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Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church



8968 Highway 23, Belle Chasse, LA 70037 + 504-394-0314 + Fax: 504-394-0376

Web: www.olphbc.org + Email: churchoffice@olphbc.org

OFFICE HOURS—Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
Please call between these times for routine parish business.

PASTORAL TEAM

Rev. Kyle V. Dave, *Pastor*
kdave@arch-no.org

Rev. William F. Maestri,
Ministry of Sacraments & Education

George "Ed" Merritt, Jr., *Deacon*
emerritt@arch-no.org

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Education and Adult Formation*
cre@olphbc.org

Angel Boyd, *Receptionist*

Debbie Fagnano, *Director of Music Ministry*

TJ Lejeune & Kenneth Pouwels,
Maintenance Supervisors

OLPH SCHOOL

8970 Highway 23 + 504-394-0757

PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION

8968 Highway 23 + 504-394-0314

K.C. HALL

9016 Highway 23, Belle Chasse, LA 70037

MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday 7:30 a.m. & Vigil 4:00 p.m.
Sunday 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Monday 7:30 a.m.
Tuesday 7:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday 8:30 a.m. During the school year
(7:30 a.m. when school is not
in session)
Thursday 7:30 a.m.
Friday 7:30 a.m.
First Friday Adoration: 8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.
Holy Days: Consult the bulletin.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Tuesday 5:30 p.m.—6:15 p.m.
Saturday 2:30 p.m.—3:30 p.m. or by appointment.

SACRAMENT OF THE SICK (ANointing)

By appointment only

MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, are a living and growing Catholic community of faith, striving to follow and serve Christ. We are an evangelizing community, and we welcome others to fullness of life in Christ. With Mary we say "Yes" to God's call to pray together, worship consciously, and serve joyfully.

To visit our
church website
scan the QR
code below:



Be vigilant at all times...
Lk 21:36

HOPE



NEW PARISHIONERS

We welcome you to a very friendly and enthusiastic community. Please fill out the information in the Binder on the Welcome Table located in the back of church or register at the Church Office. A Census Form can also be found on our website at www.olphbc.org.

Sacraments



SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM: Baptisms are usually celebrated on the fourth Sunday of the month during the 10:30 a.m. Mass. Due to demand, some months may be eliminated or another day or time may be chosen by the family if it is available on the church schedule of events." To begin the process, parents are encouraged to go to our website at www.olphbc.org to access the forms under Sacraments and return the forms by email or drop off at the Church Office. Parents and godparents are required to attend a seminar prior to the Baptism. The Baptismal Seminar is held on the third Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Day Chapel. If you need more information or have questions, call the Rectory at (504) 394-0314 or email cre@olphbc.org.

SACRAMENT OF FIRST COMMUNION: First Eucharist is celebrated the first Saturday of May for students in the 2nd grade or above. Children older than 2nd grade will be prepared on individual situations. The Sacrament of Reconciliation must be celebrated prior to Communion.

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION: Confirmation is celebrated in the Fall of 11th grade. Candidates who attend Catholic high school or are enrolled in the High School of Religion program come together for Sacramental preparation. All candidates are asked to pre-register in their freshmen year and no later than December of their 10th grade year. Information and registration can be found on our website: www.olphbc.org.

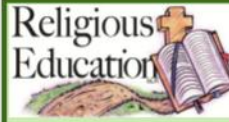
SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE: Contact the Church Office at least nine months prior to the planned date. No other arrangements should be made before contacting the Church Office.

For more information on any of our Sacraments, contact the Church Office or email cre@olphbc.org.



VISITATION OF THE SICK: Inform the Church Office when someone is sick, shut-in or hospitalized and unable to attend Mass.

FUNERALS: Inform the Church Office as soon as possible when someone in the family dies, preferably before contacting the funeral home.



Religious Education

The mission of OLPH's Religious Education program is to bring the "Good News" of God's love to all children and their families and to call them to commit their lives to Christ. Religious Education is available for children in Kindergarten through adults. We encourage parents to be parishioners of OLPH when registering students for Religious Education classes. Census forms can be obtained from the Parish Office during regular business hours, on the Welcome Table located in the back of church or you can register online. Call the Church Office at (504) 394-0314, or email cre@olphbc.org for more information.

SUNDAY LITURGY OF THE WORD: Children in grades K-2nd are invited with a catechist during 10:30 a.m. Mass to the Day Chapel for the Liturgy of the Word for Children (September-May). A summary of the readings of the day is discussed on their level.

PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION: Our PSR program is divided in two parts. Family Faith Formation is the "academic" part with the textbook discussed at home as a family. Our Encountering Engaging Events are a chance to come together as a community to worship together, do crafts, or engage in traditional events like our Nativity Play and Living Way of the Cross.

HIGH SCHOOL OF RELIGION: Students in 9th through 12th grade not attending a Catholic High School are offered Faith Formation with academics at home, working at their own pace, but also some time to get together to discuss what they have learned with their peers about three times a year. It is intended to be an informal study with honest Catholic answers.

RCIA: Are you or someone you know interested in becoming Catholic or completing Sacraments? Please join our RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults). We have a Year-Round RCIA process that you can enter into whenever you are ready. This is for you if you have never been baptized, if you have been baptized into another denomination and now want to become Catholic, or if you are an adult Catholic but have never been confirmed. Sessions will be held in person with day and time to be adjusted to personal schedules. For additional information and to register, contact the Church Office or email cre@olphbc.org.

Archdiocese of New Orleans Safe Environment— Refer to the Web Site: <http://www.nolacatholic.org/safe-environment> for policies and procedures concerning safe environment and child protection.

Scripture Readings & Events this Week

Saturday, November 30, Feast of Saint Andrew, Apostle; Rom 10:9-18; Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11; Mt 4:18-22

Daily Mass, Church—7:30 a.m. (Fr. M)
Confessions, Church—2:30 p.m.—3:30 p.m.
Vigil Mass, Church—4:00 p.m. (Fr. M)
2nd Collection—Building & Maintenance Fund

Sunday, December 1, First Sunday of Advent; Jer 33:14-16; Ps 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14; 1 Thes 3:12-4:2; Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

Masses, Church—8:00 a.m. (Fr. K) & 10:30 a.m. (Fr. K)
Children's Dismissal—10:30 a.m. Mass
2nd Collection—Building & Maintenance Fund

Monday, December 2, Is 2:1-5; Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9; Mt 8:5-11

Daily Mass, Church—7:30 a.m. (Fr. M)
Church Office Hours—9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. or by Appointment
Altar Society, KC Hall—6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 3, Memorial of Saint Francis Xavier, Priest; Is 11:1-10; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Lk 10:21-24

Daily Mass, Church—7:30 a.m. (Fr. M)
Church Office Hours—9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. or by Appointment
Confessions, Church—5:30 p.m.—6:15 p.m.
Novena—Mother of Perpetual Help, Church—6:50 p.m.
Daily Mass, Church—7:00 p.m. (Fr. K)

Wednesday, December 4, Is 25:6-10a; Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Mt 15:29-37

Daily Mass, Church—8:30 a.m. (Fr. K)
Church Office Hours—9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. or by Appointment

Thursday, December 5, Is 26:1-6; Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a; Mt 7:21, 24-27

Daily Mass, Church—7:30 a.m. (Fr. K)
Church Office Hours—9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. or by Appointment
Catholicism Class, KC Hall—7:00 p.m. (Fr. M)
Choir Rehearsal, Church—7:00 p.m.

Friday, December 6, Is 29:17-24; Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14; Mt 9:27-31

Daily Mass, Church—7:30 a.m. (Fr. M)
1st Friday Adoration, Day Chapel—8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.
Church Office Hours—9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. or by Appointment
Riverbend Mass—10:00 a.m.

Saturday, December 7, Memorial of Saint Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church; Is 30:19-21, 23-26; Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6; Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8

Daily Mass, Church—7:30 a.m. (Fr. M)
Confessions, Church—2:30 p.m.—3:30 p.m.
Vigil Mass, Church—4:00 p.m. (Fr. K)
2nd Collection—Retirement Fund for Religious Appeal

Sunday, December 8, Second Sunday of Advent

Masses, Church—8:00 a.m. (Fr. K) & 10:30 a.m. (Fr. M)
Children's Dismissal—10:30 a.m. Mass
2nd Collection—Retirement Fund for Religious Appeal

Mass Intentions

11/30, Saturday, 4:00 p.m.— For the Parishioners

12/1, Sunday, 8:00 a.m.— Cathy Madere, Sally Allan, Kenneth Pouwels, Sr., Patsy & Ray "Pete" Ansardi, Sanders & Dobard Families, Lynwell Wilson

12/1, Sunday, 10:30 a.m.— P.G. Stockstill, Theresa L. Bossier, Rosebud L. Dumesnil, Seth David Chedville, Blaze St. Marie, Francis Gainey, Eva Vujnovich, Carolyn Neilsen, Helen Abadie Morris, Eugene D. Fagnano, Johnnie Pennison, Amanda Luneau, Bill Serpas, Allyson Kirby, Dr. James Brown, Alicia Marie DiMiceli, Sgt. Peter Foltz

12/2, Monday, 7:30 a.m.— For the intentions of the Priest

12/3, Tuesday, 7:30 a.m.— For the intentions of the Priest

12/3, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.— Blaze St. Marie

12/4, Wednesday, 8:30 a.m.— Emmette E. Dumesnil, Sr.

12/5, Thursday, 7:30 a.m.— Wheldon Boyd, Sr.

12/6, Friday, 7:30 a.m.— For the intentions of the Priest

12/7, Saturday, 7:30 a.m.— For the intentions of the Priest

12/7, Saturday, 4:00 p.m.— Jerry Pignuolo, Eric Hansen, Larry Avist, Sr., Beverly Hebert, Ross Smith, Francis Gainey, Joyce Ehrhard, Patricia Caylor Williams, for the intentions of Cindy Darce', Edna & Eugene Fagnano, Bernadette Duet

12/8, Sunday, 8:00 a.m.— For the Parishioners

12/8, Sunday, 10:30 a.m.— Joyce Ehrhard, Vincent & Adrina Ladner, Blaze St. Marie, Barbara Jursich, Eva Vujnovich, Evelyn Mistich, Elaine Shelley, Helen Abadie Morris, Eugene D. Fagnano, Louise & Joseph Johnson, Allyson Kirby, Dr. James Brown, Alicia Marie DiMiceli, Sgt. Peter Foltz



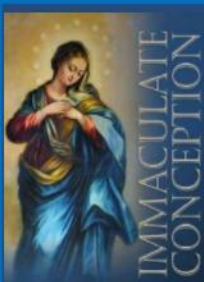
OLPH St. Vincent de Paul Society

If you didn't get an item from the recent reverse collection for the holiday baskets, but would still like to donate, please bring any of the following items

to Church and place in the bin in the back of Church:

Jelly	Gravy	Sugar
Vienna Sausage	Stuffing	Syrup
Canned Peas	Mac & Cheese	Cereal
Canned Yams	Apple Sauce	Cookies
Canned Red Beans	Pancake Mix	Grits
Canned Fruit	Peanut Butter	Rice
Cranberry Sauce	Instant Potatoes	Dry Milk

As always, thanks for your generosity!



Because December 8, 2024 falls on the Second Sunday of Advent, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is transferred to Monday, December 9. All Masses celebrated on Sunday, December 8th are to be the Mass of the Second Sunday of Advent. All Masses on Monday, December 9 are to be for the Immaculate Conception which is a Holy Day of Obligation and will be celebrated at 7:30 a.m. (Day Chapel), 8:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

"There will be signs
in the sun, the moon,
and the stars,
and on earth nations
will be in dismay..."



OLPH School News



OLPH CHRISTMAS MARKET AND CELEBRATION

Craft and food vendors!
Donuts with Santa, Mrs. Claus, and the Grinch! Photography available!
Kids' "Secret Shopping" market
Craft making and more!
(Santa/Mrs. Claus only from 9-11)

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Sunday, 12/15/2024
OLPH School, Belle Chasse

MARKET IS OPEN TO EVERYONE!
SANTA'S VILLAGE \$10/CHILD

Don't forget 50/50 raffle tickets too!

Still interested in being a vendor? Email
sam.bordelon@gmail.com.

The poster features festive illustrations including a bee, holly leaves, a Santa hat, a Grinch, and a candy cane.



FRIDAY DANCE PARTY!



Some of our lucky winners who found a *Golden Ticket*! Winners received a delicious 1-pound bar of World's Finest Chocolate!




OPEN HOUSE



Discover what makes OLPH so special! We invite prospective families to tour and experience our vibrant school community firsthand. From our nurturing nursery programs to the engaging curriculum and activities for students through 7th grade, our school provides a warm and welcoming environment focused on academic growth, character development, and faith-based learning. See our classrooms in action, meet our dedicated teachers, and get a glimpse of the unique opportunities we offer. Come see how we can support your child's journey – we can't wait to meet you!

DECEMBER 13
9 am to 11 am

 school.olphbc.org

 504-394-0757



OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

First Sunday

Stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.

Matthew 24:42



Today is the first Sunday of Advent, which is also the first Sunday of the 2025 Liturgical Year. The Advent season includes the four Sundays that precede Christmas. Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of the Lord. In this season, we recall two central elements of our faith: the final coming of the Lord in glory and the incarnation of the Lord in the birth of Jesus. The key themes of the Advent season are watchful waiting, preparation, and justice.

In this new liturgical year, the Gospel of Luke will be the primary Gospel proclaimed (Lectionary Cycle

C). Today's Gospel is taken from the last chapter before the passion narrative in which Jesus is teaching in the Temple. We hear Jesus speak to his disciples about the need for vigilance and prayer as they wait for the coming of the Son of Man in glory. This passage marks the conclusion of a lengthy dialogue in which Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, warns about the persecution and tribulations to follow, and identifies the signs that will signal the coming of the Son of Man in glory.

The community for whom Luke wrote his Gospel may have believed that they were already experiencing some of the events Jesus described. Most scholars believe that Luke's Gospel was written after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. At the time, many Christians interpreted this event as an indication that Jesus' second coming was near.

Though Jesus predicts a time of destruction and fear, Jesus indicates that others will be frightened; Jesus' disciples are not to fear, but are to stand tall. Yet Jesus does not promise deliverance from anxiety or tribulations. He encourages his disciples to pray for strength. The early Christian communities did not find consolation in the promise of a utopia, nor should we. Instead, we find in our Christian faith the means by which we witness to God's unfailing love for us in all circumstances.

Jesus' predictions about the end times may sound dire, but in the next paragraph Luke tells us that people woke early to listen to Jesus' teaching in the Temple area. In his person and in his message, those who heard Jesus found strength and consolation. Like the first Christians, we may encounter events and circumstances that could lead us to despair. Through prayer, however, we find strength and consolation in Jesus' words and in his continuing presence with us to endure all things and to witness to the action of God in our world.

<https://s3staging.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/first-sunday-of-advent-cycle-c-sunday-connection/>



OLPH Angel Tree Program

Now through **December 22nd** you are invited to participate in the Angel Tree Program **benefitting Padua House**, which is run by Catholic Charities. All are residents of Plaquemines Parish.

Simply select one or more angels found on the tree as you walk into the church. Gifts found on the back of the angels are for essentials that are needed to be replenished each year. Please return your unwrapped gift and place it in one of the boxes found under the tree. You are welcome to then select more angels, if you would like. Thanks to the OLPH school students for providing the colorful angels. Also, thanks in advance for your generosity.



Christmas Flowers

We are accepting donations toward the Christmas Flowers. Donation envelopes are available on the information table. Please write clearly on the envelope so that the memorial may be published.



CHRISTMAS TREES

If anyone is interested in donating one of the Christmas Trees used in church in memory of a loved one, please contact the Church Office at 504-394-0314.

The memorials will be published in the bulletin.



2024 CHRISTMAS CANDLES

To assist with the expense of 12 Christmas Candles used at our 10 p.m. Christmas Candlelight Mass, we are accepting donations of **\$15 per candle** (this covers cost plus shipping expense) in memory of a deceased loved one. The memorials will be published in the bulletin. The candle will be labeled with your intention and you may take your candle after the 10 p.m. Mass.

If anyone is interested, please contact the Church Office at 504-394-0314.

Next Sunday is the Second Sunday of Advent

Baruch 5:1-9. Jerusalem—God will show your splendor.

Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11. Show yourselves sinless and without blame in the day of Christ.

Luke 3:1-6. All mankind shall see the salvation of God.



The **Advent wreath** is a familiar symbol of the Advent and Christmas season. Traditionally, the Advent wreath is a circle of evergreen branches and is often decorated with berries and pinecones. Both the evergreen branches and the circular shape symbolize the passing of time and eternal life. The Advent Wreath traditionally holds four candles (three purple and one pink) which are lit, one at a time, on each of the four Sundays of the Advent season. Each candle represents 1,000 years. Added together, the four candles symbolize the 4,000 years that humanity waited for the world's Savior—from Adam and Eve to Jesus, whose birth was foretold in the Old Testament. The shape of the wreath, with no beginning or end, reflects the complete and endless love that Jesus has for us. During the Advent season, we eagerly anticipate his coming and the promise of eternal life in heaven with him.

The First Week of Advent: December 1, 2024

Candle Name: the Prophecy Candle

The First Week of Advent Represents: Hope (reminding us that Jesus is coming)

Candle Color: Purple

Purple is the primary color associated with Advent. Within the Catholic Church it symbolizes penance, preparation, and sacrifice. During the first week of Advent we remember the Old Testament prophets who foretold of Jesus' coming with hope and anticipation. <https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/advent>

Sponsor of the Week:

Look to the back now! Look and remember to support these businesses when you need a product or service. Also, tell them "thank you" for their interest in Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

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****NEW BOOK REPLACES HEAR OUR PRAYER BOOK****

On December 1, 2024, which is the first Sunday of Advent, we will begin using a different book for Prayer Intentions since the red "Hear Our Prayer" book has been discontinued. The new blue book is called "Lord, Have Mercy" and will

be displayed on the same table as the Hear Our Prayer book in the back of church. Like the old book, the new book is to record the petitions and prayer requests for the sick, the homebound, the suffering, the local and universal Church, the needs of the world, and all who need prayer. As previously done, the prayers contained in the new Lord, Have Mercy Book will also be remembered in the Prayers of the Faithful during Sunday or weekday Masses.



Pope Francis' Prayer Intentions for 2024

December—For Pilgrims of Hope

We pray that this Jubilee Year strengthen our faith, helping us to recognize the Risen Christ in our daily lives, and that it may transform us into pilgrims of Christian hope.



The Sanctuary Light by the tabernacle burns to remind us of the sacramental presence of Jesus Christ. It is a mark of honor to remind the faithful of the presence of Christ, and is a profession of their love and affection.

The Sanctuary Light will burn this week in loving memory of: **Edna & Eugene Fagnano**, requested by Dolly Roy.

If you would like to have the Sanctuary Light burn in memory of a loved one, call the Church Office. The donation for the Sanctuary Light is \$10.

Stewardship
All things are possible with God



Devote Time Share Talent



Give Treasure A way of life

**Church Financials
Fiscal Year Ending
June 30, 2024**

Total Income	\$ 749,209
Total Expense	\$ 707,120
Net Gain/(Loss)	\$ 42,089

Thank you to our parish family members who faithfully support our parish. May God bless you for your generosity!

Online Giving Is Available on Our Website at www.olphbc.org (click on Give Online), or simply scan the QR code with your phone. You can easily create your donation account online and make changes at any time.



First Sunday of Advent



Straight Talk by: **Father William Maestri** **Advent: God's Divine Comedy**

As a way into the holy season of Advent, please consider the following:

It is done. Once again the Fire has penetrated the earth. Not with the sudden crash of thunderbolt, Riving the mountain tops: Does the Master break down doors to enter his own home? Without earthquake, or thunderclap: The flame has lit up the whole world from within. (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), from *Hymn of the Universe*)

Before proceeding further, a word of clarification about the title of this column. It may seem at first blush to be irreverent, if not sacrilegious. Such is NOT the case. For the Bible and the Christian Story are a play in three acts: Creation, Redemption, and the Afterlife. The subplot of the play, which joins the three acts into a whole, is COMEDY rightly understood. That is, the word 'comedy' has its roots in the Greek, "koma" as in sleep, not a state of unconsciousness, but a condition of dreaming in which the unexpected, mysterious, and impossible are possible. The visionary is one who wakes up and dreams! The three acts of God's Divine Comedy challenge the ways in which we believe God should act and the world should work. The season of Advent is the middle act which reverences MEMORY (has Been) while living forward in HOPE (will be).

Advent, thick in the fabric of time, requires a looking back to Eden and the tragic loss of Original Innocence and the expulsion from paradise (comedy and tragedy are sides of the one human drama). However, banishment does NOT mean abandonment. The God, one and true, shocks all expectations. God promises that sin will not have the last word. A new phase will commence, namely, the pledge of a Redeemer who will heal the breach between God, humanity, and all creation (Gen 3:15/ protoevangelium- the good news that "where sin abounded, grace did much more" (Rom 5:20-21)). How this will happen is beyond our great expectations. (1Cor 2:9).

God's Divine Comedy unfolds east of Eden down the long road of history. Specifically, the love-comedy between God and Israel. This part of Act I, involves the good (Noah, Gen 7:1; Abraham, Gen 12:1), the bad (Nebuchadnezzar and the destruction of the Temple in 597 BC), and the ugly (Jezebel, whose wickedness disfigured her soul by persecuting the prophets and instituting the worship of Ba'al, 1Kgs 16:2 - 2Kgs 9). For "comic relief", God raises up Jonah as a most successful prophet in terms of conversion of the sinful (Jn 3:6-10). However, Jonah becomes God's reluctant prophet to the point that he prays, "Lord, please take my life...for it is better for me to die than to live." (Jon 4:3). Jonah's success is his torment! Jonah doesn't want repentance, but destruction, not mercy, but damnation. God will have none of Jonah's "comical" histrionics. Finally, the Divine Comedy displays a delicious sense of irony. God raises up the Persian King Cyrus who, after defeating the Babylonians, allows for the return of the exiles to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple (2Chron 36:22): "The Lord...has...charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem.... All among you...who belong to his people, may their God be with them, let them go up." (2Chron 36:23).

The passage from Act I into Act II is expressed by St. Paul who writes: "...when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption." (Gal 4:4-7). Fast forward thirty-three years to Golgotha. We are informed that on or about three o'clock, "Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last." (Mk 15:37). A centurion guard was moved to proclaim, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (Mk 15:39). It is "reasonable" to conclude - end of the Divine Comedy. No need for Act III.

However, there will be an Act III. After a three day interlude in the tomb (bodily), an angel announces: "He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said." (Mt 28:6). Furthermore, the two women are to go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee, there you will see him.'" (Mt 28:7). When Jesus meets the women on their way he says, "Do not be afraid." (Mt 28:10). These women carry the message of the Resurrection and pass it on to His "disciples". Salvation history, from Eden to the empty tomb, is God's Divine Comedy. The Third Act is a commencement, a fulfillment and a whole new, unimaginable way of human existence and the meaning of history. The curtain has NOT been drawn. The Divine Comedy continues until He comes again. The Church, the community of disciples in each age, is an Advent Church. Saint John Paul II preached the following: "...we must understand that our whole life should be an 'advent', in vigilant expectation of Christ's final coming...we must learn to recognize his presence in the events of daily life. Advent is then a period of intense training that directs us decisively to the One who has already come, who will come and who continuously comes." (December 18, 2002).

May we be that Advent people who proclaim and live the Great Mystery of Faith within the Divine Comedy: "Christ has died. Christ is Risen. Christ WILL COME AGAIN."

One thing is clear: Satan's "victory lap" around Eden is short lived. For with the Crib, Cross, and empty Easter Tomb, the joke is on the Evil One. It is God who enjoys the last laugh. In the words of Shakespeare: "Many a true word hath been spoken in jest." (*King Lear*, 1606). Can WE enjoy God's Divine Comedy? Can WE laugh with God?



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