



# St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

**Third Sunday of Advent**  
**December 12, 2021**

## Parish Mission

We are one Church: loving Jesus,  
serving Jesus, and sharing Jesus.

## Parish Vision

We are a vibrant Catholic church  
serving a diverse community in a  
safe and welcoming environment  
where we care for all people  
along their faith journey.

## Core Values

Discipleship • Hospitality  
Serving • Worship

## *Make Us an Image of Justice*

*Loving Father, in your goodness you have made us in your image.  
Make us an image of your justice, mercy, and peace that,  
like John, we might point the way to you.  
Bring all the world into the light of your love  
that we might see your glory forever.  
Let our rejoicing now be the seeds of the joy that is to come.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Weekend Masses

Saturday, 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday 7:30, 9:00, 10:45 a.m.,  
3:00 p.m. (Spanish)

## Weekday Masses

Monday 6:30 a.m.  
Tuesday 6:30 a.m.  
Wednesday 6:30 a.m., 5:15 p.m.  
Thursday 6:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m.  
Friday 6:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m.  
Saturday 6:30 a.m.

## Confessions

Saturday 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.  
or by appointment

## Congratulations to St. Vincent's Newest Catholics!

Congratulations to **John Broeckling, Karen Piker, LeeAnn Rhodes, and Lyndsey Unterreiner** who are making their Professions of Faith as Catholics and receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion this weekend. The community of St. Vincent de Paul welcomes you!!! May God continue to bless your journey to know and love Him ever more deeply!

## Woman's Council Bake Sale

This weekend after Masses, the Women's Council will host a bake sale. The items available will be packaged for gift giving. This is an excellent opportunity to pick up gift items for friends, co-workers, and service personnel. Please be generous and support the efforts of the Women's Council.



## Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe



In celebration of the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the St. Vincent Parish family is invited to attend the 3:00 p.m. Mass today. After Mass, a fiesta will take place in the parish center. If you are able, please bring a dessert. Everything else will be provided. All are welcome!



1913 Ritter Drive • Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63701  
573-335-7667 • Fax 573-335-0034 • [www.svcape.com](http://www.svcape.com)  
*Serving the Catholic Community since April 9, 1836*

## • Mass Intentions •

### Monday, December 13 St. Lucy

6:30 am Gene and Vera Rhodes ☩

### Tuesday, December 14

St. John of the Cross

6:30 am Gail Seiler ☩

### Wednesday, December 15

6:30 am Thomas McCarthy (living)

5:15 pm Mary Loos ☩

### Thursday, December 16

6:30 am Mike Conley (living)

8:00 am No Mass

### Friday, December 17

6:30 am Janet Knobbe ☩

8:00 am Patrick Lucas (living)

### Saturday, December 18

6:30 am Living and Deceased Members  
of the Steve Arnzen Family

5:00 pm Eleanor Nenninger ☩

### Sunday, December 19

Fourth Sunday of Advent

7:30 am St. Vincent de Paul Parish Family

9:00 am Jeff Bohnert ☩

10:45 am Greg Swoboda ☩

3:00 pm Marcelino Dominguez ☩  
(Bilingual)

## • Prayer Requests •

Please remember the sick, the hospitalized, and those who care for them. Pray also for the homebound of the parish.



## Livestreamed Masses

Each weekend, the Mass celebrated here at St. Vincent is livestreamed and available to view on the St. Vincent de Paul Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/svcape/>). The video is also available to view after Masses on the parish website ([www.svcape.com](http://www.svcape.com)). Most of the live feeds will be at the 5:00 p.m. Saturday evening Mass to allow for the longest viewing time.

*Today's Gospel provides a blueprint for good stewardship: "Let the man who has two coats give to him who has none. The man who has food should do the same."*

## St. Denis Advent Mission

You are invited to join the members of St. Denis Parish for a special Advent Mission on Sunday, December 12, at 6:00 p.m. (refreshments following) and Wednesday, December 15, at 6:30 p.m. The presenter for the parish mission will be Deacon Tom Schumer, Director of SEMO's Catholic Campus Ministry and a Deacon here at St. Vincent. Deacon Tom is also the Spiritual Advisor for the Cursillo program. Come one or both nights to deepen your faith during this special time of year. St. Denis Catholic Church is located at 135 N. Winchester, Benton, Missouri.

## NDRHS Annual Concert

Notre Dame Regional High School's Annual Concert, Men's, Treble, and Select Choir performance will take place at 7:00 p.m. this Sunday, December 12, at Old St. Vincent Church. All alumni choir members are encouraged to attend and participate in the "finale."

### Young Adult

## Tuesday Night Thrive

Feeling alone, restless, or unfulfilled in the Faith or in life in general? Longing for more? Come! Join young adult Catholics (ages 18-40) from a variety of parishes as together you can seek to thrive. Upcoming Sunday Scriptures will be read and their meaning for your own daily lives will be discovered. Find community and a better way forward. This will take place weekly on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. in the old convent, 815 Caruthers Avenue, Cape Girardeau. Enter through the door facing the parking lot. Bring a snack to share if you'd like. For info, contact Carlee at [idCapeinfo@gmail.com](mailto:idCapeinfo@gmail.com). Don't just live. Thrive!

## Saint Gerard Circle

Saint Gerard Circle's meeting this month is a Christmas party Ornament Exchange. It will take place on Thursday, December 16, at 7:00 p.m. in the lower meeting room. A fun evening is planned with food, drinks, and games. Please bring a wrapped ornament to exchange. Visit the Facebook page for more information and to sign up.

Saint Gerard Circle is a ministry for mothers of young children offering a place for mothers to grow in friendship, faith, and support for one another in the parish. It is a perfect way to get involved in the parish community! Please come and bring a friend. For further information, please reach out to Bridget Wengert at 816-805-3707.

## Remember a Loved One at Christmas

During the upcoming Christmas season, you are welcome to honor a loved one while making a contribution toward Christmas decorations. An ornament in your loved one's honor will be placed on a Christmas tree and his/her name will be posted next to the tree. **Return your donation to the parish office by Monday, December 13, along with the following info.**

Name of loved one \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \_\_\_\_\_ Person making donation \_\_\_\_\_

## May He Rest in Peace

Sympathy is extended to the family of  
**James A. Eftink**, brother of Pat Brase.

*May he and all the souls of the faithful departed,  
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*



## Marian Consecration

Join the Parish family of St. Vincent de Paul in consecrating our Parish, families and ourselves to Our Most Blessed Mother, Mary. This prayer will begin in early February and conclude with consecration to Mary on the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25. The program and book being used will be **Mary's Mantle Consecration: A Spiritual Retreat for Heaven's Help.**

The consecration consists of a daily Rosary, daily two-minute readings, journal writing, daily reflections and simple fasting. All of this can be done from your home, but there will also be an optional weekly meeting to view an inspirational video. The video will be followed by discussion topics that allow every participant to grow deeper in his or her spiritual life. These optional weekly meetings will be held on Monday evenings in the upper meeting room of Church beginning February 7 at 6:00 p.m. and conclude March 21 (excluding the week of March 14, which is Parish Mission week). This program is open for individuals, families, couples, or anyone who wants to learn more about their faith and grow closer to Jesus through Our Blessed Mother, Mary. Cost of the program is \$10 and includes the **Mary's Mantle Consecration** book and prayer journal. For more info or to sign-up, please stop by the table in the Gathering Area after the Masses this weekend! For more information, contact Krissi Priest at **krissi.priest@yahoo.com** and sign-up by December 15.

St. Vincent De Paul Parish presents an amazing  
Spiritual Journey to Jesus through Our Blessed Mother!

**FEBRUARY 8TH — MARCH 25TH, 2022**

**MARY'S MANTLE CONSECRATION**

EXPERIENCE DEEPER  
INTIMACY WITH GOD & MARY

5-MINUTES OF  
ENJOYABLE SPIRITUAL  
READING, REFLECTION &  
MEDITATION EACH DAY

RECEIVE & GIVE DAILY  
ROSARY PRAYERS FOR  
EACH OTHER

A DAY OF FASTING WITH  
A FINAL CONSECRATION  
TO THE BLESSED MOTHER

ENDORSED BY:  
— Archbishop SALVATORE CORDILEONE  
— Bishop MYRON J. COTTA

CONTACT KRISSI DAVIS  
at [krissi.priest@yahoo.com](mailto:krissi.priest@yahoo.com) or call 573-275-1445  
for more information or to register.  
visit [www.QueenofPeaceMedia.com/Marys-Mantle](http://www.QueenofPeaceMedia.com/Marys-Mantle)

~ Father Rick

## • The Week Ahead •

### Monday, December 13

7:15 am St. Vincent de Paul Society  
8:00 am Confirmation Prep (SVS)

### Tuesday, December 14

8:00 am Confirmation Prep (SVS)  
10:00 am Mass at Heartland Care  
6:00 pm Tuesday Evening Bible Study  
7:00 pm i.d.Cape

### Wednesday, December 15

9:00 am Wednesday Women's Bible Study  
10:00 am Mass at Capetown  
3:00 pm Divine Mercy Holy Hour  
6:00 pm PSR

### Thursday, December 16

9:00 am Maxine's Shareable Wearables  
(9:00 - 11:00 am)  
9:00 am Thursday Women's Bible Study  
5:00 pm School Board Meeting  
5:30 pm Centering Prayer  
6:45 pm St. Gerard's Circle

### Friday, December 17

### Saturday, December 18

9:00 am Maxine's Shareable Wearables  
(9:00 - 12:00 noon)  
3:30 pm Reconciliation  
6:00 pm Healing Prayer Ministry

### Sunday, December 19

Prayer Ministry after Masses  
9:00 am Children's Liturgy of the Word  
4:00 pm Posada  
4:30 pm Baptismal Prep

## ADVENT

*A Season of Preparation*

### Readings - December 19, 2021

Micah 5:1-4a • Hebrews 10:5-10  
Luke 1:39-45

### Collection - December 5, 2021

Collection	\$26,779.13
E-Tithing	\$ 3,637.00
Total	\$30,416.13
Weekly Budget	\$31,450.00
Difference (7-1 to 12-5)	\$ 209.99

*Thank you for being good  
stewards of God's gifts!*



*Blessings to James and Sheryl Bollinger as they  
celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary on Sunday,  
December 12, and to Deacon Mark Kiblinger as he  
celebrates his birthday on Wednesday, December 15.*

**IS CATHERINE'S CUPBOARD ON YOUR GROCERY LIST?**



## • Contact Information •

### Parish Office

contactus@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

### Father Rick Jones, Pastor

Stvcapepadre@gmail.com / 573-335-7667

### Father Alex Sutachan

Associate Pastor/ Chaplain of NDRHS  
fatheralex@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

### Deacon Robbie Huff

Superintendent of Schools  
Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau  
rhuff@dioscg.org / 573-335-7667

### Deacon Mark Kiblinger

Coordinator of Stewardship and RCIA  
mkiblinger@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

### Deacon Thomas Schumer

Director of CCM, SEMO University  
deacontom@ccmin.org / 573-335-7667

### Kay Glastetter

Principal of St. Vincent DePaul Grade School  
kglastetter@svcape.eduk12.net  
573-334-9594

### Kathy Hotop Raines

Director of Religious Education  
kraines@svcape.eduk12.net / 573-335-7667

### Rose Huff

Bulletin Editor/Administrative Assistant  
rhuff@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

### Becky Kitchen

Social Media Coordinator  
kitchenbecky19@gmail.com / 573-382-6005

### Lenny Kuper, Music Coordinator

lennykuper@notredamecape.org  
573-335-7667

### Jeffrey Lloyd, Maintenance Supervisor

jllloyd@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

### Beverly McMeel

Accounting Clerk/Administrative Assistant  
bmcmeel@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

### Cheryl Oberhaus, Director of Parish Finance

coberhaus@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

### Debbie Wells, Receptionist

dwells@svparish.com / 573-335-7667



## Baptismal Prep

Parents and godparents are required to attend a baptismal preparation class before a child is baptized in the Catholic faith. The next class is scheduled for Sunday, December 19, at 4:30 p.m. and will be held in the upper meeting room. Contact the parish office to register and to fill out a baptismal registration form.

## Required Minimum Distributions

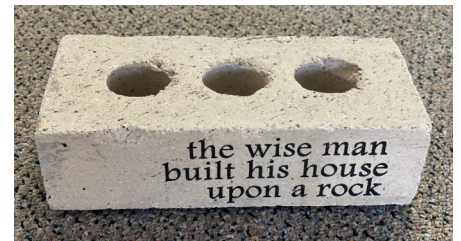
If you have reached the age of 70½ and have an IRA, there are tax advantages you may wish to consider. Gifts made to charitable organizations will not be treated as taxable income and may result in a substantial tax benefit. Please contact Cheryl Oberhaus at the parish office for more information.

## Tax Credit Opportunities

Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri (CCSOMO) has Missouri State Tax Credit opportunities for individuals and businesses. These gifts support CCSOMO in providing critical services to the most vulnerable across the Diocese. To learn more about how tax credits can help you on your Missouri State taxes or to see if you qualify, please contact Mandy Long at 417-720-4213 or by email at [mlong@ccsomo.org](mailto:mlong@ccsomo.org).

## Souvenir Rectory Bricks

If you missed the St. Vincent Christmas Bazaar, you may be interested in purchasing a souvenir brick from the old rectory (1961-2021). The bricks are imprinted with a Bible verse and would make an excellent Christmas gift. They are available at the parish office for \$10. There is a limited number, so stop by soon!



*Catholic calendars for the year 2022 are available at all church entrances. Thank you to Ford and Sons Funeral Home for making these calendars available to the St. Vincent Parish family.*

## Welcome to St. Vincent de Paul

If you would like to register for the parish, change your address, or simply have questions, please fill out the form and place it in the collection basket. You may also mail it to the parish office at 1913 Ritter Drive, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701. Please free to contact parish office staff anytime during regular office hours, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. You may email the parish office at [contactus@svparish](mailto:contactus@svparish) or call 335-7667. A parish registration form is available at <http://www.svcape.com/Parish/>.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I am new to Cape Girardeau. ☐ I am new to St. Vincent de Paul Parish.

☐ I have been attending St. Vincent Parish and would like to register as a member.

☐ I would like to learn more about the Catholic faith.

☐ I would like to register my child/children for Parish School of Religion.

☐ Please change my address to the one shown above.

☐ I would like to sign up for Faith Direct.

## *Christmas Mass Schedule*

**Christmas Eve - Friday, December 24**

**Christmas Vigil Mass**

**4:00 p.m. • 6:00 p.m.**

***Please Note: Pews may not be reserved for Christmas Masses. Once pews are full, the upper meeting room and the parish center gym will be used.***

**Midnight Mass**

**11:00 p.m.**

**Christmas Day - Saturday, December 25**

**Christmas Mass of the Dawn**

**8:00 a.m. (Church)**

**Mass of the Day**

**10:00 a.m. • 12:00 noon- Bilingual**

***Please Note: There will be no 5:00 p.m. Mass on Saturday, December 25.***

*On Christmas, all parishes of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau will be conducting a collection to help fund the education of seminarians and help to meet the needs of retired priests. This is an opportunity to show gratitude for those who have and those who will serve the diocese. You are asked to use Faith Direct or the envelope in your envelope packet.*

## *Mary, Mother of God Mass Schedule*

***(Solemnity but not a Holy Day of Obligation this year.)***

**New Year's Eve - Friday, December 31**

**5:15 p.m.**

**New Year's Day, Saturday, January 1**

**6:30 a.m. • 9:00 a.m.**

### **Christmas Gifts for Birthright**

If you wish to share with a Birthright baby during this Christmas season, gifts will be collected in the gathering area at all Christmas Masses. Most items collected will be used in layettes given to mothers just before their babies are born. Items needed include **new** heavy weight pajamas, warm outfits, sleepers, and long sleeve onesies (sizes 0-3 and 3-6 months). Birthright is also in need of small fleece blankets (new and gently used), receiving blankets (new and gently used), diapers and pullups (all sizes), baby lotion and wash (15 oz.), bottles (4 and 8 oz.), Similac ProAdvanced formula, sippy cups, hooded towels, washcloths, baby hygiene items, small board books, small stuffed animals (new), teething toys, breastfeeding supplies (shields and storage bags), sanitary napkins, new or gently used maternity clothing (XS-3XL), and nursing bras (new or gently used). Also needed are gently used baby clothing for boys and girls (18 months - 4T). Your generosity is appreciated.

### **A Ministry of Outreach and Service**

**Are you being called to Outreach and Service in our parish and community?** If so, I invite you to join me in visioning how our parish can better serve the needs of other parishioners and those in the broader Cape Girardeau community. The founding principle of "serve one another through love" (Galations 5:13) follows in the legacy of our parish's namesake, St. Vincent de Paul and in supports the vision of **Loving Jesus, Serving Jesus, Sharing Jesus**. Please contact me through the parish office if you feel called to a ministry of outreach and service. ~ Deacon Mark

## Celebrating the Sacraments Celebrando los Sacramentos

**Marriage:** Please contact the parish office at least **six months** in advance. (If you have been married before, an annulment may need to be done first.)

**Matrimonio:** Por favor comuníquese con la oficina parroquial por lo menos con **seis meses** de antelación. (Si usted ha estado casado antes, una anulación del matrimonio puede necesitar ser hecha primero.)

...

**Baptism:** Your family needs to be registered in the parish for three months prior to the baptism. It is necessary to schedule baptismal preparation classes six weeks prior to your child's baptism. Taking the baptism class prior to birth is encouraged! Contact Deacon Mark Kiblinger at the parish office (573-335-7667).

**Bautismo:** Es un requisito ser inscritos en la parroquia por lo menos 3 meses antes de bautizar. También los padres tienen que celebrar la santa misa cada fin de semana. La clase de preparación para el bautismo para padres y padrinos es cada último lunes del mes. Favor de comunicarse con Padre Rick una semana antes al 573-335-7667.

...

**Anointing of the Sick:** If you are going to the hospital for a planned surgery, please call the parish office so this Sacrament can be celebrated with you.

**Unción de los enfermos:** Si usted va al hospital para una cirugía planificada, por favor llame a la oficina parroquial para que este Sacramento pueda ser celebrado con usted.

## Christmas Card Addresses

As you write your Christmas cards this year, remember the priests, sisters, deacons, and seminarians who served St. Vincent Parish in the past.

### **Father Milton Ryan, CM**

Holy Trinity Parish  
3826 Gilbert Ave.  
Dallas, TX 75219

### **Father Charles Prost, CM**

Saint Catherine Laboure Parish  
9740 Sappington Road  
St. Louis, MO 63128

### **Father Derek Swanson, CM**

St. Vincent de Paul Parish  
621 W. Adams Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90007

### **Father David Hulshof**

North American College  
Via del Gianicolo, 14  
Rome, RM, Italy 00165

### **Father Rahab Isidor**

St. Lawrence Parish  
503 7th Street  
Monett, MO 65708

### **Father Joseph Stoverink**

Sacred Heart Parish  
1050 W. Business Highway 60-63  
Willow Springs, MO 65793

### **Father David Baunach**

St. Eustachius Parish  
200 W. Fourth Street  
Portageville, MO 63873

### **Father Francisco "Paco" Gordillo**

Sacred Heart Parish  
P.O. Box 470  
Webb City, MO 64870

### **Father Bobby Manso**

Congregation of the  
Mother of the Redeemer  
1900 Grand Avenue  
Carthage, MO 64836

### **Father Brian Straus**

St. Peter the Apostle  
812 S. Pearl Avenue  
Joplin, MO 64801

### **Deacon David Kiblinger, SJ**

196A Foster Street  
Boston, MA 02135

### **Sister Theresa Davey, OSU**

2520 St. James Road  
Springfield, IL 62707

### **Sister Susan Kienzler, OSU**

Unione Romana dell'Ordine  
della S. Orsola  
Casa Generalizia  
Via Nomentana 236  
00162 Roma Italy

### **Deacon Jonathan Tolberd**

Kenrick Seminary  
5200 Glennon dRive  
St. Louis, MO 63119

## A Note from Catholic Social Ministries

Dear St. Vincent Parishioners:

Thank you so much for your generous donation of 270 hams to our food pantry and for the volunteers who distributed them on November 6, 13, and 20. This act of charity was truly a blessing for our clients especially just before the Thanksgiving holiday. I am certain that many families were touched by your kindness.

Again, thank you for being so generous and thoughtful. Please know that I will keep you in my prayers. God bless you for all you do!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Jim Kuesenkothen*

Parish Pastoral Ministry  
St. Mary Cathedral



*Do you feel called to welcome the stranger? Do you enjoy talking to old and new faces? If so, the hospitality committee might be the place for you! For more information or to join, reach out to RaeAnne Kloss at [rakloss70@gmail.com](mailto:rakloss70@gmail.com).*



# Journeying through Advent

## St. Lucy

**Monday, December 13**

St. Lucy was an early Christian martyr who died during the Roman persecutions. Accounts say that her eyes were gouged out when she was martyred, and therefore she is the patron of those with eye illnesses. Her feast day is often celebrated with candles because, in the Northern Hemisphere, the day is among the shortest days of the year. St. Lucy is one of eight women included in the canon of the Mass. *Today's readings: Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a; Psalm 25:4-5ab, 6, 7bc, 8-9; Matthew 21:23-27.*

## St. John of the Cross

**Tuesday, December 14**

St. John of the Cross, a doctor of the Church, was a priest, mystic, and writer who lived in Spain in the sixteenth century. One of his best-known works is *The Dark Night of the Soul*. He was a close collaborator of St. Teresa of Avila. *Today's readings: Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13; Psalm 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19, 23; Matthew 21:28-32.*

## Signs

**Wednesday, December 15**

The blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the good news proclaimed to them." Often we wish for miraculous signs that will help us know where to go. But these actions of Jesus are that and more. The hope of the people of Israel was in a person who would bring about a new kingdom in which the sufferings of this world would be left behind. These particular signs are a message to John the Baptist: Jesus is the long-awaited messiah. *Today's readings: Isaiah 45:6b-8, 18, 21c-25; Psalm 85:9ab, 10, 11-12, 13-14; Luke 7:18b-23.*

## God's Faithfulness

**Thursday, December 16**

God's love will be constant, the covenant of peace unbroken, even if the mountains fall. While people often disappoint us when commitments are not kept, God's promise is not reliant on our faithfulness but on the faithfulness of God. We know that God is a keeper of promises: promises kept to Sarah, to Hannah, to Elizabeth, to Mary, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, to John the Baptist. We can trust that even in our darkest moments God is faithful to us as well. *Today's readings: Isaiah 54:1-10; Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12a, 13b; Luke 7:24-30.*

## O Wisdom

**Friday, December 17**

Within the Church's liturgical tradition, the "O" Antiphons are prayed the seven days before Christmas. Each of these antiphons presents a title for the messiah. Many are familiar with these seven titles because they begin the verses of the hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." The first antiphon, which is used on December 17, is O Wisdom. You might sing this verse of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," or you might pray Evening Prayer. You can find resources online, including apps to assist you, in praying the Liturgy of the Hours. *Today's readings: Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Psalm 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8, 17; Matthew 1:1-17.*

## The Dream of St. Joseph

**Saturday, December 18**

St. Joseph was a righteous man, meaning he followed the law of Moses, and according to the Law, Mary would be put to death. St. Joseph also must have been a man of great compassion who was accustomed to God's voice. When the angel came to him in a dream, he immediately believed. Moreover, he immediately acted. Today, spend time in silent prayer so that, like Joseph, you may know your call when it comes and answer with your whole heart. *Today's readings: Jeremiah 23:5-8; Psalm 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19; Matthew 1:18-25.*

**Sunday, December 12**

## Rejoice!

*Today's readings: Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Philemon 4:4-7; Isaiah 12:2-3, 4, 5-6; Luke 3:10-18.* The nearness of Jesus, our salvation, is now made present and brings with it a call to rejoice.

In today's Gospel, the people ask John the Baptist what they are to do. His answer is always the same: act with justice. The Jewish people, then and now, await a messiah who will bring about perfect justice. John speaks to people waiting and watching, yesterday and today: act with justice.

Often, a need to change is not associated with "good news." Yet the people feel something in their hearts when they are with John. They experience his preaching as good news even when it is challenging. They desire the kingdom of God and see that the world is not there yet. They are called to change. John also makes clear that they themselves do not have to do everything. That is also a hopeful message. Each person does their part, and their part is enough. It is God who brings about the kingdom of justice and peace, fulfilling the work begun in creation.

John speaks of a baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire. Fire can purify metal, and its heat in boiling water sterilizes objects. While preparing for Jesus' coming, we might ask the Spirit to purify our hearts so that we seek to act justly. What could you do this week to live the value of justice? What in you must be taken away to live this more perfectly?

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