

# **The Second Sunday of Advent**

## **December 10, 2023**



**Transfiguration of the Lord Parish**

**Saint Mary 14 Park Street + Sacred Heart 58 Church Street + Saint Mark 105 Stanley Street  
North Attleborough, Massachusetts**

## Transfiguration of the Lord Parish

Rev. David A. Costa, Pastor  
Rev. Deacon Joseph E. Regali, Parish Deacon  
Sister Kathleen A. Corrigan, S.U.S.C., Pastoral Associate  
Rev. Kenneth R. Sicard, O.P. & Rev. R. Gabriel Pivarnik, O.P., Weekend Assistants  
Mrs. Martha O'Neill, Administrative Assistant  
Mrs. Jean Howard, Business Manager  
Mrs. Elaine Corvese, Director of Religious Education  
Mrs. Lisa Serak, Principal, Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School  
Mr. Adam Turcotte, Director of Music  
Mr. Miguel Peixoto, Buildings Supervisor  
Mr. James Kitsock, Building Maintenance

### Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School

Mrs. Lisa Serak, Principal  
57 Richards Avenue,  
North Attleborough, Massachusetts 02760  
(508) 695-3072 FAX (508) 695-9074  
[smsh@smsh.dfrcs.org](mailto:smsh@smsh.dfrcs.org) [www.smshschool.com](http://www.smshschool.com)

### Saint Mary Cemetery

Mr. Jarrod Ward, Superintendent  
Towne Street  
North Attleborough, Massachusetts 02760  
(508) 695-1173 or email [ripco@comcast.net](mailto:ripco@comcast.net)

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saint Mary Church • Saturday 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm

### Sacrament of Baptism

Baptisms are celebrated on designated Sunday afternoons at 12:30 pm, with a limit of four families at each baptism. Please contact the office at [stmaryna@noozi.com](mailto:stmaryna@noozi.com) for more information and available dates/locations.

### Sacrament of Marriage

Marriage is usually celebrated on Saturday morning and afternoon. Please contact the Parish Office at least nine months in advance to begin preparation.

### Sacrament of the Sick

Pastoral care to those in need of the sacrament of the sick is arranged through the parish office. Please call to arrange a visit.

### Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is offered on the first Friday of each month in **Saint Mark Church** beginning at 9:00 am and ending at 6:00 pm with Benediction.

### Parish Offering

If you are attending in person, you may drop your contribution in the collection basket. You are welcome to mail your budget envelope to the parish office, at 14 Park Street, North Attleborough, MA 02760. You may also leave your envelope in the drop box located outside the parish office door, to the right on the landing. Or you can use this link for online giving:

<https://app.gabrielsoft.com/guest/mafrdiocese/31>

Thank you for your ongoing support!

### Weekend Masses

Saturday 4:00 pm **Saint Mary Church**  
Sunday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**  
Sunday 9:30 am **Saint Mary Church**  
Sunday 11:00 am **Sacred Heart Church**

### Weekday Masses

Monday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**  
Tuesday 4:30 pm **Saint Mark Church**  
Wednesday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**  
Thursday 8:00 am Communion Service  
**Saint Mark Church**

**Links to:** Transfiguration of the Lord Facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/Transfiguration-of-the-Lord-Parish-North-Attleborough-106529317647894/>

YouTube at <https://tinyurl.com/ysfaxaty>

### Parish Office

14 Park Street, North Attleborough,  
Massachusetts 02760  
Parish e-mail • [stmaryna@noozi.com](mailto:stmaryna@noozi.com)  
Parish website • [www.saintmaryna.com](http://www.saintmaryna.com)  
Phone 508-695-6161 Fax 508-695-5248  
Faith Formation • [TransfigurationRelEd@gmail.com](mailto:TransfigurationRelEd@gmail.com)  
Faith Formation • 508-695-3823  
Music Ministry • [transfiguration.na.music@gmail.com](mailto:transfiguration.na.music@gmail.com)





### December 9/10 – The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

#### Saturday

4:00 pm

#### December 9 – Vigil (St. Mary)

Robbin M. King

Susan Dudley

#### Sunday

8:00 am

#### December 10 (St. Mark)

Jennifer Ann Gengo

#### Sunday

9:30 am

#### December 10 (St. Mary)

Wayne Burtchell

Riana Marcelino

#### Sunday

11:00 am

#### December 10 (Sacred Heart)

Dale William Lutes

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#### Monday

8:00 am

#### December 11 (St. Mark)

Donat Pion

#### Tuesday

4:30 pm

#### December 12 (St. Mark)

Respect Life Group Mass

#### Wednesday

8:00 am

#### December 13 (St. Mark)

People of the Parish

#### Thursday

8:00 am

#### December 14 (St. Mark)

David Parenteau

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### December 16/17 – The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

#### Saturday

4:00 pm

#### December 16 – Vigil (St. Mary)

Mary Gagliardi

Patricia Carvalho

David McInerney

#### Sunday

8:00 am

#### December 17 (St. Mark)

Sabatino Viscusi

Robert & Angela MacCormack

#### Sunday

9:30 am

#### December 17 (St. Mary)

Ronald R. Vacher &

Elizabeth (Butterworth) Vacher

#### Sunday

11:00 am

#### December 17 (Sacred Heart)

Eugene Morris

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### Parish Contributions

Collection for November 25/26: \$13,209.69

Collection for December 2/3: \$13,085.45

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### Tuesday Communal Rosary Schedule

Tuesday, December 12, 2023: Rosary for Life (4PM)

Tuesday, December 19, 2023: Prayer & Pizza (5PM)

Tuesday, December 26, 2023: No Mass or devotions today

Tuesday, January 2, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)

Tuesday, January 9, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)

Tuesday, January 16, 2024: Prayer & Pizza (5PM)

Tuesday, January 23, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)

### 2023 Marian Medal Congratulations

Congratulations to parishioner, **Margaret M. Smith**, who received the diocesan Marian Medal this past Sunday, December 3, at ceremonies in St. Mary Cathedral, Fall River. Bishop da Cunha bestows this award on parishioners who have given dedicated and generous service in parishes across the Diocese of Fall River. Margaret and her husband, Sam, have been active parishioners for a number of years. Margaret serves as an adult altar server, Eucharistic Minister, past president of the Women's Guild, assists with the Christmas Fair, has worked with our Christian Initiation of Youth and Young People, served on the strategic planning group for the establishment of Transfiguration Parish, and serves as a member of the collection counting team.



Margaret, many, many thanks for your generous and joyful service to the Lord and to our parish. May God continue to bless you with good health and much happiness!

### Bulletin Submissions

Please note that due to anticipated delivery issues with FedEx during the entire 2023 holiday season, all transmission dates have been moved up by our publisher. Anyone wishing to submit a notice should email it as early as possible and include the dates you would like the notice to appear. It will be published in the earliest weekend available.

### Parish Grand Annual Appeal

As we approach the "official" conclusion of our Grand Annual Appeal for 2023, I offer sincere thanks to all who have participated in this special endeavor. Your tremendous response indicates a deep commitment and a special pride to and in Transfiguration Parish. We are awaiting the final reports, but as of this printing the total for this year's Appeal is over **\$210,000.00!**

We will continue to accept donations for the Appeal till the end of the calendar year. Please know we are most grateful for any and all donations. Please contact the parish office if you have any questions. God bless!

### From Fr. Costa:

You may have heard Adam, our music director, refer to the Christmas Mass schedule in his “plug” for new choir members. Yes, that schedule has been determined. To assist with your planning, I offer the schedule and some of the rationale behind this time schedule.



As Christmas falls on a Monday this year, we celebrate a very, very brief fourth week of preparation. The **Fourth Sunday of Advent** is Saturday, December 23, and Sunday, December 24. There will be **two** Masses scheduled for this last Sunday of Advent:

**Saturday, December 23, Vigil Mass @ 4:00 p.m.**  
**St. Mary Church**

**Sunday, December 24, Morning Mass @ 9:30 a.m.**  
**St. Mary Church**



There will be six (6) Masses celebrated for the **Christmas** holy day in our parish. Each of our churches will have two Masses. As the 4:00 p.m. Vigil Mass is the most popular with our parishioners, there will be three 4:00 p.m. celebrations. The solemn Mass for Christmas will be celebrated at 9:00 p.m. in Sacred Heart Church. The Roman Missal (the official prayerbook for Mass) no longer refers to this as Midnight Mass. Now it is called “Mass in the Night.” This Mass will feature our choir and instrumentalists. There will be a concert of Christmas music before the Mass. The full schedule for Christmas Masses is as follows:

#### **Saint Mary Church**

**Christmas Eve, December 24, Mass @ 4:00 p.m.**  
**Christmas Day, December 25 @ 9:30 a.m.**

#### **Sacred Heart Church**

**Christmas Eve, December 24, Mass @ 4:00 p.m.**  
**Christmas Eve, December 24, Mass @ 9:00 p.m.**

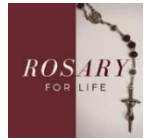
#### **Saint Mark Church**

**Christmas Eve, December 24, Mass @ 4:00 p.m.**  
**Christmas Day, December 25 @ 8:00 a.m.**

I hope the early sharing of this information will be helpful for planning your Christmas activities. Because people always ask, I also want you to know that the collection taken on Christmas remains 100% in the parish. Many thanks for your generosity and commitment to Transfiguration Parish.

### **Rosary for Life**

The Respect Life Committee of Transfiguration of the Lord Parish is pleased to announce that we will lead a Rosary for Life at 4:00 pm, prior to the 4:30 pm daily Mass in **Saint Mark Church** on the *first, second, fourth, and fifth Tuesday* of each month. The communal Rosary is also livestreamed for any participants who wish to join us remotely.



### **Winter Storm Mass Policy**



As we face the unpredictable New England winter season, I share our Winter Storm Mass Policy.

#### **Sunday Mass**

Should there be significant snowfall or extreme ice conditions on a weekend, especially if we have been warned or “encouraged” to stay off the roads, weekend Masses will be celebrated **ONLY** at Saint Mark Church. We will follow the usual Mass times, but all Masses will be moved to Stanley Street because (1) I live on that property and the Dominicans would not be driving from Providence to be with us, and (2) only one property will need to be plowed and shoveled in time for Mass. Please note: when we are told to stay off the roads because it is too dangerous to travel due to weather conditions, any Mass obligation does not hold. **STAY HOME** for your safety and the safety of others. The Lord certainly understands!

#### **Daily Mass**

When school is canceled or delayed due to winter weather, the daily Mass is also canceled. If the delay is on a Tuesday, we will have Mass on Tuesday afternoon. If there is an early dismissal of school due to winter weather on a Tuesday, the daily Mass on Tuesday afternoon is canceled.

I hope these directives are clear. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation. If you have any questions, please call the parish office.

### **Knights of Columbus Monthly Meeting**

Council #330 of the Knights of Columbus has been serving the Catholic Community of North Attleborough for 125 years. The Knights meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7pm, in the St. Mary Church Hall. Please drop by on meeting nights if you’d like to learn more about the Knights. Council #330 is committed to assisting local charities that align with the values of our Faith such as the Parish, the Parish school, and Abundant Hope. Contact Jim Schromm with any questions: [jim.schromm@verizon.net](mailto:jim.schromm@verizon.net).



## Transfiguration of the Lord Parish Saint Vincent de Paul Society

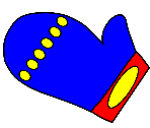
Inspired by Gospel values, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organization, leads women and men to join to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are in need or are suffering, in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul. The Society meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month in the parish hall in Saint Mary Church. Please join us!

### Call for Assistance:

If you need assistance, please call the help line for our parish Saint Vincent de Paul Society. They can offer information about the types of assistance available. Please call 508-212-4755 for help or more information.

## Knights of Columbus – Annual Coat Drive

Knights of Columbus Council #330 is once again collecting gently-used coats, jackets, hats, and gloves during Advent. Collection boxes can now be found in all 3 churches. The



drive will end on the weekend of **December 16th-17th**. The clothing will be donated to local charities and distributed to persons in need. We appreciate the generous donations that our fellow parishioners have provided in the past and hope this year's drive will be as successful as previous ones. Thank you for your generous support!



If you are interested in joining our choir or becoming a cantor, please scan the appropriate QR code(s) and fill out the form.

To join the **choir**:



To become a **cantor**:



If you are unable to complete the form online, please see Adam Turcotte after any Mass to pick up a paper copy.

Note: We are in need of **instrumentalists** for the **9 pm Mass in the Night** on **Christmas Eve** at **Sacred Heart**. If you are interested, please email Adam Turcotte at [transfiguration.na.music@gmail.com](mailto:transfiguration.na.music@gmail.com). Thank you!

## Faith Formation Program 2023-2024

Director of Religious Education ~ Mrs. Elaine Corvese  
508-695-3823; [transfigurationreled@gmail.com](mailto:transfigurationreled@gmail.com)

### Faith Formation Office hours:

**Monday – Thursday: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

### Class Schedule:

December 10<sup>th</sup>: **Grades 3 & 4**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.  
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

December 11<sup>th</sup>: **Grade 5**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

December 17<sup>th</sup>: **Grades 1 & 2**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.  
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

December 17<sup>th</sup>: **Grade 9**, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

December 18<sup>th</sup>: **Grade 6**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Please see website: [saintmaryna.com](http://saintmaryna.com) for the 2023-2024 calendar for all grades. Faith Formation classes are held at Saint Mark Church hall in Attleboro Falls.

**Cancellation of classes:** In the event of cancellation of classes due to inclement weather, the Faith Formation Office will notify parents/guardians by email and the cancellation notice will also be on the answering machine of the Faith Formation office at 695-3823. Please note: if the North Attleboro School Department cancels school, Faith Formation classes are automatically canceled.

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE COMING OF OUR

*Lord Jesus Christ!*

“Adopt-A-Family”

An Advent Project



Transfiguration of the Lord Parish is once again sponsoring “Adopt-A-Family” as an Advent project. Organized by former State Representative Betty Poirier and many faithful assistants from parish organizations, families from North Attleborough are provided with much needed assistance. This project provides warm clothes for all family members and assistance with heat and necessary bills. “Santa” is also given a helping hand with his list for the children. Envelopes are available at all 3 churches through the weekend of **December 23/24**. We ask that you please make your donations payable directly to **Adopt-A-Family**. Thank you for your generous support of this annual project.

God Bless,

Debbie Fitzgibbons and Betty Poirier,  
Adopt-A-Family Committee Members

# SAINTS

## SAINT MARY-SACRED HEART

Apply now to be a SMSH scientist!



An important component of our middle school science program is the participation in science fair. These long-term projects teach our Saints to think like scientists, to develop organizational habits, and to enhance their writing and oral-presentation skills. Our amazing middle school science teacher, Mrs. Burns, integrates lessons into the curriculum to explain the process of conducting a science investigation to guide them on their way. This is just one of the many ways our teachers enhance how the Saints learn each and every day. We invite you to discover more about our school's strong curriculum by visiting our website: [www.smshschool.com](http://www.smshschool.com).

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### Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School Alumni:

Did you, your child, grandchild or other relative graduate from St. Mary's School, Sacred Heart School or Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School? If so, please go to the Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School website [www.smshschool.com](http://www.smshschool.com) and under the Alumni tab fill in the form on reconnect with SMSH. We appreciate your support in this important part of our school's history!

### Christmas Memorials

For many years our parishioners have memorialized deceased loved ones with donations for the beautification of our churches for the Christmas holy days. For all who receive budget envelopes, a specially marked envelope is included with this most recent mailing. If you do not receive budget envelopes, you are invited to make your donations by using a separate envelope marked "Christmas Flowers." Please include the names of your deceased loved ones for our Christmas Memorial Book. Please have your donations into the parish office by Wednesday, December 20.

The Christmas Memorial Book will be displayed in all three of our church buildings throughout the Christmas season. Many, many thanks for your generosity as we make our beautiful worship spaces even more festive for this holy season!

### December Women's Guild Meeting



The Transfiguration of the Lord Parish Women's Guild will be meeting **this** Tuesday, December 12, 2023. All women of the parish are invited to join us at the St. Mary's Parish Hall starting at 6:00 p.m. We will be having a Potluck Dinner and an Ornament Swap. Please feel free to bring a dish to share and a wrapped ornament for the exchange. RSVP to Cathy LaFratta at 508-612-4748 or [catlaf@aol.com](mailto:catlaf@aol.com). Come join us for an evening of fellowship and fun!

### Baptismal Preparation Classes Have Resumed

Parents requesting the baptism of their child should be registered members of the parish who attend weekend Mass here at Transfiguration of the Lord Parish on a weekly basis. Please pick up and complete one of the Parish Census forms if you have not already registered with the parish. If this is your first Baptism here at Transfiguration Parish, parents are asked to attend a brief baptismal preparation session. The next session will be held on Sunday, **January 14 at 12:30 pm** in the Sacred Heart Meeting Room. Advanced registration is required. Please call Martha at the parish office or email at [stmaryna@noozi.com](mailto:stmaryna@noozi.com) for more information.

### Transfiguration of the Lord Respect Life Group

#### Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe:

Please join us on **Tuesday, Dec 12, 2023** at the **4:30 pm** Mass at St. Mark church to celebrate the **Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe**. This feast commemorates the four apparitions of Mary in 1531 to peasant Juan Diego near Mexico City. Mary told him that a church should be built in that spot. The bishop needed more proof however, and Mary sent Juan to pick roses (rare in December) to present to the bishop. When he opened his cloak (tilma) to show the roses to the bishop, they discovered a painted image of the Blessed Virgin imprinted on the tilma, which is now preserved in the Basilica of Mexico City. Among other titles related to this event, Mary was declared Patroness of the Americas in 1999. We hope you can join us for this tribute to our Blessed Mother. This Mass will be preceded by the Rosary for Life at 4 PM. A collection basket will be available to benefit the charities of the Transfiguration Respect Life Group. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Pray for Us!

#### Monthly Meeting:

The next meeting of the Respect Life Group will take place on Thursday, **January 4, 2024 at 6:30 pm in Sacred Heart Church's Library**. We hope to see you there!



## Baptism Congratulations

Our prayerful best wishes are extended to four of our infants and their families who recently celebrated the Sacrament of Baptism. Please welcome and remember:

### *John Joseph Farroba*



Son of John & Kathleen (Hennessey) Farroba  
Godchild of Ryan Padula & Ashton Therrien

### *Cora Michael O'Donoghue*



Daughter of Michael & Emily (DeChambeau) O'Donoghue  
Godchild of Evan DeChambeau

### *Lily Mae Schofield*



Daughter of Derek & Lauren (Oggiono) Schofield  
Godchild of Jonathan Oggiono & Lori Beth Schofield

### *Jack Ramsay Webb*



Son of David Webb & Cait Ramsay  
Godchild of Barrett Ramsay & Michelle Webb

## Something to think about . . .

The gospel for the First Sunday of Advent reminded us that the Lord gives each of us work to do as we watch and wait for his coming in glory. This work is not always grand and glorious, but most often is done quietly and with no fanfare. Here's a very practical list of actions we may all take during these weeks of Advent:

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**Mend a quarrel.**

SEEK OUT A FORGOTTEN FRIEND.

Dismiss suspicion & replace it with trust.

*Write a letter.*

GIVE A SOFT ANSWER.

Encourage youth.

*Manifest your loyalty in word & deed.*

**KEEP A PROMISE.**

Forgo a grudge.

**Forgive an enemy.**

**APOLOGIZE.**

*Try to understand.*

**Examine your demands on others.**

Think first of someone else.

**BE KIND.**

**BE GENTLE.**

*Laugh a little more.*

Express your gratitude.

**WELCOME A STRANGER.**

*Gladden the heart of a child.*

TAKE PLEASURE <sup>in</sup> the BEAUTY & WONDER <sup>of</sup> the EARTH.

**SPEAK YOUR LOVE &**

**THEN SPEAK IT AGAIN.**

*Howard W. Hunter*

## *Please Pray for our Deceased:*

**Ronald E. Rioux**

**Dillon E. Achin**

**Helen Brissette**

*Pray*

*Eternal rest grant unto our beloved dead, O Lord.*

*Let perpetual light shine upon them.*

# *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent – December 10, 2023*

## READINGS FOR THE WEEK



### *First Reading*

#### **A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah**

Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service is at an end, her guilt is expiated; indeed, she has received from the hand of the LORD double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low; the rugged land shall be made a plain, the rough country, a broad valley. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Go up on to a high mountain, Zion, herald of glad tidings; cry out at the top of your voice, Jerusalem, herald of good news! Fear not to cry out and say to the cities of Judah: Here is your God! Here comes with power the Lord GOD, who rules by his strong arm; here is his reward with him, his recompense before him. Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care.

The word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*



## *Responsorial Psalm for Advent*

### **Liturgical Note:**

On the four Sundays of Advent, the Church gives us a Common Psalm for the Season. For each of these weeks, we will sing the following setting of Psalm 25:

**R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul, to you, I lift my soul.**

### **To You, O Lord**



Psalm 25  
Psalm 1 for Advent  
Marty Haugen  
English translation of the Refrain from the Lectionary for Mass, copyright © 1969.  
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### *Second Reading*

#### **A reading from the second Letter of Saint Peter**

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. The Lord does not delay his promise, as some regard “delay,” but he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar and the elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be found out.

Since everything is to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be, conducting yourselves in holiness and devotion, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved in flames and the elements melted by fire. But according to his promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you await these things, be eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace.

The word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*



## Gospel Acclamation

**R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

*Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths:  
All flesh shall see the salvation of God.*

**R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

## Gospel

The Lord be with you.  
**And with your spirit.**

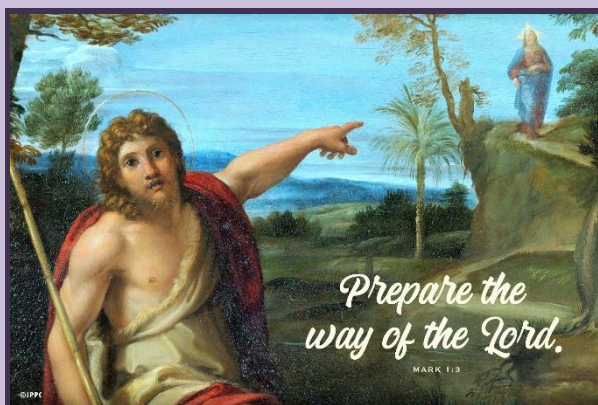
† A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: *Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice of one crying out in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."* John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. And this is what he proclaimed: *"One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*



## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### Preparing the Way:

Today's readings spin an exciting, hurry-up, preparing story. They proclaim that the fast-approaching feast of Christmas is a celebration that acknowledges that the story of Christ has not come to an end, that God's concern for us is no less evident, no less real, than it was thousands of years ago. The message of today's liturgy is clear: "Pull out all the stops! Get busy! Get ready!"

### Comment:

Today's first reading treats us once again to the powerful words of Isaiah. The mighty Lord, our kindly shepherd, is coming. We must ready ourselves for this long-anticipated advent. We must straighten out our crookedness, plane away our rough edges, broaden our narrowmindedness, fill in our gaps with grace. Then we will be ready to see and receive "the glory of the Lord."

Today's second reading calls for a state of preparation that is analogous to that demanded of those who maintain the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Once a crew finishes painting the bridge, it simply starts all over again. Peter calls Christians to a similar sort of perpetual preparation. The Lord is coming, but we can't know exactly when. Thus, the "way" of the Lord must remain in a constant condition of readiness, a steady state of repair. Conversion is ongoing. The "new heavens and the new earth" must be just that - new.

The Gospel directly parallels the first reading. Mark seems to admit that he can't do better than Isaiah, so he simply repeats the prophet's words: "Make ready the way of the Lord." How? By adhering to the Baptist's "five R's," that's how: by remembering, reforming, returning, repenting, and reconciling our lives. Such is the grace-filled grammar of readiness for the coming of the Lord.

### Reflection:

Minnesota, my home state, has but two seasons: Winter and Road-Repair. The latter, shorter season prepares Minnesotans for the former, longer one, which we are now enjoying.

The season of Road-Repair teaches us patience and composure and gives new meaning to the phrase "You can't get there from here." During this season, patience is not a virtue, it's a fact of life. One waits - till the potholes are filled in, till the bridges are reinforced, till the roads are seal-coated, till the overpasses are repaved. Until all this is done, the way from hither to yon is virtually impassable. We don't necessarily like it, but we know its urgency.

For without the season of Road-Repair, we Minnesotans would not be able to scoff at six-foot snow drifts, look forward to jump-starting the car, thrill to the adventure of slip-sliding our way to work, nor become such experts at the effects of road salt on auto quarter panels. We may not relish the season of Road-Repair, but we know that it's absolutely essential to prepare us for our favorite season.

Although the smile may limp a bit, the season of Advent for Christians is a lot like that of Road-Repair for Minnesotans. Advent is a time of getting ready or preparing the way for our favorite season, Christmastide. It's a time that not only tries, but builds up and reinforces our patience. Likewise, Advent points out that - as far as having Christmas as a goal is concerned - "you can't get there from here" unless we take the time for some lifestyle repair and reconditioning.

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# Reflections for the Week beginning Sunday, December 10, 2023

## Sunday, Dec 10, 2023

### A voice cries out

This year the Universal Declaration of Human Rights turns 75. The world could use a reminder that human rights belong to each of us and must be defended without exception. We live in an age marred by misinformation. Attacks on others grow more destructive online and in our common spaces. Climate change, hunger, and poverty are unequally borne by those whose rights are not recognized or protected. Advent is the perfect time to identify the rights that resonate most powerfully for you. Claim them. Discover ways to stand up for them. Create alliances with those whose rights are in jeopardy.

#### SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8 (5). *"In the desert prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!"*

## Monday, Dec 11, 2023

### Backstory on the Bible

The 73 books in the Catholic Bible were written hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of years before they were officially compiled. It wasn't until the late fourth century that the Catholic Church decided upon the list of sacred scripture to be included. Pope Damasus I presided over the Council of Rome of 382 that determined the scriptural canon, and he commissioned Saint Jerome to translate these texts from Greek into Latin. This collection of sacred books is the inspired word of God, reveals the truth of Revelation, and forms the core of Catholic beliefs. Pass on the Good News!

#### MEMORIAL OF DAMASUS I, POPE

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 5:17-26 (181). *"We have seen incredible things today."*

## Tuesday, Dec 12, 2023

### Mysterious mother of the Americas

On a wall, under glass, is the life-sized image of Our Lady of Guadalupe—enshrined in the Basilica of Guadalupe, on Tepeyac Hill in Mexico City, where Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego in December 1591. As mysterious and symbolic as the Woman of the Apocalypse described in Revelation 12, it continues to defy human explanation, including analysis from a NASA scientist. The humble cactus fiber cloak it appears on hasn't deteriorated in more than 400 years, nor has the image, which experts from Kodak likened to a photograph though photography wasn't invented yet. Countless miracles are associated with Guadalupe, but the greatest is the conversion of an entire continent. Pray for the people of the Americas with the Center of Concern prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe that begins: Hail Mary, Lady of Peace, We pray for the peace in our world; make us peacemakers.

#### FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

TODAY'S READINGS: Zechariah 2:14-17 or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:39-47 (690A). *"A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun."*

## Wednesday, Dec 13, 2023

### Keep your eye on the divine

Like many early Roman saints, little is known about Saint Lucy. Tradition says that her eyes were removed in an act of torture before her death for being a Christian. As such, she is the patron saint of the blind. We often take sight for granted, but Lucy should remind us, especially in hard times, to look beyond our own vision

—and see with God's eyes. The reward for our faithful acts is the beatific vision. Or as Saint Paul puts it: "We see now in a glass darkly, but then face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12). Work to improve your vision.

#### MEMORIAL OF LUCY, MARTYR

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 40:25-31; Matthew 11:28-30 (183). *"Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these things."*

## Thursday, Dec 14, 2023

### He wasn't afraid of the dark

Today is the memorial of Saint John of the Cross, a Spanish Carmelite mystic, poet, and reformer who died in 1591. He may be best known for *Dark Night of the Soul*, which develops the idea that suffering—including the sense of God's absence—can actually lead to unity with God. "The endurance of darkness is the preparation for great light," he wrote. John came to his insights through experience, having been maltreated and even imprisoned by his own religious community. If God ever seems far away, let John of the Cross guide you to the light.

#### MEMORIAL OF JOHN OF THE CROSS, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 41:13-20; Matthew 11:11-15 (184). *"Whoever has ears ought to hear."*

## Friday, Dec 15, 2023

### The secret to our success

Damned if you do, damned if you don't. That is Jesus' complaint about public opinion. John the Baptist fasted and they called him crazy. Jesus feasted and they called him a glutton and drunkard. We've all been there. The best response to criticism is success. What is success in the spiritual life? "In God's will, there is great peace" is the answer Saint Josephine Bakhita offers. Wise words. Ignore your critics, and follow Jesus' path to peace.

#### ADVENT WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 48:17-19; Matthew 11:16-19 (185). *"Wisdom is vindicated by her works."*

## Saturday, Dec 16, 2023

### Modernism gets its say

Maude Petre, who died on this date in 1937, was a British writer and religious sister best known for her work on Catholic modernism. She was a prolific author, writing on a wide range of topics, including theology, philosophy, politics, and literature. She openly supported women's suffrage, which the church opposed at the time. Her 1907 book *Catholicism and Independence* got her kicked out of her order and she was refused the sacraments by her bishop. Her views were controversial, but they helped form Catholic thinking for the Second Vatican Council. Prayerfully consider that the Catholic controversies of today may lead to the church of tomorrow.

#### ADVENT WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13 (186). *"Elijah will indeed come and restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come."*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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