

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 4, 2022

Become the Best You Can Be

Our daily activities are filled with one form of preparation or another and we pay attention to things or people that matter most to us. Think about the time and energy we give to preparing the soil for gardening, getting food items ready for cooking, raising children, putting some money aside for unforeseen circumstances, starting a new job or business, or getting ready to celebrate events that are important to us.

Every time we prepare for big events, we usually pay attention to important details so we can identify the things and the people that really matter. And usually, our goal is to get the best possible outcome. But getting things done satisfactorily or successfully may not always depend on our perspiration in preparation. Today, I invite you to reflect deeply on how divine inspiration and grace could bring new insight and meaning to every event and circumstance of your life so that you may become the best you can be.

John the Baptist, “A voice of one crying out in the desert, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths,’ was inspired and favored to announce what really mattered: the imminent coming of the one “mightier than I...[who]... will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” John proclaimed the arrival of the Sovereignty of God and challenged the religious leaders of his time to examine their religious assumptions and to think differently about their claims and beliefs so that they could be the best they could.

John declared, “the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals.” The one who will manifest the reign of God and the Sovereignty of God, was all that mattered to John the Baptist. Here are some questions to ponder as you seek to become the best you can be: What motivates you to devote your life or attention to one thing rather than the other? How do you react to the challenge to think differently about anything you hold in high esteem or to re-examine whatever you consider to be your values? And how can you be the best at what you do and who you are?

To become the best we can be, the message of John the Baptist challenges us to change our ways or behavior, to upscale our priorities, and to refrain from presumptuous reliance on self-righteousness. “Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father’” (Matt 3:8-9). Good fruit is evidence of repentance. It means that our Christian claims or values must show forth in “the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22-23).

We all have a longing or a desire to be satisfied; some good, some not so good. We need good models and best practices to follow, both in our secular and spiritual life. If there is no model of repentance, good fruit, uprightness in your family, if there is no beacon of life or love, goodness or kindness, commitment or resilience, accountability, or stewardship around you, prepare to be one by producing good fruit as evidence of repentance and oneness with Jesus! Learn from Jesus Christ, the perfect model and exemplar of all virtues.

We may not be free from all distractions, but things begin to change when we give our hearts and mind to Jesus. Our journey begins to be peaceful and fruitful when we reflect and act on God’s word or make Jesus Christ the object of our preparation and celebration. Surrender your life to the “one mightier than I” and let the Lord teach you how to know him. The “knowledge of the Lord [must fill your heart] as water covers the sea.”

The Body of Christ, the Church, must be filled with the knowledge, wisdom, and fear of the Lord. Jesus comes to us with grace and wisdom to make us be the best we can. So, prepare to encounter him in a new and deeper way. John the Baptist challenges us to examine our conscience so we may be humble and contrite of heart.

To be the best we can, we need the willingness and the commitment to learn and to practice what we learn. So put the message of John the Baptist into practice. Give yourself away: your time, presence, energy, mind, heart, soul, and spirit, to Jesus Christ, the “mightier than I.” Let him be your model. The Lord invites you and me this Advent to “Come, follow me!” Come to him with good fruit of repentance and songs of praise. If you’re unwilling, Jesus says, “I tell you, if they keep silent, the stones will cry out” (Lk 19:40)!

In Christ, all elements of creation shall become the best they can be. Every beast, wild and tame shall be in harmony with one another, and every natural and human hostility will be reduced to peace and serenity when the Lord comes in majesty.

God Bless You!

Fr. Godwin Akpan, S.S.J., Pastor

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Tithes and Offerings November 27, 2022 \$5,153.00

Mass Intentions for...

Saturday, December 3, 2022

5:15 p.m. Soul of Lillian White

Sunday, December 4, 2022

8:00 a.m. Intention of all Parishioners

10:00 a.m. Souls of Elaine Christophe, Milton Keys and the Intention of Cynthia Richardson

Monday, December 5, 2022

8:00 a.m. Intention of Gregory Williams

Sunday, December 11, 2022

8:00 a.m. Souls of the Hithe Family and Soul of Karen Lee

10:00 a.m. Intention of all Parishioners

Daily Scripture Readings

Sunday Is 11:1-10, Ps 72:1-17, Mt 3:1-12

Monday Is 35:1-10, Lk 5:17-26

Tuesday Is 40:1-11, Mt 18:12-14

Wednesday Is 40:25-31, Mt 11:28-30

Thursday Gn 3:9-20, Lk 1:26-38

Friday Is 48:17-19, Mt 11:16-19

Saturday Sir 48:1-11, Mt 17:9a-13

Sunday Is 35:1-10, Ps 146:6-10, Mt 11:2-11

Christmas Season Celebration

Join us to celebrate the Christmas Season Sunday, December 11, 2022 after Mass in the Msgr. Martini Hall. Coffee, donuts, baked goodies and more will be available.

Thank you

The beautiful flowers on the altar this week were donated by *Cynthia Richardson* in honor of **Elaine Christophe, Milton Keys and Cynthia Richardson**. If you would like to donate flowers, please call the rectory for more details.

Return to Bible Study

Mondays at 7:00 PM

Bible study returns as we start our preparation for the coming of Our Savior Jesus Christ.

Bring your Bible, a friend, or a family member.

ALL ARE WELCOME.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

We will celebrate the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick within Mass on Wednesday, **December 21, 2022 at 10:30 AM**. **Jesus came to heal the whole person, body, and soul.** You are invited to participate!

Pray for the Sick

Jon Adams, Glenda Alexander, Brian Argusta, Baby Caroline, Eileen Bacon, Gerald Bill, Vivian Burgess, Brownie Cain, Christopher Chestnut, Sister Ann Paul Clare, Jo Ann Collins, Joseph Colvin, Cynthia Cyrus, Juanita Davis, Carolyn Didney, Beverly Colvin-Dorsey, Bobby Eason, Mark Eason, Cynthia Fortier, Sherie Frierson-Chenier, Avis Gibbs, Jennifer Hallman, Sister Marianna Halsmer, Barbara Harris, Ella Hartley, Eddie Hiley, Barbara J. Jones, Madeline Jones, Marjorie Jones, Briana Katz, Barbara Lagarde, Irwin Lagarde, Christian Latigue, Mercedes LeBlanc, Vylfred Manor, Grant McArn, Anna Moran, Dorothy Okoye, Carol Powell, Sally Price, Sally Prescod, Wiley Pugh, Kayla Samuel, Vanessa Samuels, Dana Semien, Dudley Semien, Mike Simon, Charlize Taylor, Leila Thomas, Iris Turner, Shane Walters, Mabel Walton, William Warrior, Alice Williams, Jacqueline Williams and Peggy Wilson.

Transfiguration Gospel Choir CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Sunday, December 18, 2022 at 6PM

Tickets are \$15 Adults and \$7 Children

SPECIAL GUEST

Fr. Godwin Akpan, S.S.J



Did you Know?

California act protects children online The California Age-Appropriate Design Code Act, which was signed into law in September, requires companies to assess potential harm in how they use data from children (defined as any user under 18) in new services or features, and to enact plans to reduce risk. Companies are also banned from using minors' information in "materially detrimental" ways, such as routing searches for weight loss to photos of supermodels, and from collecting, sharing, or selling a minor's personal information by default. For more information about this new law, read "California takes child protection seriously with new online law" on [AngelusNews.com](https://www.angelusnews.com).

Sacred Heart Retreat

Ladies, if you need a quiet, prayerful space in your life, the Sacred Heart Retreat House may be for you. You can choose March 31-April 2, 2023 or April 14-16, 2023 for a silent retreat. Register online at www.sacredheartretreathouse.com. Call Sonya Robertson at 323.574.4846 if you have any questions or need assistance with the online process.

RCIA

Come, learn or renew your Catholic faith...

Tuesday, December 6 "To Jesus through Mary" by Fr. Godwin Akpan, SSJ at Holy Name of Jesus (*Acacia Center*), 1955 W. Jefferson in Los Angeles from 7:00 PM.

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

(A Holy Day of Obligation)

Thursday, December 8, 2022 Mass at 8:00 AM