

DECEMBER 18, 2011: Fourth Sunday of Advent



Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father." — Lk 1:28-32

LITURGY

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday, December 18 (2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Rom

16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38)

8:00 am- For our Parish Family

10:30 am- Victor & Alma Brosch

Monday, December 19 (Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Lk 1:5-25)

7:00 am- Joe & Benita Pavlu

10:00 am- Special Intention (H'ville Rehab)

Tuesday, December 20 (Is 7:10-14/Lk 1:26-38)

7:00 am- Emogene Kahanek

Wednesday, December 21, St. Peter Canisius, priest & doctor of the Church (Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Lk 1:39-45)

7:00 am- Dolores Ludwig

8:05 am- Milada Netardus

Thursday, December 22 (1 Sm 1:24-28/Lk 1:46-56)

7:00 am- Louis, Stazie & Jerome Haas

10:00 am- Louis Mikulenka (Stevens)

Friday, December 23, St. John of Kanty, priest (Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Lk 1:57-66)

7:00 am- Deceased members of M. I. & Henrietta Bozka Family

8:05 am- Paul P. & Mary J. Janak

Saturday, December 24 (Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25/ Midnight: Is 9:1-6/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14)

4:00 pm- Living & deceased members of Paul Jansky & Frank Schaefer Families

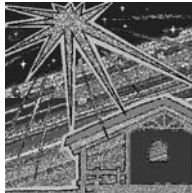
6:00 pm- Janet & John Brier

12:00 am (Midnight)- For our Parish Family

Sunday, December 25, The Nativity of the Lord (Is 52:7-10/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18)

8:00 am- Hilbert & Agnes Bludau

10:30 am- Eugene & Eva Brent



Christmas Confession Schedule

Sacred Heart:

Tuesday, December 20, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 21, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 22, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

St. John: Monday, December 19, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Christmas Mass Schedule

Sacred Heart: Christmas Eve – 4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. &

12:00 midnight. Christmas Day – 8:05 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

St. Mary's: Christmas Eve – 12:00 midnight.

Christmas Day – 9:15 a.m.

Moravia: Christmas Eve – 5:00 p.m.

St. John: Christmas Day – 9:30 a.m.

Bulletin & Radio Broadcast Mass Sponsors: In memory of Frank & Rosalee Henke by their children.

Vigil Light: Special Intention for employment.

Pray for vocations to the priesthood & religious life!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

-Baptism Preparation Class, 9:00 a.m., Rectory. Please call the Rectory in advance to register for the class.

-Czech Heritage Society Christmas Party, 11:00 a.m., Family Center.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 19

-Rosary & evening prayer, 5:30 p.m. in church.

-Choir practice 6:00 p.m. in church.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20

-Quilting Circle will not meet until January 3.

-Knights of Columbus & Catholic Daughters Christmas Party, 6:00 p.m., K.C. Hall.

Among our sick: Edna Key, Frank Fishar, Faith Del Castillo, Michael Gerdes, Renae Ross, Hubert & Mary Grahmann, Doug Blumberg, Dan & Danielle Grady, Rose Thumann, Dr. Michael Moore, Bill Gohlke, Sterlin Ritchie, Ed Aulick, Ricky Skelton, Larry Appelt, Victor Pavliska, Anita Bohuslav, Anita Kallus, Daniel Wick, Josephine Janak, Paul Najvar, Irene Bordovsky, Betty Hemmi, Milissa Zamora, Rhonda Janak, Larry Korenek, Donna Belt, Red Kahanek, Theresa (Alvin) Steffek, Bobby Pavliska, Liz Woytek, Hank & Marion Morris, Angela Hermes, nursing home residents & home-bound.

Our Gift to God: Envelopes-\$5,414.50; Immaculate Conception-\$747; Loose-\$1,272; Children's-\$60.

Please pray for the repose of the souls of *Ernest Schulte* and *Lawrence Grubert, Sr.* of our parish family. *May they and all the faithful departed rest in the peace of Christ.*

Anniversaries:

George & Betty Kazmir	35 years	Dec. 18
Ray & Cynthia Renken	25 years	Dec. 19

Perpetual Adoration will observe regular hours during the Christmas and New Year holidays. If you will be unable to fulfill your regular adoration hour, please find a replacement or call your hourly captain. For questions, please call Charlene Bradbury 798-3224.

Perpetual Adoration – An adorer is needed on Mondays at 2:00 p.m. If you are able to spend this hour in adoration with our Lord, please call Charlene Bradbury at 798-3224.

K.C.'s & Catholic Daughters Christmas Party, Tuesday, Dec. 20. Social Hour - 6:00 pm. Meal - 7:00 pm. \$3 per person. Catholic Daughters members to provide snacks.

Sacred Heart School HSA Apple Strudels – There are unbaked strudels still available for purchase at \$13 each. Great for the holidays. Call Barbara Grahmann 798-4167.

The Rectory will be closed on Monday, December 26 in observance of Christmas Day.

Come and join us for Mass and Healing Prayer on January 7, at 10:00 am, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 105 N. William Street, Victoria, celebrated by Fr. Phi Nguyen, chaplain of IWBS convent.

From the Desk of Father John

Today we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent. As we prepare to celebrate the birthday of Our Lord next Sunday, let us put ourselves in the right frame of mind. Let us remember whose birthday we are celebrating and let us prepare ourselves for His coming when He calls us home.

Thank you to all who helped in any way with the celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and to all who came to the Mass and breakfast. Thank you especially to Margaret Dornak for picking up the pan dulce, Frank and Anita Barrera Rocha for preparing and donating the breakfast tacos, the DeLaRosa family for donating the homemade tamales and the hot sauce, and Bea Heinzel for preparing the juice and coffee. Thank you also to all who participated in the liturgy and the music. It was a great celebration!

Sacred Heart Catholic School News Office 798-4251

Dec 19-Jan 2: Classes dismissed for Christmas holidays.
Extravaganza – Feb. 4: Tickets available at S.H. Credit Union, School Office & Rectory. Tickets \$125 per couple.

Religious Education (CCD) ~~ Office 798-3124 Angela McConnell, Coordinator

Dec. 21 & 28: No Class. Christmas holiday.

The Youth ConneXion Greg & Kris Hermes: 798-0655

Discount Cards \$10 each, on sale at Blahuta Advertising & the Rectory. *Thank you for supporting our youth!!*



Donations for Christmas Flowers: Mr. & Mrs. James Brooks-\$25; John & Laverne Trojcak-\$20; Jerry & Margaret Kallus-\$25; Vernell Bozka-\$50; S.E. & Mary Golsch-\$10;

Leo & Evelyn Hoffer-\$50; Johnny & Anna Havel in memory of Leo T., Viola & Charlie Henke-\$15; Ella Mae Bludau (memory of Ervin Bludau)-\$20; Guntram & Elaine Janak Family (memory of Alvin & Annie Schneider, Guntram, Annie & Dwayne Janak)-\$20; Bessie Dornak (memory of Phillip Chaloupka & Leo Dornak)-\$10; Mary Ann Pavliska (memory of Harvey Pavliska, Sr.)-\$25; Ronald Ridgeway Family (memory of Luciaro Cappellano Family)-\$15; Roland & Georgia Schaefer (58th anniversary, living & deceased family members)-\$25; In memory of Jim Bozka-\$50; AJ & Jo Kutac (memory of Newton & Freida Renken, Stanley Kutac)-\$15; Martha Sitka (memory of Henry Sitka)-\$20; Richard

& Dorothy Henneke (memory of Fred & Hattie Henneke, Charles & Tonie Galetka)-\$20.

Calendar Membership: **Dec 8:** Edward & Patty Grahmann-\$100; **Dec 9:** Leona Labay-\$100; **Dec 12:** Nicole Bell-\$50; **Dec 13:** Viola Jares-\$50; **Dec 14:** Alice & Leroy Janak-\$50.



Fourth Week of Advent (All candles are lit.)
Come, O Wisdom of God Most High, and fill our hearts with your word of truth. Come, O Giver of the Law, that we may be strengthened by your mighty power. Come, O Flower of Jesse's Root, that we may be made fruitful witnesses of your love. Come, O Key of David, to unlock the darkness of sin and free us by your grace. Come, O Radiant Dawn, sun of justice, and fill us with Your saving light. Come, O King of the Nations, and bind us all together in the unity and peace we seek. Come, O Emmanuel, presence of God among us, and fill our hearts with every good gift. Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

4th Sunday of Advent – It seems that angels are everywhere at Christmas. In today's Gospel Gabriel comes to Mary to announce that she will bear the Savior. In other stories at this time of year, an angel comes to Zechariah and Elizabeth to announce the birth of John the Baptist. An angel appears to Joseph to tell him to welcome Mary into his home. Angels appear to the shepherds to proclaim the birth of Christ, and to the Magi to warn them to flee from Herod after they have presented their gifts to the newborn King.

In our popular culture, angels adorn the Christmas cards we send, are put up on our front lawns, and festoon the house in various decorations. In an argument that reflects the different perspectives of the two Gospel stories of the birth of Jesus, families debate what will sit atop the Christmas tree: a star - which reveals the birth of Christ in Matthew's Gospel - or an angel - which heralds the birth of the Savior to the shepherds in the story written down in Luke.

Mary was hardly the first to be visited by an angel. They have a solid history in the Bible. But Mary's quick assent to the will of God is an example for all of us who follow Christ. She was willing to accept what God wanted of her, that is, to become the mother of His Son. And it was the angel that conveyed the message.

So with all of the images of angels that surround us at this time of year, it might be good to ask ourselves who are the real angels in our lives. As with Mary, there may be people around us who give insight into the will of God for us. As with the Magi, there may be people who give us warnings about the paths to follow in life. As with Joseph, there may be those who give specific direction about what is right. They are all our angels. 2011 Liturgical Publications

PRAYER FOR RAIN – Almighty God, we are in need of rain. We realize now, looking up into the clear, blue sky, what a marvel even the least drop of rain really is. To think that so much water can fall out of the sky, which now is empty and clear! We place our trust in You. We

are sure that You know our needs. But You want us to ask You anyway, to show You that we know we are dependent on You. Look on our dry hills and fields, dear God, and bless them with the living blessing of soft rain. Then the land will rejoice, and the rivers will sing Your praises, and the hearts of men will be made glad. Amen.

Parish Financial Report – October, 2011

Church Income:

Sunday Collections	\$ 30,778.50
Other Donations	5,000.34
Family Center Rental	975.00
Interest	547.14
Religious Articles	999.45
World Mission Collection	291.00
Picnic Transfer	<u>17,000.00</u>
Total Church Income	<u>\$ 55,591.43</u>

School Income:

Student Fees	\$ 275.00
PreK – 12th Grade Tuition	58,815.00
Extended Care	2,320.00
Catholic Education Envelopes	1,907.00
Memorials	605.00
Shop Donations	630.00
Extravaganza	100.00
Book Fair	2,131.10
Miscellaneous	<u>200.00</u>
Total School Income	<u>\$ 66,983.10</u>

Church Expense:

Salaries	\$ 7,632.71
Utilities	2,092.33
Church Expense	3,292.87
Rectory Expense	290.29
Office Expense	1,106.02
Religious Articles	546.96
Building Insurance	1,803.95
Car Insurance	431.00
Taxes	233.27
Family Center Expense	396.13
World Mission Collection	291.00
Medical Insurance & Retirement	2,507.00
Repairs & Maintenance	<u>263.83</u>
Total Church Expense	<u>\$ 20,887.36</u>

School Expense:

Salaries	\$ 80,146.87
Contracted Services	648.03
Office & Teaching Expense	1,477.50
Extended Care Supplies	41.11
Postage	370.55
Staff Development	174.00
Assessment Fees	515.00
Textbooks & Testing	415.95
Library Expense	917.14
Utilities	6,253.63
Plant Repairs	993.04
Bus & Vehicle Expense	5,603.35
Payroll Taxes	5,903.32

Medical Insurance	14,870.40
Retirement	3,650.00
Property Insurance	3,250.87
Convent Expense	645.63
Custodial Supplies	63.41
Miscellaneous	<u>521.57</u>
Total School Expense	<u>\$126,461.37</u>

Parish Income	\$122,574.53
Parish Expense	<u>-147,348.73</u>
Parish Deficit	<u>\$(24,774.20)</u>

SACRED HEART CHURCH ENDOWMENT FUND –

In memory of Gene Drozd: Frank & Rita Zaruba-\$15; Lawrence & Laura Henke-\$10. **In memory of Tommie Perez:** Gabriel & Melinda Chapa-\$20. **In memory of Henry Jalufka:** Charles & Dorothy Jansky-\$10; Grove & Sue Shade-\$50; Dennis & Barbara Janak-\$50; Jeanette Henke-\$25; Curtis Mikulencak-\$20; John & Sherry Henke-\$20; Chris & Sandra Steffek-\$10; Kenneth & Mary Anne Etzler-\$5; Mr. & Mrs. Robert Lee Berckenhoff-\$20; Joseph & Diane Kallus-\$10; Marvin & Annette Grahmann-\$10. **In memory of Eugene Mucala:** Peoples State Bank-\$10. **In memory of Edna Haas:** Bruce & Debbie Schneider-\$30; Bettye Appelt-\$20; Chris & Julie Kubena Family-\$25; Bill & Jo Ann Zapalac-\$5; Elrose & Ernest Baumgart, Jr.-\$40; Peoples State Bank-\$10. **In memory of Gilbert Butschek:** Charles & Dorothy Jansky-\$10; Welden Lell-\$15; John Pesek-\$50; Arthur & Rose Mary Etzler-\$10; Marvin, David & Carol Bohuslav & family-\$20; Howard & Carol Bludau-\$50; Daniel & Carolyn Strauss-\$20; Allen & Anita Steffek-\$10; John & Laverne Trojcak-\$25; Billy & Frances Moore-\$10; Carolyn & Richard Roos-\$20; Marjorie Hlavac-\$15; Buck & Wendy Janak-\$30; Danny & Barbara Allcorn-\$20; Sharon Janak-\$20; Gertrude & Phil Elliott-\$25; Henry & Elrose Muenster-\$20; William Gohlke-\$20; Anita Barrera-Rocha-\$10; Roland & Georgia Schaefer-\$10; Edmund & Frances Janak-\$10; Vanice Krejci-\$10; Helen M. Janak-\$10; Daniel & Janie Drab-\$10; Evelyn Holy-\$10; Lucille Jemela-\$10; Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Laqua-\$10; Bernice Kubos-\$10; Donna & Larry Janak-\$10; Genevieve Matusek-\$10; Tommy & Joan Macha-\$20; Hubert & Liz Janak-\$15; Richard & Dorothy Henneke-\$10; Marvin & Lillian Rabel-\$10; Leo & Liz Janak-\$20; Laurence & Carol Bludau-\$10; Roman & Gertie Shimek-\$10; Henrietta Jansky-\$10; Alvin Mikulenska-\$15; Frankie & Lucille Klekar-\$15; Ben & MaryLee Brosch-\$10; Forrest & Carol Sevcik-\$5; Bernard & Mary Grahmann-\$10; Marvin & Annette Grahmann-\$20; Johnnie & Alene Steffek-\$10; Jerome Pesek-\$15.

SACRED HEART CHURCH MUSIC FUND – In

memory of Dennis Smirak, Henry Jalufka & Joe Matula: Bob Kubena-\$65. **In memory of Betty Hernandez:** Soila Sanchez-\$10; Kubena Funeral Home-\$20. **In memory of Laurie Grafe:** Kubena Funeral

Home-\$20. **In memory of Gilbert Butschek:** Gussie Kelnar-\$20.

SACRED HEART CCD PROGRAM –

In memory of Joe “Pepe” Patek: Gilbert & Mary Schindler-\$20. **In memory of Edna Haas:** Patrick & Carol Steffek-\$15. **In memory of Gilbert Butschek:** Travis & Kari Etzler-\$20; Nick & Terri Nerren-\$20.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL ENDOWMENT FUND –

In memory of Daniel Wagner, Schulenburg: Victoria H. Wagner-\$100. **In memory of Urban Hemmi:** Judy Renger-\$25; Peoples State Bank-\$10. **In memory of Henry Jalufka:** Anthony & Virginia Kristek-\$50; Glen Bludau-\$20; Herbert & Georgie Etzler-\$20. **In memory of Marvin Pekar & Richard Klimitchek:** Marcus & Marjorie Grahmann-\$40. **In memory of Laurie Grafe:** Rita & Frank Zaruba-\$15; Bill & Virginia Grafe-\$20. **In memory of Gilbert Butschek:** Dorothy Bujnoch-\$15; Ronnie & Libby Bludau-\$30; Margaret Novak-\$10; Lucille Werner-\$25; Robert & Louise Pesek-\$20; Marlin & Agnes Kuenstler-\$5; Edith Konarik-\$10.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL ALUMNI FUND –

In memory of Gilbert Butschek: Raymond & Virginia Steffek-\$20; Rick & Karen Bigham-\$20; Virginia Kocian-\$10.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL OPERATING FUND –

In memory of Gene Drozd: Bill & Margaret Bludau-\$20; Ella Mae Bludau-\$10. **In memory of Daniel Wagner, Schulenburg:** Bill & Margaret Bludau-\$20. **In memory of Urban Hemmi:** Lucille (Carlwin) Werner-\$25. **In memory of Henry Jalufka:** Bryan Berger-\$100; Phillip & Nanci Hadash-\$15; Jay Tinsley Family-\$20; James & Kandyace Grahmann-\$20; Paul & Sandra Migl-\$10; Dennis & Gerardette Haas-\$15; Henry & Delores Jasek-\$20; Pat Mladenka-\$30. **In memory of Anne Gerlich:** Pat Mladenka-\$30. **In memory of Odessa Blumberg:** Rosemary Hermes-\$10. **In memory of David Halata, Sr.:** Anthony & Anna Etzler-\$20. **In memory of Gilbert Butschek:** Lucille (Carlwin) Werner-\$25; Terry & Ervin Bludau-\$20; Pat Mladenka-\$30; George & Irene Kneble-\$20; Frank & Rita Zaruba-\$20; Rosemary Hermes-\$10; Sonia Menking-\$20; Kenneth & Karen Jansky-\$50; Paul & Sheila Arnona-\$20; Robert & Leona Steffek-\$25; James & Tonie Brooks-\$10; Henry & Caroline Janak-\$20; Wesley & Mary Tymrak-\$20; Anthony & Joyce Harper-\$10; Casper & Gerda Janak-\$25; Paul & Theresa Voelkel-\$10; Bessie Dornak-\$10; Leonard & Fannie Lamza-\$20; Loretta & Tony Janak-\$10; Alois & Rose Janak-\$10; Roland & Sue Gassman-\$10; Donald & Barbara Steffek-\$10; Doris Rektorik-\$10; Gladys Strauss-\$20; Felix & Mary Ann Janak-\$10; Gene & Trudy Janak-\$20; Virginia Bozka-\$20; Leo & Joyce Janda-\$20; Glenn & Donna Leopold-\$20; Joe, Ruth & Patrick Fabian-\$10; Elsie Steffek-\$10; Sharon Bludau-\$50; Madeline Migura-\$20; Jimmie & Jeanette Jahn-\$10; John & Charlene Pillow-\$20; Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Krupala-\$10.

In memory of Edna Haas: Allen & Ann Brown-\$25; Earl & Betty Heinsohn-\$40; Franklin & Wilma Stary-\$10.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL SHOP FUND –

In memory of Gilbert Butschek: Arthur Spies-\$20.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL CAFETERIA –

In memory of Gilbert Butschek: Margaret Henneke-\$20.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL ATHLETIC FUND –

In memory of Gilbert Butschek: Daniel & Dorothy Rother-\$10.

CAROLYN DWORSKY SCHOLARSHIP FUND –

In memory of Henry Jalufka: Kenneth & Denise Barton-\$10. **In memory of Gilbert Butschek:** Emil & Joyce Hermes-\$10.

DOROTHY HENNEKE SCHOLARSHIP FUND –

In memory of Henry Jalufka: Gary & Carol Pustejovsky-\$10. **In memory of Leona Najvar, Bobby Clark, Wesley Buchanek, & Eugene Mucala:** Tommy & Elsie Grahmann-\$40. **In memory of Gilbert Butschek:** Roy & Loretta Hardcastle-\$20.

VICTOR GRAFE SCHOLARSHIP FUND –

In memory of Laurie Grafe: Dorothy Bujnoch-\$25.

JEROME HAAS SCHOLARSHIP FUND –

In memory of Harry Hruzek, Gene Drozd, & Urban Hemmi: Steven & Shandlyn Koehne Family-\$30.

DWAYNE JANAK SCHOLARSHIP FUND –

In memory of Gilbert Butschek: Sherry Hale-\$10; Victor & Katherine Kahanek-\$30; Anne & Mark Hanson-\$30; Jackie Bludau-\$10; Mike & Helen Technik-\$20; Roman, Miranda & Garrett Henke-\$20; Leo & Evelyn Hoffer-\$20; Melvin & Joyce Janak-\$20.

FR. JOHN PETERS’ SEMINARY BURSE #5 –

In memory of Henry Jalufka: Nell Fikac-\$20; Willie Barborak-\$10; Glen & Mary Ann Janca-\$10; Daniel & Martha Brom-\$10; Sidney & Barbara Jasek-\$20; Agnes Olsovsky-\$10; Fred & Debbie Huser-\$10; Phillip & Rosemary Hemmi-\$10; R.L. & Elsie Orsak-\$15; Robert & Barbara Grahmann-\$20; Vernell Bozka-\$20; Frank & Elrose Migl-\$25; Kathleen & Mike Chovanetz-\$25; Debbie Smith-\$25; John & Kathryn Koch-\$25; Stephen & Martha Gold-\$30; Dennis & Judy Barta-\$30; Francis & Allyne Fishbeck-\$50; Ervin & Bernice Neskora-\$10; Sherry Hale-\$10; Martin & Karen Steffek-\$10; Dorothy M. Bujnoch-\$10; Frank & Bernadette Bludau-\$10; Quinton & Annette Raab-\$20; Barbara Klozik-\$25. **In memory of Irene Mendel & Gene Drozd:** Ervin & Bernice Neskora-\$20. **In memory of Gilbert Butschek:** Frank & Bernadette Bludau-\$20; Theresa Pesek-\$40.

RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS FOR WOMEN

ENTERING THE CONVENT FROM SACRED

HEART PARISH –

In memory of Henry Jalufka: Rosie Olsovsky-\$15; Tommy & Joan Macha-\$20; Kenneth & Karin Filipp-\$15; Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Matula-\$15; Adolph & Georgie Dziadek-\$20; Terry & Ervin Bludau-\$20; Patrick & Christie Steffek-\$25; Richard & Sheila Klimitchek-\$100; Lillian Ann Hrcncir Family-\$100;

Doris A. Lala-\$20; James & Jody Brown-\$25; Ella Mae Bludau-\$20; Douglas & Rhonda Syamken-\$20.

SACRED HEART EARLY CHILDHOOD & DAY CARE – **In memory of Edna Haas:** Johnny & Anna Havel-\$10. **In memory of Gilbert Butschek:** Elroy & Barbara Holik-\$20.

The Word of God This Week

Set time aside each day this week with other members of your household, with other members of your parish or alone to listen to and reflect on the living Word of God. Use these passages from the Lectionary that are assigned for Liturgy this week. Reflect on how the Lord is inviting you to a deeper union with him.

TODAY

2 Samuel 7:1–5, 8B–12, 14A, 16

Romans 16:25–27

Luke 1:26–38

MONDAY

Luke 1:5–25

"I have been sent to . . . bring you this good news."

TUESDAY

Luke 1:26–38

"Greetings, favored one!"

WEDNESDAY

Luke 1:39–45

"Blessed is she who believed . . . what was spoken to her by the Lord."

THURSDAY

Luke 1:46–56

"My soul magnifies the Lord . . ."

FRIDAY

Luke 1:57–66

" . . . he began to speak, praising God."

SATURDAY

Luke 1:67–79

"He has raised up a mighty savior for us . . ."

Finding Favor with God

As a child, did you ever want to be somebody special, to be selected by a teacher to have the lead role in the play, to sing the solo at the concert, or to crown the Blessed Mother in May? Perhaps you still have fond memories of such an event when you were singled out or when you were chosen.

The story in today's Gospel (Luke 1:2–38) tells us of the Annunciation, when an angel appeared to a young Jewish woman named Mary and announced that God had chosen her to be the mother of his child. What an honor!

This event may be the greatest single moment in human history, for it was then that Jesus, the Son of God, became Incarnate. It was at this moment that Jesus was "conceived by the Holy Spirit," as we say each Sunday in the Nicene Creed. While we celebrate his birth at Christmas, it was during that conversation that Jesus became one of us.

Although the Feast of the Annunciation is celebrated each March 25th—nine months prior to the celebration of Jesus' birth—it is also appropriate that we reconsider this passage again during Advent, for it invites us to think about what it means to be chosen by God.

Advent is a time of waiting, yes, and also a time of preparation. During Advent, we prepare our hearts and our houses to welcome Christ so that he can find a home there with us. Isn't that what Mary did with her life: prepare herself for God's invitation? Prepare herself as a fitting home for God?



The Faith of the Church

God chose Mary to become the mother of Jesus because God had been with Mary in a special way throughout her life, filling her with grace and preserving her from sin. Mary didn't have to say yes to the Angel Gabriel: she had free will. But her yes was actually spoken long before the Angel appeared to her in Nazareth (Cf. *US Catholic Catechism for Adults*, p 470).



Questions of the Week

Mary could willingly say yes to God because of the loving relationship she had with him. How would you describe your current relationship with God? What would make the relationship stronger?

Adults

What is one thing that I can do this week to grow closer in my relationship with God?

Children

What are three things I can do this week to show my love for God?

Responding to God's Word . . .

The experience of "falling in love" can take many forms. Some love relationships are immediate—love at first sight—while others develop gradually.

While chemicals in our brains cause the immediate feeling of being in love, staying in love requires that we spend time getting to know and trust our beloveds. Eventually, we realize that we want to spend our lives with this one person, someone proposes, and two become one flesh.

Mary obviously had a similar deep and long-term relationship with God well before the angel appeared to her. Luke tells us that Mary was

"much perplexed" by the angel's words and that she "pondered what sort of greeting this might be." This suggests that she was surprised by the words the angel spoke, but not surprised to see an angel.

The angel told Mary that she had "found favor with God," but these words only confirmed what Mary already knew from her relationship with God. Her words in response expressed what was also known: she was "the servant of the Lord."

God wishes to be our beloved as well. He has chosen us and has invited us to a loving relationship with him. Are you ready to say "yes" to God?

SUGGESTIONS

Use one of these suggestions or one of your own to respond to God's Word this week.

In the home. Pray the Rosary as a family at least one time this week. Talk about how the Hail Mary prayer invites you to come closer to Christ.

In the workplace or in school. Carry a rosary with you every day this week. Whenever you have a few minutes free, finger the beads, say the words "Hail Mary" or "Our Father," and spend a little time with God.

In the community. Publicly pray before meals, pray for those in need every time you hear a siren, and make a donation to help others each time you buy a gift.



"To know Christ is not enough. To be convinced that he is the Savior of the world is not enough. To affirm your faith in him as we do in the Apostles' Creed is not enough. You really don't actively believe in Christ until you make a commitment of your life to him and receive him as your Savior."

BILLY GRAHAM

For reflection . . .

Concretely, what is meant by the phrase "receive Jesus as my Savior"?

SALVATION IS NOT SOMETHING THAT IS DONE FOR YOU BUT SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS WITHIN YOU. IT IS NOT THE CLEARING OF A COURT RECORD BUT THE TRANSFORMATION OF A LIFE ATTITUDE.

ALBERT W. PALMER

FROM *MISSION* BY MARK LINK, SJ

Finding Favor with God

Loving God,
help me to find favor
with you, as Mary did. Help
me to be brave, like Mary was,
as I face the difficult times in my
life. Help me to accept willingly the
gifts and challenges that you offer to
me and to my family. Help me to be
open to receiving the Holy Spirit into
my heart so that the divine life of
Christ may come to life in me. Grant
me the humility to pray with
Mary, I am the Lord's servant.
Let it be according to
your word. Amen.

Carry this thought in your heart as a guide for your faith journey this week.

By gently repeating the words of the Hail Mary we "enter the silence of our hearts, where Christ's Spirit dwells." This "restful and contemplative prayer" leads us into the mystery of God.

See *US Catholic Catechism for Adults*, page 300

Do not be afraid . . . for you have found favor with God. Luke 1:30

Profile in Faith

Benedict Joseph Flaget

Benedict Joseph Flaget (1763–1850) was the first bishop of the diocese of Bardstown, Kentucky (now the Archdiocese of Louisville), the first American diocese west of the Appalachians. Flaget spent his life growing the Church in the vast territory under his care. His life was a living "yes" to God.

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