

Dear Padre,

Was Jesus born in a stable or a cave? The Christmas scene in our church has Jesus born in a little shed, but in my friend's church it looks more like a cave. The Bible says Jesus was born in a manger, so just where was Jesus born?

The Christmas scenes, sometimes called Nativity scenes or crèches, vary from church to church. In Scripture, we find more details about the Nativity in Luke's Gospel, but even he simply says that Mary wrapped Jesus in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because the inn was full (Luke 2:7). In none of the Scriptures do we have any details about what the place looked like, but since a manger is a place where caregivers feed livestock, we can assume that Jesus was born in a stable of some kind. At that time, small caves sometimes were used as stables. Nativity scenes, though, are not an attempt to present a historically accurate picture of where Jesus was born. Rather, scenes of the birth of Jesus remind us of the special love that God shows for us in sending the Son to us. We do not care so much about creating an exact picture of what took place as we do of beholding the beauty and wonder of God born among us. ●



THE OFFICE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, ATTRIBUTED TO JACOBUS COEN

The Redemptorists / DearPadre.org

MONDAY

December 18
Advent Weekday
Jer 23:5-8
Mt 1:18-25

TUESDAY

December 19
Advent Weekday
Jgs 13:2-7,
24-25a
Lk 1:5-25

WEDNESDAY

December 20
Advent Weekday
Is 7:10-14
Lk 1:26-38

THURSDAY

December 21
Advent Weekday
Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a
Lk 1:39-45

FRIDAY

December 22
Advent Weekday
1 Sm 1:24-28
Lk 1:46-56

SATURDAY

December 23
Advent Weekday
Mal 3:1-4,
23-24
Lk 1:57-66

SUNDAY

December 24
Fourth Sunday of Advent
2 Sm 7:1-5,
8b-12, 14a, 16
Rom 16:25-27 Lk 1:26-38

Timely topics viewed with a Catholic perspective
Catholic Update explores contemporary issues through the lens of Catholic teaching and traditions. Print and digital subscriptions! For more information, visit Liguori.org or call 800-325-9521.

Our Parish COMMUNITY

December 17, 2023

Third Sunday of Advent (B)

Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11 / 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 / John 1:6-8, 19-28



Making Room for God

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

The story of John the Baptist is the story of taking a back seat to Jesus, of fading into the background so that Jesus might be the light. Fading out of the picture is something we may find ourselves doing more than once in our lives. Sometimes it's also a choice we have to make, even when it's painful.

Actor Nick Nolte talked about what it was like for him when he turned seventy; how his body would hurt and how painful it was to get out of bed some mornings. He told of how he cried when a longtime friend passed away and of the sadness death brings. But the worst part, he said, is coming to the realization that your children have grown up, are on their own, and don't need you the way they once did. His son has a family, and for him the family comes first, as it should be. That's the painful part, Nolte says, the letting go of your children because they are no longer yours; in reality, they never were.

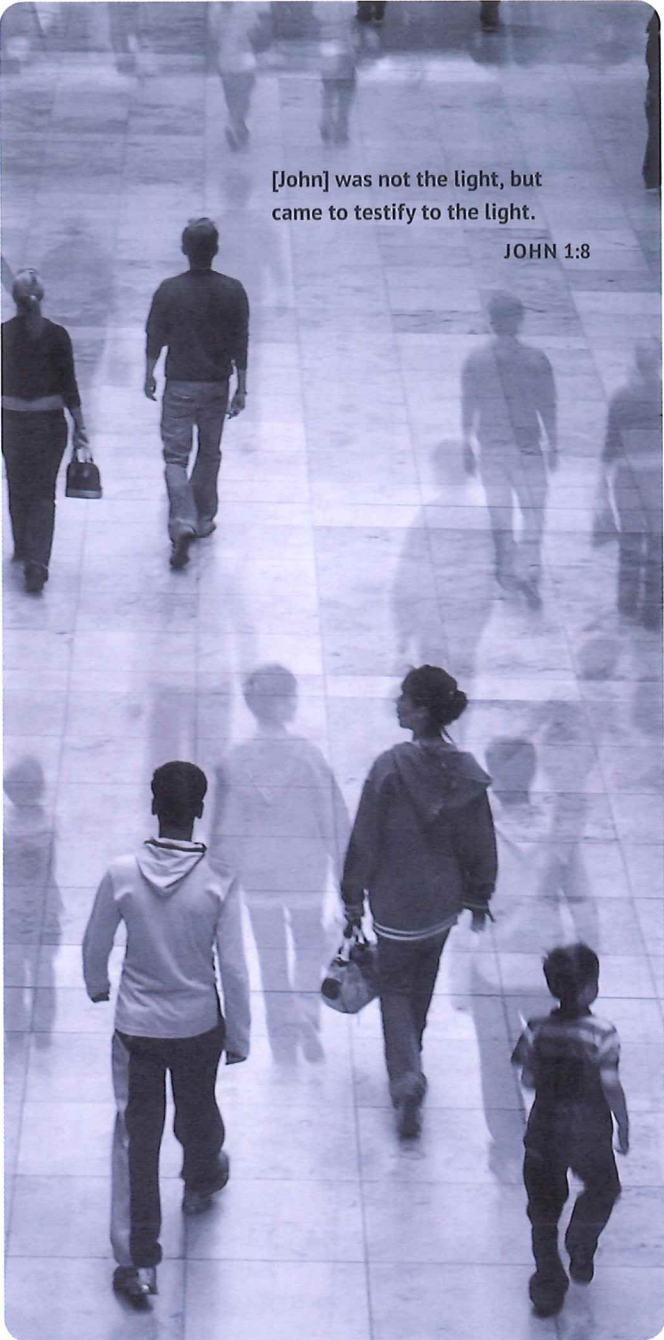
From the perspective of faith, why do we need to fade into the background? To leave room for the hand of God in life, that's why. So that God can do what God does best, and so that we don't get in the way of it all. That is a task not only at the end of life but for all of life. ●

Reflect

When has it been difficult for you to fade into the background?

[John] was not the light, but came to testify to the light.

JOHN 1:8



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

The Baptist is a model for those in the Church who are called to proclaim Christ to others: they are able to do so only by detaching from themselves and from worldliness, by not attracting people to themselves but directing them toward Jesus. This is joy: directing toward Jesus. And joy must be the characteristic of our faith.

ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 13, 2020



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600 Soderberg St. Lakin, KS 67860
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Fr. Peter Tran, Pastor—355-6405
Tuesday—Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Email: saintanthonylakin@gmail.com
Website: saintanthonylakin.org



Karen Burden, Rel.Edu. Committee 355-6388
Lisa Gannett, DRE 355-6611
Gwen Waechter, Parish C. Chair 272-1030
Tressa Powers, Finance C. Chair 355-6206
Altar S. President, Nanette Rice 355-7676
Tom Bachman, Grand Knight 640-8259
Prayer Line Starters, Allison Bushek 355-1696
& Nanette Rice 355-7676

Reconciliation: Confessions will be heard every Saturday at 3:00 p.m. and every Sunday at 8:00 a.m. or by appointment.

Baptism: Parents who have children to be baptized must be registered. Godparents must be 16 years of age or older and have received Confirmation and Eucharist. Please call the parish office for an appointment.

Marriage: Please contact parish priest at least four to six months before the wedding.

Anointing of the Sick: Celebrated anytime by calling a priest.

3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

12/16/2023 - Saturday, 4: 00 p.m.

Servers: Ryann & Brecken Bamberger, Rowen Simon

Reader: Tom Bachman

E.O.HC: Debbie Frederick, Gwen Waechter

12/17/2023 – Sunday, 9:00 a.m.

Servers: Haley Berning, Jace Berning, Cade Berning

Reader: Kyle Berning

E.O. HC: Robert Longoria, Kyle Berning

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

12/23/2023 - Saturday, 4: 00 p.m.

Servers: Jason Velasco, Jonathan Gannett, Nathan Gannett

Reader: Debbie Frederick

E.O.HC: Tino Rosales Jr., Karen Burden

12/24/2023 – Sunday, 9:00 a.m.

Servers: Volunteers

Reader: Volunteer

E.O. HC: Volunteers

COLLECTION for December 10, 2023

Envelopes: \$1147; Loose: \$354; Online Giving: \$ 1412.24

Total \$2,913.24; Average Weekly Expense: \$1,761.17. Income over/under +1,152.07

CHURCH PROJECT GOAL

\$52000—Building Fund To Date: \$43301.96. *Thank you so much for your love for our parish church and your faithful stewards*

DECEMBER 17, 2023 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

“Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.” (PS 85)

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

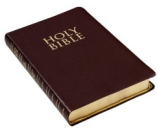
Saturday, Dec. 16	4:00 p.m.	People of our parishes
Sunday, Dec. 17	9:00 a.m.	Special Int. Alvin Bergkamp F.
Monday, Dec. 18	5:30 p.m.	David Hoang
Tuesday, Dec. 19	9: 30 a.m.	Yvonne Randolph
(Tuesday Mass at the High Plains Retirement Village)		
Thursday, Dec. 21	12:10 p.m.	David Hoang
Friday, Dec. 22	7:30 a.m.	Special Int. Powers Family
Saturday, Dec. 23	4:00 p.m.	People of our parishes
Sunday, Dec. 24	4:00 p.m.	Richard Kitzner



This Sunday, we celebrate what's known as Gaudete Sunday --- “Joyful” Sunday. Both the passage from Isaiah and the passage from Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians talk about rejoicing --- as if it is a hallmark of faith. But we know from experience that it's not always easy to be joyful, to “rejoice” in this life. After all, life doesn't always work out as we had hoped. Sorrow comes our way. Disappointments pile up. Relationships break. Loved ones die. And when those things happen, joy is the last thing we expect to experience.

But the Incarnation teaches us a profound thing, a profound truth --- that our loving God is not absent from those experiences. He is right there in the midst of all the mess and heartache and tears. He's providing moments of grace, moments in which he pours his life (his love, mercy, compassion, forgiveness) into places that seem dark, empty, devoid of life. That means that those painful situations need not get the best of us, need not overwhelm us --- for God is there --- to embrace us with a love beyond all understanding.

My friends, let's not be people who go through life finding it hard to recognize Jesus in our midst. Rather let's find him where he truly is --- on this altar, in these sacred texts, within each of us, and everywhere else too. Fr. Peter



UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL OF THE WEEK - (John 1:6-8,19-28)

Taking the stand This Gospel is like a courtroom drama in which Jesus is on trial. At issue is the following question: is Jesus the light? People must judge whether Jesus truly brings salvation to a world in darkness. The first witness in this trial is John the Baptist (vv.6-8). John is interrogated twice in vv.19-28, first by representatives of the Sadducees then by some Pharisees. The Sadducees and eventually some Pharisees ultimately reject John's testimony and reject Jesus himself. They do not recognize the light that is among them (v.26).

Giving testimony The other three Gospels present John the Baptist as calling people to repentance. The writer of our fourth Gospel downplayed this aspect of John's ministry. Since this Gospel reads as one long trial, the Gospel writer instead presents John as the first witness to take the stand in defense of Jesus. This Gospel shifts our attention from preparation to the one for whom we are preparing.

Not the One, nor anyone In Malachi 3:23 we hear that Elijah will return to prepare people for God's coming. In Deuteronomy 18:15-22 Moses promises that God will send another great prophet to his people. Here representatives of Judaism ask John if he thinks he is the fulfillment of such prophecies. Although John helps to fulfill such prophecies, he denies that he himself is important. His only role is to point to Jesus. The other Gospels present John as an Elijah-like figure, but here John rejects that association in order to focus attention on Jesus.

(oursundayreadings.wordpress.com)

UNDERSTANDING THE SECOND READING OF THE WEEK - (I Thessalonians 5:16-24)

Now that we are Christian Rejoice, pray without ceasing, and give thanks – these are essential Christian actions. Despite whatever difficulties we encounter in life, our faith in Christ and our hope in the salvation he brings should fill us with unwavering joy and constant gratitude. These are also ways in which we strive at every moment to maintain our relationship with God.

Keeping the Spirit alive The gift of prophecy seems to have unnerved some people. Paul urges the Thessalonians to celebrate the presence of God's Spirit and to listen to people who speak under the Spirit's guidance (vv.19-20). However, he also tells them to assess carefully whether a person really is speaking for God (v.21).

Called This passage concludes with a prayer for God to perfect the Thessalonians and bring them safely into union with him. Paul insists that God will answer this prayer. Just as God fulfilled his promises to people like Abraham and Moses, so God will bring the Thessalonians into eternal life.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE If you would like to donate flowers in memory of A LOVED ONE FOR CHRISTMAS, please put your donation in envelope marked to whom you want them to go to, plus your name and put in with the regular collection or send it to our office.

2024 CALENDARS are available at the church vestibule for you to pick up.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR—UPCOMING EVENTS & CELEBRATIONS



***One of these fulfills the 4th Sunday of Advent:**

- Saturday, December 23 @ 4:00 p.m. in Lakin
- Saturday, December 23 @ 5:30 p.m. (MT) in Syracuse

NOTE: NO SATURDAY MASS IN DEERFIELD & NO SUNDAY MORNING MASS IN LAKIN AND SYRACUSE THIS WEEKEND



*** One of these fulfills the obligation for the Christmas Celebration:**

- Christmas Eve. Mass—Sunday, December 24 @ 4:00 p.m.—St. Anthony
- Christmas Eve. Mass— Sunday, December 24 @ 5:30 p.m. (MT)- St. Raphael
- Christmas Day Mass—Monday, December 25 @ 9:00 a.m.—Christ the King Deerfield

THANK YOU We wanted to give a HUGE THANK YOU for all those helped, organized and everyone for making our Parish Christmas Party such a HUGE SUCCESS. Your presence and participation are the true gift for our Parish Community.

BUDGET SHOP We will be working at the Budget Shop on Saturday, December 23 and Tuesday, December 26. Please keep these dates on your busy calendars and try to save a few hours to help us. We are open on Saturdays and Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Any help will be greatly appreciated.

STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION DECEMBER 10

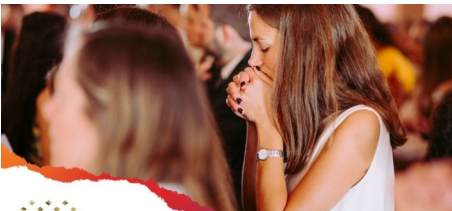
“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.” – 1 thessalonians 5:16 - 18 This scripture reading sums up Stewardship. “Rejoice always” means place your trust in God; He will provide all that you need. “Pray constantly” means prayer should be a running conversation with God throughout the whole day, every day. “Give thanks in all circumstances” means even in bad situations, thank God. Suffering a little bit helps build empathy for others in similar situations and shows our dependence on God ***“Estén siempre contentos. Oren sin cesar. Den gracias en todas las circunstancias, porque esa es la voluntad de Dios para ustedes como creyentes en Jesucristo.” - 1 TESALONICENSES 5:16 -18*** Esta lectura de las escrituras resume a la Corresponsabilidad. “Estén siempre contentos” quiere decir colocar su confianza en el Señor; Él proveerá para todas nuestras necesidades. “Orar constantemente” significa que la oración debe ser una conversación fluida con Dios a través de todo el día, todos los días. “De gracias en todas las circunstancias” quiere decir dar gracias aún en las malas situaciones, agradezca siempre a Dios. Sufrir un poco ayuda a construir empatía con los demás en situaciones similares, y muestra nuestra dependencia de Dios.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK How can I recognize and then bear witness to the light that comes from God?

PRAYER OF THE WEEK (Prayer for the Third Sunday of Advent) Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever faithful to your promises and ever close to your Church: the earth rejoices in hope of the Savior's coming and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts and remove the sadness that hinders us from feeling the joy and hope which his presence will bestow, for he is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL

DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME, PART 8: PENITENTIAL ACT



The Mass

After the priest's greeting and people's response at the beginning of the Mass, we next share in the **Penitential Act**. If you think that sounds like penance, don't worry—it's a good thing! During the entrance rite, we recall that we are in the presence of God. If we are truly sincere in realizing that God (who is all-

holy) is in our midst, then we recognize the need for purification. We recognize that when we encounter God, we must draw near with a pure heart. So, we take a brief moment of silence to call to mind our sins and failings, and we ask the Lord to forgive and heal us. After our time of silence, the priest (or deacon) leads the community in praying one of three possible prayers (conveniently known as options A, B, and C—more on them next time)

History of the Penitential Act Like nearly every part of the Holy Sacrifice, we find descriptions of the Penitential Act in early descriptions of the Mass. One of these, the *Didachē* (pronounced: did-uh-kay), meaning *Teaching of the Apostles*, gives instructions for Christians celebrating the Eucharist: "Assemble on the Lord's Day, and break bread and offer the Eucharist; but first make confession of your faults, so that your sacrifice may be a pure one" (*A Biblical Walk Through the Mass*, p. 32). As Father Guy Oury notes, "For a long time in the past this rite concerned only the celebrant and his ministers. Before going up to the altar they remained in silent prayer, lying face to the floor, as is still done in the liturgy of Good Friday" (*The Mass*, p. 49). So that everyone present could be more actively involved in this important part of the Mass, our current options came into use. Besides, except for some of our little ones, it would be really hard for everyone to lie down on the floor inside the pews!

How to Participate This honest look inside ourselves during the Penitential Act helps us to be aware of our sin and, most importantly, our need for God to help us overcome sin. In a very practical way, this brief reflection recalls the places in our lives where we know we need Christ more. If you haven't yet thought of an intention to join together with the priest's offering of the Mass, this might be a great time to ask specifically for help in overcoming a particular sin or perhaps further healing from the effects of previous sins. We believe that the Mass is our most powerful prayer together because Jesus himself is truly present and we are joining together with Him in the perfect worship of God the Father. In the Mass we take part in the one perfect sacrifice of the Cross where Christ offered Himself so that our sins could be forgiven. Realizing Jesus will be present on the altar or thinking about how the Mass is a sharing in the Cross, this moment can actually be one of great hope. What a great gift!

During this part of the Mass, as you recall your sins, you might feel unworthy of what we are about to celebrate. Although it may be uncomfortable to think about where we need healing and growth, it is actually a good sign of grace at work in our hearts. We are made out of love for love. We are made for life and communion with God and each other. Of course, sin disrupts and breaks that communion: sin moves us away from where we belong. The reason we feel frustrated or embarrassed or sad when we think of our sins is that we know deep inside that sin is contrary to the life to which God calls us. Hopefully, that discomfort will spur us to seek out the forgiveness of Christ through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Sometimes We Use Water Instead For a little bonus info: Have you ever noticed during this time that the priest might walk around with Holy Water instead? As the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says, "From time to time on Sundays, especially in Easter Time, instead of the customary Penitential Act, the blessing and sprinkling of water may take place as a reminder of Baptism" (*GIRM*, no. 51). As people from my parishes could tell you, this is often one of my favorite parts of the Mass! Using an aspergillum (typically a small reservoir with a sponge inside on the end of a handle, sometimes referred to as a sprinkler) or perhaps even an evergreen branch, the priest will dip it into the water and then sprinkle the water over the people. As when we talked about using the Holy Water upon entering the church, this water recalls our baptism and the joy of being freed by Christ from sin. No wonder the priest is often so generous with the Holy Water at this part of the Mass!

For Reflection:

1. Slowly pray Psalm 51 as a way of preparing for the Penitential Act. (Notice that verse 9 refers to being cleansed by "hyssop," a branch serving the function of the aspergillum.) Which words or phrases speak to you as you seek forgiveness and healing? Keep these words in mind next time you participate in Mass.
2. Read the first portion of Luke's account of the Risen Lord's appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-24). Observe how Jesus invites the disciples to share what they are discussing and how freely they express what is on their minds and hearts. Place yourself in this scene. What do you want to express to the Lord as he invites you to "[p]our out your hearts to God" (Ps. 62:9)? Approach the Penitential Act with this same freedom to place your total self before the Lord. (Fr. Luke Spannagel)

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Oh, Antiphons!

At evening prayer tonight, the church begins to invoke seven names for Jesus traditionally called the O Antiphons. These names—Wisdom, Sacred Lord, Flower of Jesse's Stem, Key of David, Radian Dawn, King of All Nations, Emmanuel—suggest to us how the stories of the Old Testament foreshadow the arrival of God-With-Us. As Mary Winifred observes in *Hasten the Kingdom: Praying the O Antiphons of Advent*: "The Word, which joyfully shouted all the galaxies into being, left All Power and came silently into the womb of a young girl." Seek to encounter Jesus today in wise people, books, and practices.

TERCER DOMINGO DE ADVIENTO

¡Antífonas O!

En la oración vespertina de esta noche, la Iglesia comienza a invocar siete nombres para Jesús, tradicionalmente llamados Antífonas O. Estos nombres —Sabiduría, Señor Sagrado, Flor del Tallo de Jesé, Llave de David, Aurora Radiante, Rey de Todas las Naciones, Emmanuel— nos sugieren cómo las historias del Antiguo Testamento presagian la llegada del Dios-con-Nosotros. Como observa Mary Winifred en *Anticipar el Reino: Rezar las Antífonas O de Adviento*: "El Verbo, que proclamó alegremente la existencia de todas las galaxias, abandonó Todo el Poder y entró silenciosamente en el vientre de una niña." Busca encontrar a Jesús hoy en la sabiduría de personas, libros y prácticas. (Preparetheword)