can I recognize and then bear witness to the light that comes from God?

"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16 - 18)

"Rejoice always" means place your trust in God; He will provide all that you need. "Pray constantly" means prayer should be a running conversation with God throughout the whole day, every day. "Give thanks in all circumstances" means even in bad situations, thank God. Suffering a little bit helps build empathy for others in similar situations and shows our dependence on God.

Family Connection

In family life, we learn to trust other people for protection and care. This experience of trust within the family enables children to believe us when we testify about our faith in Jesus. John the Baptist was believed by those who heard him because he helped them to recognize Jesus in their midst. In our family life, we hope and pray that we lead one another to recognize Jesus' presence in our world.

As you gather as a family, recall that during the Advent season we are invited to pay particular attention to the signs of Jesus' presence in our world. Consider some of the signs of Jesus' presence that you have experienced. During Advent, we remember how John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. Read together today's Gospel, John 1:6-8,19-28. Discuss the signs of Jesus' presence in our world that you named and explain what these signs tell us about God and God's love for us. Pray together that your family will be led to recognize that Jesus is present among us. Read and pray together the psalm for today's Mass, the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)

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Magnificat

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever.

MASS INTENTIONS

DEC 16	4:00	PM	BERNARD J. ROBARGE
DEC 17	8:00	AM	TONY AND NANCY SMITH
DEC 23	4:00	PM	ANGELINA ARRUDA
DEC 28	8:00	AM	PETER JANCITIS
JAN 13	4:00	PM	PETER CHARPENTIER
JAN 21	8:00	AM	THOMAS COTTER
JAN 21	10:30	AM	DANIEL CRONIN
JAN 21	10:30	AM	JOHN MCCLOSKEY
JAN 27	4:00	PM	MICHAEL MARCIL
FEB 4	8:00	AM	WESLEY LAFORD

Prayer of the Rosary

Every Saturday at 3:30 pm in the church, led by members of the St. Boniface Knights of Columbus.

Food Donations for the months of January and February will go to Lions Club Food Pantry in Lunenburg. Donations can be placed in the rear of the church. Thank you for your continued generosity.

Invite someone to Mass this Christmas Season!

So many messages during the Christmas Season are about coming home, being with family and friends. Consider inviting someone with you and your family to Mass this Christmas and experience the joys of the Christmas Season. It could be the greatest gift you give this year!

Tickets now available for 2024 Men's Conference

Tickets are now available for the 2024 Worcester Catholic Men's Conference which will be held on Saturday, March 16, 2024 at Worcester's DCU Center. The early availability is for those who may wish to purchase tickets as Christmas gifts! Tickets are only \$50 for Adults and \$30 for Students and can be purchased online at www.catholicmenworc.com or by calling (978) 537-3016. Speakers include Jim Wahlberg (brother of actors Mark and Donnie Wahlberg), Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers ("The Dynamic Deacon") and other Catholic Thought Leaders. Tickets include Lunch, and the opportunity to participate in Reconciliation, all-day Adoration, and to visit 50 plus relevant vendors, all within the same area of the spacious and ultra professional surroundings of the DCU Center.

Discernment Retreat for Women Spring 2024

The Diocese of Massachusetts have invited Fiat Ministries to host a discernment retreat for women April 5-7, 2024. Single women, age 18-30 who are seeking to do God's will, are invited to attend an upcoming Fiat Ministries Discernment Retreat at Betania II Spiritual Retreat Center. Fiat Ministries cultivates an authentic culture of discernment for young women by inspiring them to say yes to God's call. Religious sisters from various communities assist at the retreat by giving talks, leading small groups, giving their testimonies, and providing a joyful witness of what it means to be a consecrated religious sister. Cost is \$150. fiatministries.org/retreat-worcester/th

STEWARDSHIP

Dec 9/10

Sunday:\$3,191.00
 Maintenance/Fuel: ...\$145.00
 Christmas\$55.00
 Holy Day :.....\$27.00
 Flowers\$20.00
 Religious Retirement:\$532.00
 TOTAL.....\$3,970.00



Christmas Mass Schedule

4th Sunday of Advent
 12/24 9:00 am

Christmas Eve
 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm

Christmas Day 9:00 am

New Year's Day 9:00 am

SAINT BONIFACE CHURCH

817 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, MA 01462
Parish Office: 978-582-4008 email: stbonifaceparish@verizon.net

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Parish Office Hours

Monday / Wednesday / Thursday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

The Celebration of the Eucharist

Sunday: 8:00am and 10:30 am | Saturday Vigil: 4:00 pm
Holy Hour of Adoration: last Wednesday of the month 5:30-6:30 pm
Weekday Masses: 6:30 pm Wednesday | 8:00 am Thursday & Friday

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (Confession) Saturday 3:00 - 3:30 p.m. or by appointment.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM Adults are baptized at the Easter Vigil as part of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Infant and child Baptisms are by arrangement.

FIRST EUCHARIST Preparation begins in grade one and includes classes, retreats, and home instruction. Children receive First Eucharist in grade two.

CONFIRMATION Our Confirmation program begins in the 9th grade; students are confirmed in the spring of the 10th grade. For young adults who have been baptized but not yet confirmed, contact the parish office.

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY It is the policy of the Diocese of Worcester that a couple should contact the parish at least one year prior to the anticipated date of their wedding to allow sufficient time to carry out the various steps of the marriage preparation process. It is important that arrangements be made with the church before plans are made with reception halls, caterers, etc.

ANNOINTING OF THE SICK Please call the parish office 978-582-4008, or email Fr. Omolo at stbonifaceparish@verizon.net or Louise Nadeau at dinalou1@comcast.net to arrange these visits.

PRAYER LINE MINISTRY If you or someone you know needs prayers or if you would like to be a part of this ministry of those who pray for the needs of neighbors, please contact the parish office at 978-582-4008, email stbonifaceparish@verizon.net or contact Louise Nadeau at dinalou1@comcast.net.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL #16480 In Service to One. In Service to all. Members meet in the Parish Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 pm. Any Catholic men over 18 who are interested in joining the Knights should contact Grand Knight Peter Bak (978-403-5119) or Deputy Grand Knight, Thomas Bodkin at tbodkin@bodkinmason.com or (508-363-3422), or email kofc16480@gmail.com.

PARISH STAFF:

Rev. Charles Omolo, Administrator
Heather Sroka, Administrative Assistant
Lucy Marcil, Religious Ed Coordinator (Grades 1-5)
Terry Stramowski, Religious Ed Coordinator (Grades 6-10)
Judit Ernst, Music Ministry
Louise Nadeau, Sacristan
Ministry Schedule
Nina Charpentier, Director, Preschool

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Newcomers to St. Boniface are invited and encouraged to formally register as members of the parish so that we may stay in touch with you with faith formation news, notices of special events, volunteer opportunities, and more.

Registration forms are available at the doors of the church, the parish office, or on our website.

Please note that you must be registered for at least six months before we can issue any verification of your status as a parishioner for godparent or sponsor letters.

TODAYS GOSPEL

Background on the Gospel Reading

This Sunday's Gospel invites us to continue our reflection on the person and mission of John the Baptist. Today we depart from the Gospel of Mark and read a selection from the Gospel of John.

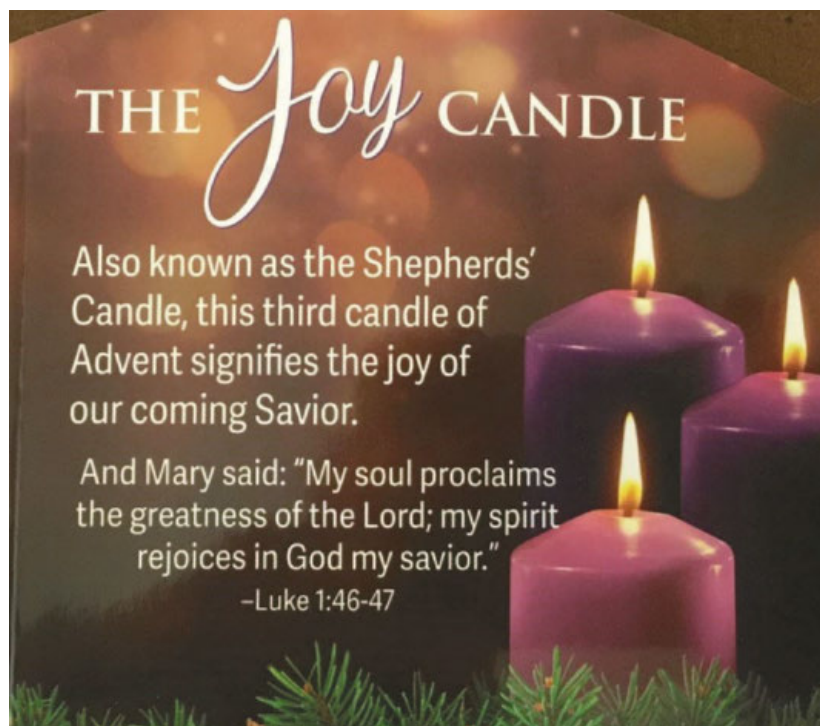
The Gospel for today combines a brief passage from the prologue to John's Gospel with a report about John the Baptist. As in Mark's Gospel, the Gospel of John contains no birth narrative. Instead, John's Gospel begins with a theological reflection that has come to be called the "prologue." This prologue places the story of Jesus in its cosmological framework. It speaks of Jesus' existence with God since the beginning of time. In John's Gospel, Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of the Old Testament and the culmination of the Word, the light that is coming into the world's darkness.

Following this prologue, John reports on the ministry of John the Baptist. We learn about the attention that John the Baptist received from the Jewish authorities. Messengers from the Jewish priests, the Levites and the Pharisees question John about his identity and the meaning of the baptisms that he is performing. John's Gospel uses these questions to establish the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. John the Baptist is not the Messiah, nor is he Elijah or the Prophet. In John's denials, we hear echoes of the kind of messianic expectations that were common in first-century Palestine.

The only affirmative response that John the Baptist gives is when he quotes the prophet Isaiah. Upon answering the next question, John announces that the savior they seek is already among them, but as yet unrecognized. John's response highlights for us an important Advent theme: Jesus has already come into the world as our savior. During Advent, we pray that we will be able to recognize Jesus' presence in our midst. Advent also reminds us that Jesus will come again to fulfill the promise of salvation. We pray that we will continue to be watchful as we anticipate that great day.

The third Sunday of Advent is also called *Gaudete Sunday*. *Gaudete*, a Latin word which means "rejoice," is taken from the entrance antiphon for Sunday's Mass. This theme is echoed in today's second reading from the first Letter to the Thessalonians. It is a reminder that Advent is a season of joy because our salvation is already at hand.

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