

A 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



December 6, 2020

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.”

Mark 1:3

The Church of Saint Agnes

1680 Dixie Highway, Fort Wright, KY 41011

859.431.1802

Website: www.saintagnes.com Email: parishoffice@saintagnes.com

STAFF:

Rev. Mark Keene, Pastor
Rev. Trinity Knight, Parochial Vicar
Rev. James Quill, Retired
Rev. Mr. Bob Stoeckle, Deacon/Pastoral Assoc.
Rev. Mr. Gary Scott, Deacon
Bobby Fisher, Director of Music Ministries
Anita Dunn, Coordinator of Religious Education
Pat Cunningham, Parish Business Manager
Denise Graves, Bookkeeper
Paula Fritz, Coordinator of RCIA
Beth Nagle, Administrative Asst./Bulletin Editor

PARISH DIRECTORY:

Parish Office431-1802
Parish Fax291-7017
Email Address . . . parishoffice@saintagnes.com

Office Hours:

Monday thru Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

School261-0543
Hall Rental (Ron Lawson)803-3216

Prayer Line Requests331-1924
331-8562

Email: stagnesprayerline@gmail.com

Adoration Chapel, Don Able.....513-403-5242

MASS SCHEDULE:

Saturday: 8:30 a.m. & 4:00 p.m.
Sunday : 8:30 & 10:30 a.m.
Weekday: 6:30 & 11:30 a.m. Monday thru Friday,
9:20 a.m. Friday - School Mass
Holy Day: 7:00 p.m. Vigil, 6:30 & 11:30 a.m.

BAPTISMS:

First-time parents must attend a Baptism Preparation Class before the child can be baptized. Classes are held every other month on the second Thursday. Call the Parish Office to register. Baptisms take place every Sunday at 12:00 p.m. except during Lent.

PARISH FACILITIES MAY NOT BE USED FOR GATHERINGS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION (RCIA):

Persons wishing to inquire about the Catholic Faith or seeking to complete their initiation Sacraments should contact Paula Fritz at 431-1802 or pfritz@saintagnes.com.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

Confessions are heard on Saturday after the 8:30 a.m. Mass, after the 11:30 a.m. Mass on the first Friday of the month or by calling the Parish Office and making an appointment.

MARRIAGE:

Call the Parish Office at least nine months in advance. At least one of the individuals must be a registered parishioner.

HOLY COMMUNION TO THE SICK:

For those who are homebound or sick and wish to receive Communion, call the Parish Office.

MEN'S PRAYER GROUP

Gather with fellow Brothers in Christ every Saturday morning, 7:00-8:00 a.m. in the Saint Agnes Daily Mass Chapel. Enjoy fellowship and the Word of God.

GRADE SCHOOL CCD CLASSES:

Held on Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. during the school year. Contact Anita Dunn, 431-1802 or adunn@saintagnes.com for more information.

PRE-SCHOOL RELIGION:

Held on Sunday during the 10:30 a.m. Mass from September thru April. Contact Maureen Osterhaus at 859-803-0458 or mosterhaus8@gmail.com for more information.

MEETINGS:

Athletic Boosters-3rd Monday at 7:30 p.m.
in the Parish Conference Room
Board of Education-2nd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.
in the Library/Media (School) Center
Finance Committee-1st Thursday at 7:00 p.m.
in Feb., May, Aug. & Nov. in the Parish Conference Room
Parish Council-1st Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Conference Room
Pro-Life Committee-2nd Monday at 7:30 p.m.
Feb., April, June, Aug., Oct. & Dec. in Murphy Hall
St. Vincent de Paul Society-2nd & 4th Mondays at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Conference Room

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Mass Intentions

Sunday, December 6-Second Sunday of Advent

8:30 a.m. Charlene Keltz
10:30 a.m. Theresa Mary Ryan

Monday, December 7-St. Ambrose

6:30 a.m. Souls in Purgatory
11:30 a.m. Norma Broering
7:00 p.m. Grace Poncer

Tuesday, December 8-The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

6:30 a.m. Anita Dodd Connelly
11:30 a.m. Jan Flood

Wednesday, December 9-St. Juan Diego

6:30 a.m. Norbert Lewin
11:30 a.m. Ruth Sorrell

Thursday, December 10

6:30 a.m. Martha Schuh
11:30 a.m. Earl Abeln

Friday, December 11-St. Damasus I

6:30 a.m. Vince Melching
9:20 a.m. Special Intention
11:30 a.m. David Taeuber

Saturday, December 12-Our Lady of Guadalupe

8:30 a.m. Souls in Purgatory
4:00 p.m. Margaret Mashmeyer

Sunday, December 13-Third Sunday of Advent

8:30 a.m. Martha Schuh-2nd Anniversary
10:30 a.m. Carroll "Mac" Heidrich

Rosary, Sunday, Dec. 13th at 8:00 a.m.: Dan Summe

Staff Article

Advent.. Beginning With the End in Mind

My life flows on in endless song; above earth's lamentation. I hear the real though far off hymn that hails a new creation. No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that rock I'm clinging. Since love is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?

These words, the first verse of the song, *How Can I Keep From Singing*, may seem like an odd or even out-of-place thing to sing about, given the tumult that often characterizes the world, and in particularly this Year 2020, fast coming to a close, though not fast enough for many: Covid-19 pandemic, civil rights injustices and unrest, sharp political divides, etc. Yet, our faith and our worship invite us to direct our attention to a broader context for all of this tumult. Advent, like the end of Ordinary Time in our Year of Worship, remind us of that invitation—a context that can be known somewhat by faith and that can give us

endurance for difficult times. If we truly give ourselves to what we profess we believe, how could it be otherwise?

I find myself (again) remembering a *Far Side* cartoon which showed a man in hell, pushing his wheelbarrow full of fire and brimstone, flames all around him... and yet he's whistling with a smile on his face. In the cartoon, two devils are observing this and one comments to the other: "Somehow we are just not getting through to that guy!" I (somewhat) tongue-in-cheek think this could be an inspirational holy card of sorts with a sort of "March into hell with a heavenly cause" attitude about it. I ask myself, "Isn't this an illustration of what attitude... what hope... what peace a Christian in this world is invited to?"

Along this line of thought, in even numbered years, during the last two weeks of our Liturgical Year, our weekday Lectionary of Readings provides readings from the Book of Revelation. I often use a book, *The Bible Made Easy: A Book-by-Book Introduction*, by Father Timothy Schehr in preparing for homilies. The book is essentially a collection of introductions to each of the books of the Old and New Testaments. As an introduction to "The Final Book of the Bible" Father Schehr writes:

One book remains to be read. It is the book of Revelation, and it is the ideal book to bring the New Testament to a close. All the books we have read up to this point in the New Testament seem to lead up to this breathtaking summary of all that Jesus means for the world.

As the title suggests, this book reveals. It reveals the overpowering majesty of God, from the victory of Jesus over sin and death, across the wide expanse of time, all the way down to the end of the ages. Its purpose is to encourage us to remain faithful to the Lord. If we do so, we will share in God's final victory and enjoy eternal life in the kingdom of heaven.

Positive images, sounds and colors—the Lamb, the rider on the white horse, a woman clothed with the sun, bowls filled with prayers of the saints, hymns of victory, and the glory of the new Jerusalem—all combine to fill us with the strength to face any obstacle. We can be confident that all the advantages belong to those faithful to Christ.

The book of Revelation is also the ideal book to bring the entire Bible to a close because in its final chapter the tree of life is featured once again "with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month".

Staff Article continued

We last saw this tree in the opening chapters of Genesis [the first book in the Bible]; it was guarded by the cherub with the swirling sword of fire. But now the way to the tree is not guarded. Through Jesus Christ people once again have access to the tree's life-giving fruit. Like a beautiful frame surrounding a picture, the tree of life surrounds the Bible drawing our attention to the wonderful message of life that lies within.

And so, from the same hymn that I began with:

*The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
A fountain ever springing,
All things are mine since I am his;
How can I keep from singing?*



Joyful Advent!
Father Mark Keene

Parish Worship

Faith Sharing Questions

Theme of this week's Gospel: John the Baptist announces the coming of Jesus and calls for repentance!

Adults: If you had been present when John the Baptist was telling about the coming of Jesus, how do you think you would have reacted: acceptance, doubt, repentance or a little of each? Why?

Teens: Do you know anyone today who reminds you of John the Baptist? Is it the way they dress, the way they speak, or is it because they talk about Jesus? How do you feel about them?

Children: Can you imagine why John the Baptist ate locusts and honey? What treat can you give up today in "repentance" of one of your faults?

Next Sunday: December 13, 2020

**Third Sunday of Advent
(Gaudete Sunday), Cycle B**

The season of Advent reminds us that we are a people who live in the "in-between times" of Christ's first and second comings. We use readings concerning the first coming of Christ to remind ourselves that we should be vigilant with regard to the second. As the people of the Old Testament awaited Christ's first coming, we—the church—are the "new Israel" who await His second coming. The Gospel of Mark will be featured on Sundays during the Year of Worship we are just beginning (Cycle B).

The third Sunday of Advent is called *Gaudete Sunday*, from the Latin word that means "to rejoice"... rejoice for with this Sunday, we are at least half-way through Advent. This is the Sunday for rose-colored vestments and for lighting the rose candle on the Advent wreath.

Gospel Reading (John 1:6-8,19-28): While the Gospel of Mark is the featured Gospel this year, there are exceptions when we read passages from the Gospel of John [the Evangelist]. That being said, again this Sunday, as with the Second Sunday of Advent, our Gospel reading concerns itself with John the Baptist's ministry. In this passage, which is from the famous prologue to the Gospel of John, the evangelist speaks of the identity of John the Baptist. John is "not the light, but came to testify to the light." It seems that in his day some thought John the Baptist might be the Messiah. In the Gospel of John the Evangelist, John the Baptist is presented as firmly denying that he is the Messiah. Rather, he is, as Isaiah says, "the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord."

First Reading (Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11): The circumstance for this very hopeful passage from Isaiah is the Jewish people's return to the Promised Land after their captivity/exile in Babylon, about 538 BC. The reading speaks of "glad tidings," "healing," and "liberty to captives." Isaiah is very hopeful about the future of the people and that Israel will be a place where "justice and praise spring up before the nations." This is consistent with one of the main themes in the Book of Isaiah: Israel's role in a more universal vision of salvation ("justice and praise") for all the peoples of the world.

Second Reading (1 Thessalonians 5:16-24): The second reading is from the concluding verses of the First Letter to the Thessalonians. This passage is full of exhortations and words of encouragement as Paul brings his letter to a close: "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks..." This is very fitting for *Gaudete Sunday!*

Adorers Needed

Adorers are needed to fill the following hours in the Divine Mercy Adoration Chapel:
Monday-12AM, 1AM, 2AM,
Wednesday-2AM
Thursday-12PM, 1PM, 11PM
Friday-4AM, 11PM
Saturday-11AM

If you are interested in helping to fill these open times or have any questions please contact Don Able at 513-403-5242 or abledrky@gmail.com.



Christmas Masses During the Pandemic

For Christmas, the attendance for the Mass at 4 PM on Christmas Eve is standing-room only, out the doors. This year, because of the Covid-19 Pandemic, we cannot allow this type of crowding. As it is, under the Pandemic protocols, we can only seat round 25% of our seating capacity in the church. Also, with the protocols, we cannot have people standing in the aisles or the foyers of church.

To help ease this, we plan to have an additional Mass this year, at 6 PM on Christmas Eve. Also, for your information, the Masses at 11:00 PM Christmas Eve, and 8:30 and 10:30 AM Christmas Day are usually, comparatively much more lightly attended.

We strongly recommend and encourage people who normally attend the 4 PM Mass on Christmas Eve, to attend one of the other Masses.

We do not relish the idea of having to turn people away, but we will have to do so once we reach the Covid-19 protocol limit, which as I stated above is about 25% of capacity. If this year is like previous years as far as people arriving early is concerned, we will reach that limit in short order, probably by around 3:15 or earlier.

I am letting the parish know this, so you can make plans ahead of time to attend another Mass. It will help. Naturally, Christmas Mass should be a part of every Catholic's observance of Christmas, so I am not trying to encourage anyone to not attend Mass at all (age, underlying health conditions, etc. are a different matter). However, since many who do not attend Mass at Saint Agnes during the year may not have seen this bulletin, we who are aware of this situation can try to "make room for them" by attending another, less-well-attended Mass.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.
– Father Mark Keene

Monthly Intention of Pope Francis

For use with The Morning Offering Prayer

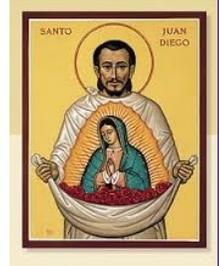
DECEMBER 2020: For a "Life of Prayer" - We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.

Bulletin Cover Picture

The Immaculate Heart of Mary window in the annex of our church. Tuesday, December 8 is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the patronal feast of the Catholic Church in the United States.

Saint Juan Diego

This time of year there are no blooming roses, but today's saint was able to pick a whole armload of them. He was Juan Diego, who was also named Cuauhtlatatzin, which means, "Eagle that Talks." He was born in 1474 in Cuautitlan, now a part of Mexico City. He was not poor but not rich either. He was one of the few indigenous Mexican people who had converted to Christianity. He was one of the first to be Baptized by the early Franciscan missionaries as was his wife Maria Lucia and his uncle Juan Bernardino.



As Juan Diego walked to Mass and religious instruction he would pass the hill of Tepeyac. At dawn on December 9, 1531 he was walking to the mission and saw an apparition of a young girl who spoke to him in, Nahuatl, his native language. It is said that he could tell she was the Virgin Mary by what she said to him. She asked that a church be built for her on Tepeyac Hill, which may have been a former native religious site. He went to the Bishop Fray Juan Zumarraga. The Bishop listened to him and then told him he needed to think about it. Probably a way of politely getting Juan to leave. The next day, December 10th, as he was again on his way to church he passed Tepeyac Hill and met the Virgin again. He told her that he had failed and that because he was not an important man she should find someone else. She said that he was the one that she had chosen and that he should go back to the Bishop and ask again to have a church built on the hill. He went back and the Bishop told him that in order to do so he would need a sign to show that the message was from the Blessed Mother. He met the Blessed Mother again and told her what the Bishop said. She told Juan that she would provide a sign the next day.

The next day, December 11, Juan did not go to church because his uncle had become ill and he had to care for him. Overnight the uncle's condition worsened so that the next day, December 12th, Juan left to go get a priest for his uncle. Because he had failed to go to the Blessed Mother on the previous day he tried to go a different way to church in order to avoid meeting her. She intercepted him and gently scolded him for not having faith in her, she said "No estoy yo aqui que soy tu madre?" (Am I not here, I who am your mother?) She told him that his uncle was well and instructed him to go up Tepeyac Hill and collect rose blooms there. It was December and there should have been no roses in bloom. He went up and found the roses where

Saint of the Week continued

there should only have been cactus and scrub growing. He gathered the roses into his cloak, or tilma. The Blessed Mother arranged them and then sent him down to the Bishop. When he went before the Bishop and opened his tilma the roses fell to the floor and the Bishop and those with him fell to their knees on seeing the image of the Blessed Mother that was under the roses.

The next day Juan Diego found his uncle fully recovered, (he too had seen the Virgin). Juan Diego met the Blessed Mother at Tepeyac and she told him that she wished to be known under the title of Guadalupe. The basilica was built and the tilma, made of plant fibers, which should only have lasted 20 years, or more often less, is still on display there with the miraculous image. Juan Diego was beatified on May 6, 1990 and canonized on July 31, 2002, both by John Paul II. Juan Diego's feast day is December 9th.

Stewardship

Status of Sunday Collection

Actual Collections (07/01/20 thru 11/23/20)	\$397,057
Budgeted Collections (07/01/20 thru 11/23/2020)	\$430,900

Retirement Fund for Religious

Support elderly religious. A donor writes, "Your flyer touched my heart—seeing the retired religious, such memories surfaced." Do you remember the sisters, brothers, or religious order priests who made a positive difference in your life? Today many are elderly and need assistance. Their religious communities struggle to meet retirement needs while continuing to serve the People of God. **Please give generously to next week's collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious.**

Parish News

Bethlehem Christians and Christmas Gifts

For several years, in September, representatives from Bethlehem Christians have visited our parish to offer the opportunity to purchase hand-carved olive wood religious items made in the Holy Land. Recently they contacted me and asked that I make you aware of the following:
"COVID-19 has had a devastating effect on the

economy in Bethlehem and has destroyed the tourism sector across the Holy Land. The Christian communities in the Holy Land, also exposed the risk of the virus and living in the environment already full of serious sufferings, need your help. It is predicted that tourism will not recover before Easter 2022. Bethlehem has had little or no economy since March 2020. We need to help support the Christian Families and workshops who solely rely on tourism in the Holy Land to remain intact, since their main source of income has completely vanished."

All are encouraged to visit their website www.bethlehemnativitysouvenirs.com and consider making purchases of religious items for Christmas gifts. – Father Mark Keene

Faith Formation

Advent Reflections

Advent 2020 will be here soon! Have you made any prayerful plans yet to prepare for the Lord's coming? Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we are unable to offer any in-person opportunities to study and pray together at St. Agnes. However, we can all still take advantage of some of the many online free resources available to enrich our Advent prayers and preparations. For example, www.formed.org provides many faith formation resources including *Opining the Word* (under programs, the Faith Formation tab), which reflects on the Sunday readings each week with special insights for Advent. Or, sign-up for Matthew Kelly's (Dynamic Catholic's) *Best Advent Ever*, which include daily brief video meditations sent to your email (go to www.dynamiccatholic.com, under my parish find Best Advent Ever). Or sign-up for Bishop Robert Barron's daily Advent reflections at www.wordonfire.org/resources/blog. Also, please check out our resource center in the back of church. You will find many up to date Advent books, booklets, wreaths, candles, and activities for children. Most importantly, please join us for Sunday Mass each weekend in Advent, and of course, on Christmas!

RCIA

Our RCIA inquirer is celebrating his first Season of Advent with us this year. We are focusing on this holy Season as a time of inviting the Lord to enter our daily lives now to prepare us for His coming at Christmas. It is a time to clear a way for the Lord. As you journey through Advent, **invite someone who is not Catholic to attend Mass with you this Advent and Christmas.** Then, invite them to inquire into our RCIA process (see the inside cover of our bulletin or website or call 431-1802). Please remember our RCIA inquirer in your prayers.