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Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church



Bulletin for December 7, 2008

Second Sunday of Advent

John the Baptist's call to repentance is echoed in the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship: "Christians must beg God for the grace of conversion: the grace to know who they are, to whom they belong, how they are to live—the grace to repent and change and grow, the grace to become good disciples and stewards."

Weeding the Garden of Our Hearts

We have some themes going in the Scriptures today that might make you very happy --- such as Isaiah's very first word: "Comfort!" The word itself is soothing, as in "comfort food". Well, today Isaiah brings out the comfort for the soul. "Comfort, console my people," says God, because the punishments the Israelites received for being unfaithful to God are finally over. Today, as we get closer to the coming of Jesus, Isaiah's theme is: "clear a pathway through the desert --- even out the rough places – and shout it out: Your God is here!"

How are we doing at cleaning up the wilderness of our hearts for the Lord God to enter in? Many times, our hearts can feel as numb and empty as a wilderness --- maybe we just hear an echo, as if we're praying in a void. At other times, we feel so choked with injustice and cruelty of the world that we don't realize our hearts are like weed-infested gardens that desperately need clearing out. So it is when John pours water over the baptized at the River Jordan. Their eyes are opened, and they see new hope for their futures. They are so eager to clear out the dirt and weeds of their old lives, that they begin to pour out their sins, repenting, and become eager to change.

What is your idea of repentance? Remember that Isaiah says "Jesus is like a shepherd...gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast..." Don't we all feel better when someone we've hurt wraps their arms around us and says, "It's Okay --- it's forgotten"? The Sacrament of Reconciliation offers that comfort in the name of Jesus. And when we ask to be changed, Jesus calls us to return to new life by receiving him into our hearts in Communion. Now, THAT'S comfort food.

Second Week of Advent

Prayer for Forgiveness

Merciful God,
John the Baptist prepared for the coming
of Christ
by proclaiming a baptism for the
repentance of sins.

In this Advent season, we prepare for
Christ's coming
by searching our hearts and asking your
forgiveness.

Forgive us for loving you too little
and our neighbors less than ourselves,
for preferring our will to yours,
for being lukewarm in prayer and timid
in faith.

Forgive our harsh words and resentments,
our excuses, selfishness, and pride.
Grant us sorrow for our sins, forgiving hearts,
and the grace to amend our lives.
May we never despair of your mercy
but find our hope increasing
as we await our Savior's birth. Amen.

Jesse Tree

Symbols for this week
represent:

- 1] **Jacob and His dream Genesis 27:41 128:zz**
- 2] **Symbol of Prophecy Is 4:2-7**
- 3] **Joseph & His Coat Gen. 37:1-36**
- 4] **Moses and the Law - Exodus 20:1-17**
- 5] **Blessing of Aaron**
- 6] **Samuel/Word of God**

Los Sencillos Símbolos de Adviento

(The humble symbols of Advent)

For a few days in December of 1531 at Tepeyac, a hillside northwest of Mexico City, the Virgin Mary appeared on several occasions to Juan Diego, a humble and poor Aztec Indian. For many Catholics, the image that miraculously appeared on Juan Diego's *tilma* is a true image of the Mother of God, patroness of the Americas. With her hands held together in prayerful reverence, just days away from giving birth to the Son of God, our Lady of Guadalupe is the most popular and venerated image of the Virgin Mary among Hispanics.

The feast day of Guadalupe falls just a few days after the feast of the Immaculate Conception, making the Virgin a loving and fitting symbol of Advent. While the Immaculate Conception is the bridge between hoping for a Savior to come and the arrival of salvation through Mary and the birth of Jesus, Our Lady of Guadalupe is the bridge of salvation between the New World and the Old World, between conqueror and those who were conquered.

And just as Mary responded with obedience and faith to God's calling, Juan Diego (whose feast day is celebrated on December 9th) accepted the mission given to him by the Virgin Mother. God placed his trust in Mary, a humble woman, and in turn, the Mother of God sis the same when she appeared before a humble Aztec Indian.

Both Mary and Juan Diego accepted God's mission despite the difficulties they would certainly entail. While Mary endured the doubts over her son, Juan Diego faced the doubts of the bishop. After all, it is hard to believe God would send his son into this world to be born from a humble young woman or that the Mother of God would choose to appear before such a poor man. But as the scripture teaches us in the book of Sirach (Sr.3:20) "The Lord's power is great and he is honored by those who are humble."

Our Lady responded to Juan Diego's doubts by saying, "You are my ambassador, in you I place all my trust." When Juan Diego heard the words of the Virgin he was very much consoled, his heart became peaceful, and he accepted his mission. When Mary heard the angel announce she would give birth to the "Son of the Most High" by the power of the Holy Spirit, she responded with obedience, "I am the Lord's servant."

Just as the birth of a child born in meager circumstances changed the world, the faith and conversion of a poor but dignified Aztec Indian brought two worlds together, bringing many to believe in Mary and in the Son of God. By saying "yes", Mary of Guadalupe and Juan Diego, humble servants of the Lord, helped bring salvation to a world desperately in need of a Savior.

Through the week in our parish:

Calendar for December 8 — December 13, 2008 Daily Readings

December 8, Monday: Noon Mass & Mass @7pm, Holy Day of Obligation Morning prayer, 7:30am	Isaiah 30:19-21m 23-26 Psalm 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 Matthew 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8
December 9, Tuesday: Noon Mass Morning prayer, 7:30am RCIA, 7pm	Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm 96:1-2, 3 & 10ac, 11-12, 13 Matthew 18:12-14
December 10, Wednesday: Noon Mass Morning prayer, 7:30am Advent Reconciliation, 7pm	Isaiah 40:25-31 Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8 & 10 Matthew 11:28-30
December 11, Thursday: Noon Mass Morning prayer, 7:30am Eucharistic Adoration starts after noon service	Isaiah 41:13-20 Psalm 145:1 & 9, 10-11, 12-13ab Matthew 11:11-15
December 12, Friday: Our Lady of Guadalupe Masses: @ Our Lady of the Angels, Kenai, 9AM @ Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Noon and 7pm — the 9am and 7pm Masses will be in Spanish Morning prayer, 7:30am Eucharistic Adoration continuous from yesterday, ends before Mass	Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab (690A) Judith 13:18bcde, 19 Luke 1:39-47
December 13, Saturday: 5pm Mass Reconciliation, 4:00pm	Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11 Psalm 80:1ac & 3b, 15-16, 18-19 Matthew 17:9a, 10-13
December 14, Sunday: 9:00am, 11:30am Masses Kids' Bazaar & Breakfast at OLPH, after Masses on Sunday	Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11 (8B) Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 Isaiah 61:1 (cited in Luke 4:18)

Saturday, December 13, 2008

5:00pm

Sunday, December 14 , 2008

9:00am

11:30am

Eucharistic Ministers:

Barbara Bonk
John Bonk
Kathy Culling
Anna LaRoche
Krys Williams

Barbara Dilley
Bob Evenson
Alyson Stogsdill
Jim Stogsdill
Kevin Woodvine

Karen Evans
Diane Garske
Lucy Katzenberger
Tonilyn Spring
Remy Spring

Lectors:

1st reading:
Dave Carey
2nd reading:
Barbara O'Lena

1st reading:
Kathleen Evenson
2nd reading:
Eli Woodvine

1st reading:
Linda Houglum
2nd reading:
Charlie Miller

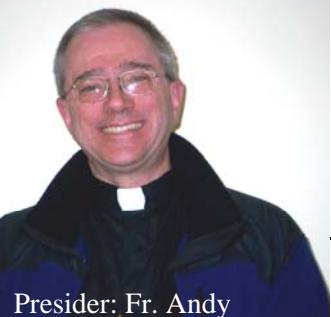
Altar Servers:

Hannah Pothast

Alex Agosti
Nate O'Lena

Danny McIntosh
Edward Johnson

Mop & Bucket: 12/8 — 12/13, Marty Oberg family
Collection Counters: 12/14, Kathryn Dunagan & Cathy Haas



Presider: Fr. Andy

Youth Bulletin Items: This weekend's Teen Night will be at Our Lady of the Angels in Kenai on Sunday with mass starting at 2:30 p.m., followed by a trip to the Nikiski Pool [transportation provided to and from the pool]. Pick up will be at O.L.A. at 6:30 p.m. Sign up is in the foyer at the teen bulletin board, and the normal \$5 cover charge applies. Female swimwear should be one-piece or covered with a dark t-shirt. For more information, contact Youth Ministry coordinator Adam Bell at 262-4956.

SCRIP NEWS . . . Did you know there are over 50 retailers that give extra bonus discount this time of year? What a great way to make your dollar go farther and help you spend cash instead of adding to your credit card bill. SCRIP, a good thing for everyone.

Kairos update The third Kairos retreat will be held at Wildwood January 8 to 11. If you can bake some cookies or give a half hour to pray during the weekend, please see Alex Zerbinos or Scott Earsley (262-7094).

We need help with the Kairos Prayer Board for the retreat at the Prison...please sign up for the success of this ministry. Prayer is always powerful !!!

ATTENTION . . . Kenai River Nursery is a contributing business to this parish and our SCRIP program. If making purchases this holiday there please consider using SCRIP gift cards.

We are most appreciative of Pegge Bernecker's time with us this last week. The varied resources and opportunities that were granted us during the retreat gave us much insight into the Intention, Beauty and Hope that we may aspire to during Advent season.

Truth Pursuit practice session will be in the hall after 11:30am Mass on December 14th — all are welcome. For more information, call **Kathy Johnson @ 776-8593**.

A Resource — The website for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) contains a quick computer access to the text of daily readings, and also has that text in downloadable audio. The address is: <http://www.usccb.org/nab/>

Lowes is now in our community and available through SCRIP. Plan ahead for your home improvement needs and use our Lowes SCRIP.

Did you know that 58% of women and men religious are past age 70, and 7% are past age 90? Next weekend, the parishes of our Archdiocese will hold a second collection to benefit the Retirement Fund for Religious. Your gift to this collection will help ensure quality of life and adequate health care for elderly women and men religious. Please prayerfully consider donating to help provide for those who have devoted their lives to our Church. For more information visit www.retiredreligious.org.



A LOOK AHEAD:

Holy Day of Obligation: Monday, December 8. Masses @ noon & 7pm.

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe: Friday, December 12th. Spanish Mass offered at 7pm.

Advent Reconciliation service is December 10th, Wednesday @ 7pm. Kenai's Reconciliation service is December 17th @ 7pm.

Christmas Poinsettia Remembrance Fund is available to remember loved ones; for \$12, a poinsettia will be put in sanctuary area. Please put name on envelope along with the money in container in foyer.

Christmas Cleaning/decorating will take place Tuesday December 23rd; there is a sign up sheet on the foyer. Please bring vacuums and helping hands.

Memorial Mass of Resurrection for Joseph Marchetti is Tuesday @ 7pm.

Salvation Bell Ringing sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. Please consider participating with your family for one hour—

Children's Christmas Pageant practice for Midnight Mass is Sunday, December 21st at 10am. Please meet in Community Room.

Generations of Faith planning team meeting, Tuesday @ 3pm in the hall. If you would like to help plan the January session, please join us.

