



ST. ROMUALD CATHOLIC CHURCH

394 N HWY 259 · HARDINSBURG KY 40143

December 3, 2017 - First Sunday of Advent

dear Padre

Why do we have Advent?

Advent as we know it today developed many centuries after Jesus' life on earth. Because of the number of persons being baptized in the early Church, a practice developed of having another time for baptism in addition to the Easter Vigil. Christmas was chosen as another baptismal season. Since Lent served as a time of preparation for the baptisms at the Easter Vigil, the weeks leading up to Christmas became a time of penance and preparation.

Combined with this penitential practice, of course, was the preparation for Christmas. The Sunday and weekday Scriptures during Advent recall the centuries of longing for the coming of the Messiah, the conception of John the Baptist, and the family history of Mary and Joseph. Today the writings of the prophet Isaiah are featured during Advent because they so eloquently speak of Israel's longing for salvation.

Among the special signs and symbols that the Church uses to recall and enter into these central parts of our Christian heritage are the Advent wreath, vespers, reconciliation services, the O Antiphons, Scripture readings, the Jesse tree, the giving tree, the Christmas tree, the crèche, gift-giving, and of course, Midnight Mass. Hopefully, these symbols of the season will remind you of your own birth in baptism and your own commitment to living a life filled with peace and love.

Fr. Thomas Santa, CSsR



Parish Office:

Phone: 756-2356

Fax: 756-2099

Hours: Monday - Friday

8:00am - Noon, 1:00 - 3:00pm

Email: stromuald@bbtel.com

www.stromuald.org

Pastoral Staff:

Pastor, Father Brian Johnson

Email: Brian.Johnson@pastoral.org

Deacon, Tony Anthony

Deacon, Mike Wiedemer

Administrative Asst, Jane Haynes

CRE: Adult, Rosa Hockenberry

CRE: RCIA, Marie Rose

CRE: 7-12, Gayle Poole

CRE: K-6, Kim Brumfield

Pastoral Council:

Dana Bland, Kevin Oelze,

Janet Bland, Danny O'Reilly

Chris Brumfield, Don Payne,

Gera Jarboe, Gail Pollock

Harry Mattingly, Pam Pollock

Joellen McGary, Mark Rhodes

St. Romuald

Interparochial School:

Phone: 756-5504

www.stromualdschool.org

Principal, Rob Cox

School Board

Representatives:

Jamie Barr, Amy Flood,

Jennifer Payne

Masses for the Week

December 4th - 10th

Tues	1:00 pm	Martha Elder (AH) (Extended Care)
Wed	5:00 pm	J.W. Bland (LB)
Thurs	9:30 am	Martha Elder (Medco)
Fri	7:00 am	J Paul & Mary W Henning (RO)
	12:05 pm	Victor Henning (LH)
	6:00 pm	Robert Myldy (RM)
Sat	5:00 pm	Beavin Thornsberry (GB)
	7:00 am	Herman Barr (JK)
	10:00 am	Clara & Frank Sulpa (MW)

Stewardship of Finance

November 19 Collection

Sunday Collection.....	\$8,429.00
Building Fund.....	\$5.00
Children.....	\$1.00
Loose change for the Poor.....	\$32.41
Human Development.....	\$65.00

November 26 Collection

Sunday Collection.....	\$6,640.00
Building Fund.....	\$15.00
Children.....	\$3.53
Loose change for the Poor.....	\$31.05
St. Vincent de Paul.....	\$810.00

Worship and Sacrament

Anointing of the Sick: Anointing of the Sick is celebrated with the parish community every first Wednesday at 5:00 pm Mass. Yet, anytime, anointing is available for illness, preparation for surgery or for recovery, by calling Fr Brian.

Baptism: Congratulations on the birth of your child! Your Church Family is excited about your family growing and our family growing! We look forward to celebrating your child's baptism! Preparation for new parents or those new to the parish is held by appointment. Call Fr Brian.

Marriage: Congratulations on your engagement! Your Church Family wishes to help you fully prepare spiritually and walk with you into this lifetime commitment to each other. In order to allow sufficient time, couples must contact the parish office at least 6 months before the anticipated wedding date.

Confession/Reconciliation: Every Wednesday 4:00-5:00 pm; every Saturday 4:00-5:00 pm, every first Saturday after 8:00 am Mass, or anytime by simply asking or calling Fr Brian for appointment.

Visitation of the Sick: Please notify Father or the office upon admission of a family member into nursing homes or hospital. Often we rely upon word from the family about illnesses of a member. Please call.

RCIA: Interested in the Catholic Faith? The RCIA process is a "spiritual journey" that fully initiates those who are not baptized or who have baptism from another tradition and wish to join fully the Catholic Church. Classes are offered through the year culminating at Easter! Please call the office for details!

Membership in the Parish: Welcome to all new families or persons moving into our parish. We are glad that you are joining the parish community. We want to visit with you and help you settle into the church. Please register in the parish office as soon as possible.

Ministers of the Liturgy - December 9th & 10th

	Eucharistic Ministers	Lectors	Ushers	Servers	Rosary Leaders	Music Ministers
5:00 pm	Jerry Jarboe Shelly Jeffries	Jennifer O'Reilly Jenny Pile	C-Arnold O'Reilly* C-Tony Critchelow S-Paul Shalosky S-Davye Duggins	Phillip Shalosky Preston Flood	Minnie Nimmo	Pippa
7:00 am	Faye Glasscock Tiffany Davenport	Tom Aull	C-Bryce Glasscock* C-D.J. Glasscock S-Tim Glasscock S-Kenny Glasscock	Brianna Laslie Trey Laslie	Crystal Greenwell	Pippa
10:00 am	Lisa Kennedy Sally Hinton Tabetha Walz Kathryn Ables	Suzanne Rose Danny Shain	C-Drew Hinton* C-Mike Hinton S-Tyler Hinton S-Noah Matthews	Logan Walz Ryan Whitfill	Pat Whitfill	Deacon Tony
Radio Minister: Laura Skillman Children's Liturgy: NO CHILDREN'S LITURGY						



Happy Advent! We begin our four week countdown to Christmas today, watching and waiting for the Lord's Coming! As a historical event, over two thousand years ago, Jesus the Messiah was born in Bethlehem. Yet as an end-time event (aka. 'eschatological'- meaning 'last-or end or utmost') we await the promised 'return' again of Jesus. Many people think right away of Jesus' ascension as recorded in Luke and Acts where Jesus says in response to a question about the 'restored kingdom of God's People' in Acts 1:7-8 "" **It is**

not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority." And after rising up out of sight, two men in white (angels?) say "why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven." (Acts 1:11). So we await that Second Coming, and use Jesus' historical birth as a model of how to wait in the time leading up to His Return. So, a first question is, how long was the waiting until Jesus came the first time? It was quite a while. In fact by all accounts, the waiting began almost from the very beginning of time-maybe just a day or hour after Adam and Eve's creation. It was their Sin and Fall that called for humanity's **need of a Savior**. So we may be in this waiting stage for a while. A second question is, how do we wait, and what do we do in the mean time? We are following good company if we do what the holy men and women of the Old Testament did while waiting for a Savior. We should keep the commands of God, practice virtue, stay faithful to prayer, offer divine worship and read every day the given words of the Lord, including all of the prophets' messages of conversion and repentance. These works will lead us to recognize the Savior when he arrives! So here we are in Advent, doing just that!

To help us, we use an Advent wreath to countdown the days to Christmas. Some people see the four candles as representing four epochs or thousand-year periods from creation until Jesus' coming. Of course, astrologic and geologic signs from the universe and earth indicate that God's creation goes further back in time than that, but we can draw great symbolic meaning in viewing the long waiting period from Adam's Fall to Jesus' arriving to redeem us, in **four stages**. I think of Jesus as Lord of all Space, and King of all Time, so it makes sense to see Jesus' coming as the **fulfillment of fours**: just as we mark four seasons of time and four directions of space! So on our circular wreath we position four candles to reveal the gradual increasing of light that culminates in the coming of Savior! I also like, that we use **evergreens** on the wreath to indicate 'ever-living' beyond a season and greens that rise from the ground (imagine the green of pine trees leading your eye skyward and to take the place of the green of flat fields!). In our waiting period, we have great messianic readings to study. We read such prophets as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Micah! We focus on living more faithfully, which includes repentance and making life-changes if needed. We often think mostly of John the Baptist as our Advent Prophet, since he was the last one. He did fulfil the role as the 'last call' and the immediate precursor to Jesus' coming ('voice in wilderness crying out 'Prepare'-Isaiah 40:3). However, I like to dedicate time in Advent to read again some of the other OT prophets in depth. So much lyric poetry and imaginative language describing God and our relationship to Him comes from the Old Testament Prophets (potter-clay, shepherd-flock, gardener-vineyard, holy mountains, blooming deserts, etc. and lions and lambs living together). I encourage everyone to dip into the longer works

of Isaiah or Jeremiah, or if time is an issue, try reading the shorter books of Amos or Micah. Praying with the Prophets is an excellent Advent activity. Take a moment, sit down with a prophet, read and pray together. Imagine you are waiting at the bus-stop, or better yet, the airport watching for your flight to arrive!

Mark 13:35 "Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming"

We have all heard this before: "*For quality assurance your phone call may be monitored or recorded.*" I understand the original idea behind 'monitoring' calls, was to provide good service through the accountability to supervisors evaluating them. Yet, I hear that line of Jesus about watching and keeping alert to suggest the same idea to us as disciples. In our practice of faith, we need to stay committed to good work and be ever-watchful for the Master's return. For the best following of Jesus, assume our life of service is being recorded for the **assurance of fidelity**. In fact, it may be broadcast one day over all God's creation (it will at our own day of judgement). The Book of Revelation 20:12, actually says, "*I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. The dead were judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls.*" As workers in God's Kingdom, it sounds like our *work is being recorded*, whether we think the master is on the site or away. We could say, "**For salvation assurance**, our actions are being recorded and monitored." This is a good check on our faithfulness. We should spend our time waiting for the Master's return, knowing that everything is being registered. We should live and work the same, thinking the Master is right over our shoulder, or just gone away on a short break. Our gospel today calls us to simply keep faithful to our God-given duties and responsibilities, whether we feel we are being supervised or not. As good work, I do it not because I am being watched, but because it is good in itself, and it is what I am supposed to do. I heard someone say once that the measure of a person's faithfulness and goodness is **what they do when no one is watching**. For example, it is easy to do the right thing when the whole world is watching, but true goodness shines most in the shadows when no one is watching. As good servants to Jesus we serve best when we simply keep focused on the task in front of us. While we wait, we work! Jesus summarizes it best in his one word in Mark 13:37 "**Watch!**"

Here are some daily questions to consider in our prayer time!

Sunday: Did God speak to my heart today about any issue or problem I have been facing? Did I ask God for direction in any situation I am facing?

Monday: Am I patient? How do I handle 'waiting'? Pray about it and try to practice.

Tuesday: Am I keeping my faith, and staying focused on God today, just as much as I was Sunday morning? Do I take my faith into my week's activities?

Wednesday: Are we ready for Christ's return? What if it was today? What about NOW?

Thursday: How can I help others ready themselves for Christ's coming? Is there anything can say or do to help someone else focus upon God more in his/her life?

Friday: Perform an act of sacrifice for the good of someone you have hurt in the past.

Saturday: What special blessings, will I be thanking God for at mass this weekend?

Peace and Prayers, Fr Brian Johnson

PARISH NEWS & EVENTS

Practices for the 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass

Thursday	Dec 7	3:00 - 4:00 pm
Thursday	Dec 14	3:00 - 4:00 pm
Thursday	Dec 21	3:00 - 5:00 pm

All children are invited to participate. For more information please call Patty Curran at 270-945-8155

December 3-Holy Hours throughout the

Diocese: Come pray in solidarity with the whole Diocese Sunday afternoon **December 3, from 2:30-3:30 pm in St Romuald Church.** The Bishop has asked all parishes to observe a Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration to pray for renewed evangelization efforts and eager application of Pope Francis' call for 'Joyful Witness and Encounter with Christ' in us all!

Anointing of the Sick-First Wednesdays of

Month: Father Brian will offer the sacrament of the sick, 'Anointing for Healing' at the Wednesday evening mass (5:00pm) on December 6th. The Catechism specifies that those who can be anointed include 'anyone in danger of death from sickness or old age' yet also includes anyone 'prior to a serious operation', or 'for the elderly whose frailty becomes more pronounced' (Catechism #1514-1515).

Gift of Joy

The Blessing of a Child in the Womb

"The presence of new life in the womb of the mother brings joy and hope to the center of our families, our church, and our world. It is the ultimate gift. At the very same moment when God created your child, He also created you as a mother and father."

On Dec 9th & 10th, Father Brian will be offering a special blessing to any expectant mother who would like to participate. We invite the mother to stand, if you want the father, or any other family member may stand with you, to experience the "Gift of Joy. The blessing is bestowed upon you, and you will receive a booklet as a point of reference to read during the time you carry your child.

All expectant mothers are welcome to receive the blessing at any of the Masses during this weekend.

Celebration

BIRTHDAY: Aulton Richards, December 7th and Mary Ann Johnson, December 12th.

Ministry Schedule: If you would like to volunteer for any of the Christmas Eve (4pm, 8pm & 12am), Christmas Day (9am), New Years Day (9am) Masses please call the office or email stromuald@bbtel.com.



Are you or someone you know interested in knowing more about the Catholic faith or considering becoming a Catholic???

If yes, please contact Fr. Brian, Deacon Mike, Deacon Tony or Marie Rose at 756-2356 anytime throughout the year!

Advent Giving Tree: The Advent Giving Tree is a wonderful opportunity to assist those in our parish and community who are in need of support. All giving tree gifts must be returned by December 3rd. Thank you for your generosity!

Church Bus Survey: The Parish council is conducting a survey to determine if there is a need for the parish to purchase a van or small bus. The vehicle would be used to bring parishioners to mass who do not have transportation to the weekend masses. Please contact Janet Bland 270-617-8156, email janetbland@att.net or Gail Pollock 270-756-2547, 270-668-3338 email pollockl@bbtel.com to share your thoughts. Thank-You.

This Week at St. Romuald

Mon	1:00 pm	Blue Army Rosary
	7:00 pm	Al-Anon Meeting
Tues	10:00 am	Scripture Study
	1:00 pm	Mass at Extended Care
	4:00 pm	Rosary
	6:00 pm	St. Vincent de Paul
Wed	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Mass
Thur	9:30 am	Mass at Medco
	3:00 pm	Practice for 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass
	6:00 pm	Family Holy Hour
	6:00 pm	Men's Jail Ministry
Fri	7:00 am	Holy Day Mass
	12:05 pm	Holy Day Mass
	6:00 pm	Holy Day Mass
Sun	8:45 am	K-6 Religious Ed Caroling at Medco

UPCOMING:

Dec 13 6:00 pm SRIS Christmas Program

PRAYER AND SPIRITUALITY

A Word from Pope Francis:

: "When you do some activity for the 'little ones', the excluded and the least, never do it from a pedestal of superiority. Think rather that all that you do for the 'least' is a way of returning what you have received for free. Make a welcoming and friendly space for all the least of these of our time to come into your life: the marginalized, men and women who live in our streets and parks; the thousands of unemployed, as well as the many sick people who do not have access to adequate care; many abandoned elders; mistreated women; immigrants seeking a respectable life and all those who live on 'margins' deprived of dignity. Learn to be, as St. Francis said, "sick with the sick, afflicted with the afflicted." The initials for Franciscans are OFM, Order of Friars Minor, so keep alive the 'minor' (little one) part. We are 'minority', so always humble yourselves" (Angelus 11-23-17).



Men's Discernment Retreat: A retreat for men ages 18-25 who are seriously thinking about their vocation and who have the desire to courageously give their lives to Christ. This retreat is an opportunity to set some time out in silence to listen to the voice of God in your life; receive guidance for the discernment process; learn the tools of discernment, and sharpen your discerning skills. It will be held on December 8-10 at St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology. There is no cost to participate and to register before deadline of December 6th. For more information and to register online, contact the vocations office: 270-683-1545, jason.mcclure@pastoral.org, www.owensborovocations.com

February Men's Conference: Mark your calendars-February 17th at RiverPark Center, Owensboro 8:30-4:30. Speakers will be national catholic evangelists Christopher West and Doug Barry, to order tickets visit www.kycatholic.com or email msullivan@smsmlaw.com



Please pray for the repose of the of Bob Rankin, Samuel Monarch and Jim Curtis (Kim Hurley's Father). Please keep the families in your prayers for comfort.

Al-Anon Meeting: Mondays 7:00 pm St Romuald Parish Hall. Come find support and understanding to recover a sense of serenity in your life.

Readings for the Week

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Is 2:1-5; Ps 122:1-9; Mt 8:5-11
Tuesday: Is 11:1-10; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Lk 10:21-24
Wednesday: Is 25:6-10a; Ps 23:1-6; Mt 15:29-37
Thursday: Is 26:1-6; Ps 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a; Mt 7:21, 24-27
Friday: Gn 3:9-15, 20; Ps 98:1-4; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38
Saturday: Is 30:19-21, 23-26; Ps 147:1-6; Mt 9:35 — 10:1, 5a, 6-8
Sunday: Is 40:1-5, 9-11; Ps 85:9-14; 2 Pt 3:8-14; Mk 1:1-8

Abortion Update: Last week 49 women went into EMW Clinic for abortions at 2nd and Market Street in Louisville. **Please pray to end abortion.**

Pray to end abortion: Join other Catholics and those from other faiths that gather each Saturday at 2nd and Market in Louisville from 7:00-8:00 am (EST) to pray for families entering the abortion clinic. Many children have been saved and mothers spared future grief by this prayer action and support. With God, all things are possible! Archbishop Kurtz is known to show up and pray with everyone too!

DRF Update for St. Romuald, Hardinsburg:
Thank you for your generosity toward our parish goal target:
St Romuald Parish Target Amount: \$12,069.67
Pledged for year: \$8,492
Contributions so far: \$3,732

Funeral Meal Dishes: We are very grateful to all the ladies of the parish who provide food for the funeral meals. There are several dishes that have not been picked up. The parish hall is open Monday thru Friday from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm daily for you to pick up any dishes you may have left. Thank You!

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
OF THE *Blessed Virgin Mary* ©LPI

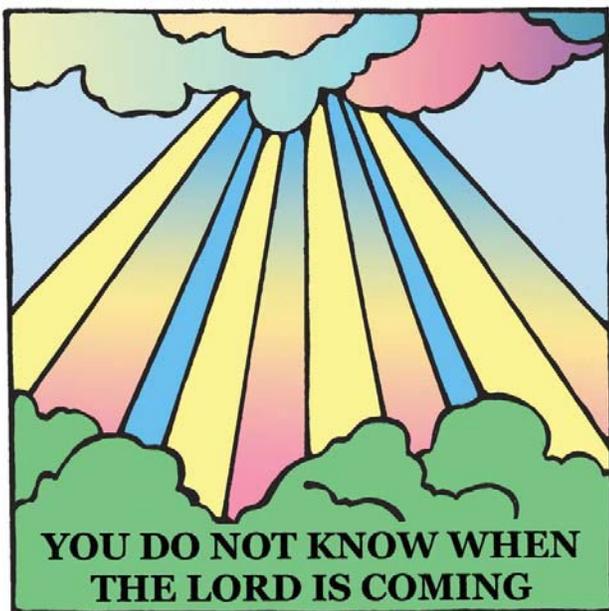
PRAYER REQUESTS

We Pray For:

Gene Aldridge, Paula Anthony, Baby Barr, Gene Bennett, Joe Bennett, Roy Bennett, Lorena Bland, Becky Brown, Ava Bruner, Juanita Burch, Brian Butler, Billy Carwile, Jerry Carwile, Kayla Christian, Mallorie Collins, Debbie Critchelow, Rick Dale, Vonda Decker, Amanda Douthitt, Marolyn Dowell, Kenneth Dowell, Treyten Drake, Debbie Dubree, Davye Duggins, Sammy Duggins, Tijuana Duncan, Lottie Eauer, Tessa Farris, Carroll Ferguson, Ginny Flood, Cindy Getz, Jenny Ginn, Dorothy Greenwell, Bill Greenwood, Linda Greenwood, Susan Griffin, Janet Hallway, Kay Harris, JoAnn Henning, Lisa Henning, Joe Hess, Kitty Himmelhaver, Bill Hinton, Doug Hinton, Johnny Howard, **Lori Howard**, Rick Hurley, Merri Hurt, Braddock Inman, Robert Jackey, Virginia Jeffries, Mary Ann Johnson, Brenda Kelly, Louise Kennedy, Patricia Lane, Angie Lawrence, Parker Leslie, Annette Lucas, **Junior Lucas**, Margaret Lyons, Bevan Michael Miller, Elaine Miller, Richard Miller, Blaise Mills, Sharon Morgan, Emma Nottingham, Don O'Donoghue, Joe Oelze, Patsy Oelze, Earl O'Reilly, Janet O'Reilly, Libby Osborne, Martha Payne, Brian Phillips, Peggy Phillips, Joe Priest, Robert Priest, Sandy Priest, Stella Prewitt, Kay Ray, Melvin Roach, Rita Roach, Shirley Robbins, Lincoln Roberts, Suzanne Rose, Carri Roth, Eric Severs, Rex Lee Sheets, Haley Sloan, Beth Smith, Steve Smith, Jerry Sosh, Virginia Stanford, Lucye Stupak, Pam Sturgeon, Phillip Sturgeon, Loretta Swink, Adalee Taul, Gina Thornsberry, Rufus Tivitt, Calla Stiith, Tessa Wadsworth, Fallon Wen, Greg Wethington, Raymond Wethington, Jimmy Whitworth, Mary Rita Whitworth, Carolyn Wilcheck, Kevin Wilcheck, Robert D. Wilson, Anne Wolfe, Sandra Zanone. **Serving in the Armed Forces:** Mandie Adams, Kevin Arnold, Fred Barham, Austin Brown, Timothy Cashen, Ryan Critchelow, Cody Garst, Parker Findlay, James Hanor, Christian Hansen, Jack Hayes, James Howard, Charles Kuhlman, Bradford O'Reilly, Jordan Pate, Liana Tindle, Chase Upchurch, Garrett Wadsworth



Kick the new year off right with a public reading of God's word on the Court House lawn! January 1-4, there will be teams to recite the Word of God, over 90 straight hours. Teams from different churches will take on a three hour watch shift (a total of 30 watches) to ensure the proclamation of the Bible starting with Genesis and ending with Revelation. If you are interested in taking a reading shift or being a 3hour team captain, please let Fr Brian know as we try to assemble a reading team.



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AROUND AND ABOUT

Knights of Columbus News

K of C Raffle Drawing, December 12, 2017: Up to \$3000 in cash (\$1,500—1st Prize, \$1,000—2nd Prize, and \$500—3rd Prize); haven't got your ticket, contact a K of C member or GK Pat O'Reilly 270-617-0754. Tickets are going fast; only 300 will be sold. \$20 per ticket.

Our Annual Light Up for Christ Christmas Dinner is on the 12th of December @ 6 pm, St Romuald's Parish Hall. Please bring a cover dish and desert. Meats will be provided by the Council. In support of the Angel Tree we will be asking for a small monetary donation. We will also be drawing the winners of our Raffle.

Called by Name Program: Every young Catholic man should consider all vocations, including whether or not God is calling him to priesthood. However, if not invited or encouraged to think about priesthood, it may never be considered. Many young men may have the burning question within of God calling them to priesthood, but they may be waiting for a confirmation from someone else, to nudge them into seriously pursuing God's priestly call for them. Do you know a faithful young man who may have a vocation to the priesthood? We believe that our future priests will come from our own parishes and schools, but we need your help to identify them. We're looking for high school students and older. Any man you recommend will receive good information from the Vocation Office about discerning his vocation, as well as invitations to discernment retreats and other events. Tell Fr Brian, Deacon Mike or Deacon Tony, to approach them or to invite the vocation director to reach out to them.

"Set Apart: Our Identity in Christ" at the Dec. 11 Theology on Tap. Owensboro's Theology on Tap will host Wade Gaynor, former professional baseball player, on Monday, Dec. 11 at 6 p.m. at Los Cabos Mexican Restaurant at 2845 W. Parrish Ave., Owensboro. The theme of Wade's talk is "Set Apart: Our Identity in Christ" and will explore our identity found in Christ and how Wade's faith led him to the Catholic Church. Theology on Tap is open to all faith traditions and welcomes young adults ages 18-39. Sponsored by the Diocese of Owensboro's Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry. To learn more: charlie.hardesty@pastoral.org.



Sunday, Dec 03, 2017

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Mindfulness 101**

Be aware of your surroundings. Look where you're going. Think before you speak. Remember to breathe. Be here now. Pithy reminders to be mindful have been sprinkled into the popular diet for so long, they tend to join the background noise

we train ourselves to ignore. Too bad: Mindfulness isn't just for monks and yoga fans. Jesus invites us to live in watchful awareness of our times, ready to respond in any given situation. Practice being present to every person and each hour today. Where is the Spirit drawing you this Advent season?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:33-37 (2).* "What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'"

Monday, Dec 04, 2017

MEMORIAL OF JOHN DAMASCENE, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Imagine if you can

It's hard to get somewhere if you don't know where you're going. That's true not only in travel but in the larger sense of life goals as well. Contemplation of religious images helps us focus on the inward journey toward holiness. Such images can even aid in establishing a relationship with a spiritual guide in the person of the saint. John of Damascus championed the use of images to ignite the religious imagination. This season let's imagine together what a just nation should look like.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 8:5-11 (175).* "Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith."

Tuesday, Dec 05, 2017

ADVENT WEEKDAY

To know you is to love you

In these times of war, political conflict, and growing poverty, it's hard to imagine a state of affairs in which wisdom and justice reign and everything works together for the good. Yet that's exactly the possibility God has promised and offered from the prophets to Jesus. The more we learn the ways of God—and the more we follow them—the closer we get to that place where all have what they need and act justly toward one another.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 11:1-10; Luke 10:21-24 (176).* "There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord."

Wednesday, Dec 06, 2017

MEMORIAL OF NICHOLAS, BISHOP

A jolly good tradition

Saint Nicholas spoke out against heresies and was imprisoned for a time for his Christian beliefs. His faithfulness is exemplary, but charity remains his signature virtue. What started with Nicholas tossing a few bags of coins into a poor family's yard has been transformed over centuries of retelling, embellishing, grafting, and adapting into the magical tales of Ole Saint Nick (Father Christmas, Santa Claus, Kris Kringle), whose yearly ambition is to deliver gifts to every girl and boy. We may not bring out our best robes and a fatted calf for the annual return of Santa, but cookies and milk serve nicely to show our gratitude to Saint Nick for inspiring ole souls of every stripe to be more jolly and generous.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 25:6-10a; Matthew 15:29-37*

(177). "My heart is moved with pity for the crowd."

Thursday, Dec 07, 2017

MEMORIAL OF AMBROSE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

God works in strange ways

When a dispute arose about who was to be the new bishop of Milan, Ambrose (c. 339-397) stepped in to try to mediate the dispute. He so impressed those involved that they decided to elect him bishop, even though he was not baptized, much less ordained. So he was baptized and ordained priest and bishop at the same time! Do something today about resolving a major conflict in your life, but be careful—you might be put in charge!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 40:25-31; Matthew 11:28-30*

(178). "They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength."

Friday, Dec 08, 2017

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY; PATRONAL FEAST DAY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Rejoice with Mary today

Today we celebrate not only the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but also the anniversary of the declaration of this solemnity and the doctrine behind it. In a sense this day answers a question: How could Jesus, who was human in every way but sin, be born without original sin? Answer: Mary must have been without sin, therefore she was "immaculately conceived." In a larger sense this day encourages us to honor the special holiness and closeness to God of Mary as the woman who brought the Savior into the world. It also declares God's grace and love to be greater than sin's destructive effects. Pray to Mary today and rejoice that we can turn to such a wonderful figure.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38 (689).* "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

Saturday, Dec 09, 2017

MEMORIAL OF JUAN DIEGO CUAUHTLATOATZIN

More than meets the eye

There are many accounts of the apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe in 1531 to Saint Juan Diego, an indigenous Mexican who had converted to Catholicism after the Spanish conquest. There are also many questions about the historical accuracy of those accounts. But great stories also serve a purpose beyond historical literalism—they speak to our hearts of greater truths that are sometimes best captured in epics. A great mythic story is not necessarily false—it can be true at a deeper, more symbolic, and powerful level than facts alone can approach. Dip into some deeper truth by searching online for good accounts of the Guadalupe story.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8 (180).* "At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them."

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