

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2017

Mass Intentions

Sunday, December 24th

5 P.M. – Sweet Home – Presider's Intention
10 P.M. – Sweet Home – Presider's Intention

Monday, December 25th

9 A.M. – Koerth – Presider's Intention

Saturday, December 30th

5 P.M. – Sweet Home – Marcus Janak

Sunday, December 31st

7 A.M. – Sweet Home – Hubert Janak
9 A.M. – Koerth – Victor & Cecilia Bujnoch

Sanctuary Candle Intention

The Sanctuary Candle will burn this week in memory of Ben Kopecky.

This Sunday's Holy Scriptures

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Rm 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38

Your Gift to God: December 17th

Sweet Home	\$1,251
Online Giving	\$520
Building Fund	\$10
DSA	\$15
Koerth	\$755
Building Fund	\$2,010

May God reward your generosity!

Celebrate the Lord's Abundant Mercy

Each Saturday the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance/Confession) is available from 4:00 P.M. to 4:40 P.M. in the Sweet Home confessional.

Office Christmas Schedule

The Pastoral Center will be closed until 8:00 A.M. on Tuesday, January 2nd.

Christmas Blessings!

May this unfolding season of joy and love be filled with graces for each of you. We are so appreciative of the many acts of kindness and support we have received particularly as we have all prepared together on our Advent journey. May you and your loved ones receive choice blessings from the humble Christ-child who brings the world hope and redemption!

Fr. Jacob and Fr. Matthew

Feast of Christmas Mass Schedule

Sweet Home - December 24th – 5:00 P.M.
10:00 P.M.

Koerth - December 25th – 9:00 A.M.

Feast of Mary, Mother of God

The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, January 1st, is not a holy day of obligation in the United States in 2018 since the feast falls on a Monday. There will be a Vigil Mass for the feast day as follows:

Sunday, December 31st – 5:00 P.M.

Stayed Tuned for Continuous Christmas Music – 91.5 FM

Listen to continuous Christmas music beginning December 21st thru December 25 by tuning in to KHCB 91.5 FM radio.

Faith Formation

CCD/Faith Formation classes will resume **Wednesday, January 3rd** at 6:30 P.M.

Merry Christmas!

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

December 31, 2017

Mass Intentions

Sunday, December 31st

5 P.M. – Sweet Home – World Peace

Saturday, January 6th

5 P.M. – Sweet Home – Deceased Members of
the Albert & Helen Janak Family

Sunday, January 7th

7 A.M. – Sweet Home – Otto, Lydia &
Toni Havel

9 A.M. – Koerth – Edward Hermes

Sanctuary Candle Intention

The Sanctuary Candle will burn this week for peace throughout the world.

This Sunday's Holy Scriptures

Gen 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40

Annual Contribution Statement

Those who would like a statement of their envelope support contributions should call the parish office at 293-3518.

Baptismal Preparation Class

The next Baptismal Preparation Class will be held Saturday, **January 13th** at 9:00 A.M. in the St. Joseph Family Center Meeting Room.



Oh Holy Night

Church Calendars

The parish wants to extend its gratitude to Thiele Cooper Funeral Home for generously providing for the expenses of our Catholic Family Calendars.

You are Invited to: "Rediscover Jesus"

An invitation is extended to you to join a small group using the book "Rediscover Jesus" by Matthew Kelly beginning the week of **February 4, 2018 through March 23, 2018**. Small groups are being offered from 6:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. Sunday through Thursday. Please call the Parish Office, 293-3518, if you would like to join a small group for Lent and indicate the best day of the week. If you would like to host or form a small group in your home (or for more information), call Ashley Hermes, 293-0700 or Joyce Harper, 798-6325.

St. Joseph was more than "righteous"; he was courageous

Russell E. Saltzman

The angel wouldn't have said "Do not be afraid" unless there was something to fear.

The Feast of St. Joseph, Guardian of Our Lord, is what I call an orphan solemnity in the Church. Not much is made of it, not really. Right now it just hangs around in the middle of Lent, March 19, pretty much as it has since the 15th century.

I blame the Bible for that; maybe St. Matthew especially. It is Matthew who first introduces us to the man later generations, including our generation, calls the Guardian of Our Lord. After that, Joseph drops away.

Precious little is known about Joseph. Even the oral tradition — the tradition outside scripture — hasn't got

much to say about him. There is a lot of invented “history” but little that is real. We know only that he was a “joiner,” a carpenter, a *tekton* in Greek (which today gives us words like *technician* and *technology*), and we know that only because it is a criticism made of Jesus, muttered by a voice in a crowd (Mt. 13:55).

But Matthew does drop a hint of what sort of man was Joseph. Matthew lets it slip that Joseph was a “righteous” man (1:19), and Joseph’s “righteousness” wasn’t necessarily a good thing for Mary.

We know this because Matthew tells us Joseph was quite prepared to deal with a pregnant Mary according to the demands of righteousness, understood through the Jewish law and custom. He was prepared to renounce his betrothal, to “put her aside” as was said, when he discovered she was pregnant.

That is what “righteousness” demanded from a “righteous” man. The one concession he made was to do it quietly, to avoid Mary’s public disgrace.

Joseph, make no mistake, was a “righteous” man, but not without some consideration.

Of course we know what happens next. After Joseph decided upon this, an angelic visitor arriving in a dream straightens him out, and the dream angel even prescribes the name by which Joseph is to name the child. Yeshua in Hebrew, Jesus as it gets translated, “God is our salvation,” and it might be added parenthetically, not our “righteousness.”

Frankly, as visits with angels go, Joseph gets slighted. There is no other way to put it. Compared to the others in the Nativity story, Joseph gets the shortest of short straws.

When it came time to announce the birth of John the Baptist, Zechariah gets a visit from an archangel, no less than Gabriel himself, who tells Zechariah that he, Gabriel himself, “stands in the presence of God” and was specifically told to deliver the message to Zechariah. Pretty important stuff for an angel, who makes sure Zechariah knows it too. (Lk 1:19)

When it came time to assign Mary’s role in the salvation of the world, once more, it is the Archangel Gabriel who declares her pregnancy is by God’s choice through the Holy Spirit.

Even hired shepherds outside Bethlehem get better than Joseph. They get a flash-mob chorus from heaven dancing the *Gloria*.

But Joseph; what does Joseph get? Joseph gets some no-name angel and no face-time, only a dream. No flappy wings, no dazzling light, no tune for him to hum on the

way to work – he gets a whisper in his ear from lower-echelon angel.

And Joseph acts on the basis of a dream. There is a brave man, especially after this no-name angel says, “Do not be afraid.” The angel wouldn’t have said that unless there was plenty to fear.

If a betrothed woman became pregnant, it was regarded as adultery, if not harlotry. Deuteronomy spells it out. She shall be “brought to the doorway of her father’s house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death because she has committed an act of folly in Israel by playing the harlot in her father’s house; thus you shall purge the evil from among you.” (Deut 22:21)

Joseph risks his “righteousness” for a dream. He does not put Mary aside quietly or any other way and, come time for the child to be born, he remembers what name to give.

Here is a “righteous” man by religious law and Jewish custom. For a woman, and for a child not his own, on the word of an anonymous angel, he discards his righteousness according to the law. This he tosses this aside for an uncertain if not perilous future.

The public disgrace that would have fallen upon Mary, Joseph accepts it for his own.

St. Paul once called himself a “Pharisee of Pharisees,” so righteously did he work to observe the traditions. But all he was doing, so he said, was picking through trash compared to the Good News of the Messiah.

St. Paul said it. But it was Joseph who first lived it.

The story of Joseph reminds us that what is yet honored best are words like courage, duty, love, devotion, faith — words that every father, even a foster father, should seek for his own.

Even though we really know so little about Joseph, thanks to a no-name angel, we know enough to call him Guardian of Our Lord.

