

**Daily Reflections- By Jeanne Lischer**

**Monday, December 3, 2018** Readings: Is 2:1-5; Mt 8:5-11

**Saint Francis Xavier, priest**

*When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion approached [Jesus] and appealed to him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, suffering dreadfully."*

Throughout the laws recorded in the Torah, there is much concern expressed for those who are needy, especially widows and orphans. There's also concern for "outsiders" — the traveler, the stranger, the foreigner, the refugee. Caring for others was a response to God's care for the Hebrew people. Did the Hebrew people keep these laws? Sometimes. Were people outcast or excluded in the name of the law? Yes. But Jesus boldly reinterpreted the law — and he didn't limit his healing and forgiving to those who were Jewish like him. Everywhere he went, he cared for, reached out to, and loved all sorts of people: lepers, prostitutes, Gentiles, people suffering because of disease or disability, people who lived as outcasts. In today's reading, Jesus heals the servant of a leader of the occupying Roman government — and then praises his faith.

*Holy, eternal God, your love and care are for all people.*

**Tuesday, December 4, 2018** Readings: Is 11:1-10; Lk 10:21-24

*There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.*

Our writing schedule necessitates writing about four months in advance, which means thinking about Advent in the middle of the summer. This year, I am pondering Isaiah's hope for completely new and different kind of king — and a kingdom where there is no harm or ruin — even as children and parents are being held separately, often in different states, because of U.S. immigration policy. Will they have been reunited by the time this is published? Isaiah's vision of a world filled with peace and harmony sounds wonderful, almost too good to be true. Who among us has not longed for such a place, such a society, such a world? Of course, such a world doesn't just happen; it is, in large part, up to us to build it — with God's help.

*May we be instruments of your shalom, holy One.*

**Wednesday, December 5, 2018** Readings: Is 25:6-10a; Mt 15:29-37

*Jesus summoned his disciples and said, "My heart is moved with pity for the crowd."*

For many years, I have preached what I call my "Bah humbug" sermon. I often do this in the summer, long before anyone is even thinking about Christmas, but when holiday merchandise begins to appear in stores. Why? To help us ponder why we celebrate the birth of a baby in a stable with a multimillion-dollar spending spree. When we spend too much on electronics, designer clothes, toys, decorations and food, less is available to respond to the needs of the poor, hungry, lonely and excluded. Unfortunately, our commercialized Christmas is not going to go away, which means that we, as followers of Jesus, must make deliberate decisions about how we are going to celebrate Jesus' birth. Can we do what he did? Can we let our hearts be moved by peoples' needs, whether next door or around the world?

*Be with us as we prepare for your birth, Lord Jesus.*

**Thursday, December 6, 2018** Readings: Is 26:1-6; Mt 7:21, 24-27

*Everyone who listen to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on a rock.*

As a Protestant Christian, I am not very familiar with all the saints and martyrs commemorated in other Christian traditions. But one I do know is St. Nicholas, who is often remembered on this day. Some people know him as Santa Claus, the "jolly old elf" who travels by sleigh and somehow manages to squeeze down chimneys to deliver Christmas gifts. But the real Nicholas was a fourth century bishop of what is now Turkey. Being a Christian at that time was dangerous and Nicholas was sent into exile for a time because he refused to proclaim that the Roman emperor was lord. He is remembered for his often-anonymous gift giving, his faith and his love of children. The solid foundation of his faith was visible in his life and ministry — not so he would become a household name, but to point us to Jesus.

*Gracious God, help us build a strong foundation that our lives may point to you.*

**Friday, December 7, 2018** Readings: Is 29:17-24; Mt 9:27-31

**Saint Ambrose, bishop and doctor of the church**

*The lowly will ever find joy in the Lord, and the poor rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the tyrant will be no more and the arrogant will have gone.*

Isaiah's words sound eerily similar to Mary's song in Luke's Gospel: "He has thrown down the powerful from their thrones but lifted up the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty." And Mary's song is likely based on the song of Hannah proclaimed many years before Isaiah. If we ever wonder where Jesus learned at least some of his radical, upside-down priorities, it is more than a little obvious that all those "new" radical ideas had been around for centuries. Jesus learned the Hebrew Scriptures as he grew and heard Isaiah's words and Hannah's song that was later echoed in his mother's song. God's desire for mercy, justice and shalom for all God's children comes from Hannah to Isaiah to Mary to Jesus to us.

*Relying on your guidance, O God, may we work together to create a global community of love, respect, justice and peace.*

**Saturday, December 8, 2018** Readings: Gn 3:9-15, 20; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38

**Immaculate Conception**

*Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.*

She's young, she's not married, and now this angel shows up and tells her she will bear a son. And not just any son, mind you, but God's Son. Even though Mary questions how this is possible, she accepts Gabriel's explanation. I wonder, in those few moments, did all possible scenarios stream through Mary's mind? Joseph might accuse her of adultery. She might be stoned to death. Her parents would undoubtedly disown her. Anyone she considered a friend would avoid her. It doesn't sound very appealing, does it? But despite all the possible consequences, Mary said "yes" to Gabriel and to God. Sometimes it's very easy to say yes, but we generally find it much easier to say no: "No, I don't want to pay attention to the experiences of poor people;" "No, I don't want to listen to the stories of immigrants;" "No, I really don't want to consider what might be required of me to bring about God's shalom."

*For courage, wisdom and a willingness to say yes, we pray.*

**THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY**

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**First Sunday of Advent  
December 2, 2018**

**Mission Statement:** Our mission is to form Christian Communities that will glorify God by our loving and serving one another, and to extend our love, support, and compassion to the needy.

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**REV. JOHN BOSCO DURAISAMY**  
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**Ann Mitchum**  
Parish secretary

**MASS SCHEDULE**

Sunday	8:00am
Sunday	9:30am
Wednesday	9:00am
Friday	9:00am
<u>Confessions on Wednesdays and Fridays at 8:30am</u>	

**Diocesan Office of Child Protection Services 843-261-0430**  
**Diocesan Victim Assistance Minister 843-856-0748**

**PARISH NEWS AND ACTIVITIES**



**PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK OF OUR PARISH**

Doyle Adams, Linda Adams, Barbara Barrs, Hazel Basilio, Chester Broton, Jr., Bea Clair, Allison Condon Chappell, Jack Cooper, Edna DeGennero, Jacob Matthew Dupree, Francis Enos, Ken Fleming, Clementa Florio, Elizabeth Good, Sally Gorman, DeeDee Huck, Milagros Lamar, Grace Miller, Jane Morley, Sarah Proulx, Mary Redman, Elizabeth Smith, Landon Smith, Eloise Stroud, Larry Walker Teekie Walker, Ellie Wilson, Mary Wilson, Frank Wilson, Edward Wolf, Bob Glenn, Mary Lydia Moskow, Sonia Dees, Eustolia Villaneuva, Ruth Gerth.

**WELCOME:** WELCOME to St. Mary’s! We trust you find a welcoming community here. If you would like to register with the Parish, forms are in the back of the Church. You may deposit the forms in the collection basket or bring it over to the Parish Center. We invite you to come over to the Parish Center after Mass for snacks, coffee and juice provided by the Ladies’ Guild. **Special welcome to Fabian Dianas, Dora Martinez and their son, Fabian. Welcome to our Parish Family!**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7:** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is immediately following the 9am Mass on the first Friday of every month.

**LADIES’ GUILD:** The Ladies’ Guild will meet in the Parish Center on **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9** immediately following the 8am Mass. **ALL ladies are encouraged to attend and help us prepare the Church for the Advent Season. Thank you to all who have supported the Ladies’ Guild throughout the year!**

**ANGEL TREE:** Children of the Catholic Church of the Resurrection in Loris, SC have been chosen as our Angel Tree recipients. Many of the parishioners were affected by the hurricane and flooding this year. You can help make a child’s Christmas a little brighter. Each Angel has a child’s age and a “wish list” gift. Please take an angel and buy the gift identified on it. **Please ATTACH the angel to the gift or gift bag and place under the tree. ALL gifts must be in the Church by December 16** to insure we can make a delivery to their church on time for Christmas. Thank you to our teachers and youngest CCD students for cutting out all the angels!

**CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS/CARDS:** We have cards and ornaments in the Parish Center which feature a picture of St. Mary’s. Come see our card selection and marble ornament for sale.

**CHILDREN SAFETY:** We ask parents and all parishioners to keep an eye on the little ones – please do not let them play or roam around the parking lot. We encourage everyone to stay and visit with each other, however, the safety of the children is a concern as drivers pull in and out of their parking place.

**Record of Faithfulness  
11/25/2018**

Parishioners	\$ 2105.00	Maintenance & Repair	\$ 50.00
Visitors/Loose	\$ 153.00	Human Development	\$ 467.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2258.00</b>		

**Attendance**

Sunday 8:00am	31	Sunday 9:30am	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>		

**JUBILEE CELEBRATION: SAVE THE DATE: ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 2019** we will celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee for Father Antony Benjamine. Mass will be celebrated at 10AM. The Ladies’ Guild will host a brunch following Mass. Fr. Antony served at St. Mary’s for several years. Everyone is invited to celebrate his Jubilee Anniversary! **There is a sign - up sheet in the narthex (back) of the church and in the Parish Center. Please let us know you plan to attend so we can plan on food and drink.**

**TOWN HALL MEETING:** The Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmone will hold a “Town Hall” meeting on **MONDAY, DECEMBER 10** at 7pm at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. Our Bishop will address the current issues in our Church and answer questions. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC NURSES:** We invite all RN and LPN nurses, employed, retired and students, to attend an information meeting held on December 13th at 10am & 6pm at Cardinal Newman School in Columbia. Please join us as we begin to make key decisions and take the beginning steps to launch the new South Carolina chapter of the National Association of Catholic Nurses. For questions please contact Michelle Law at [MLaw@Charlestondiocese.org](mailto:MLaw@Charlestondiocese.org) or the Family Life Office at 803-547-5063.

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Advent does not start until December this year, a hint that the season will be shorter than last year, when we had a full four weeks. This year, the fourth week of Advent only lasts two days. So, it is important to observe the season well as long as it lasts.

We know that it is Advent when we look at the Church. The worship space is simple and restrained without any decoration. The color purple appears prominently. The advent candles appear on the altar. The liturgical missalette has been changed indicating the beginning of the new Liturgical year with the starting of the first week in advent. These are some indications that we are in the beginning of the season of Advent.

Advent is not penitential to the degree that Lent is, but it is still a preparatory season. Its mood is joyful, but it is a restrained joy, even mixed with lament. We might call it an anticipatory joy, based on our faith in God to hear our laments and heal our lives and our world. Advent is a season of “the already but the not yet,” rejoicing that the kingdom is already in our midst but aware that it has not yet arrived in its fullness.

The Gospel for this First Sunday of Advent reminds us that all is not well with our world (if the news reports have not already made that quite clear to us). Read these words again in light of the ecological issues we face: “There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world ...” Are we doing all we can to address climate issues and care for creation? We have traditionally thought of the end of the world as something God will bring about, but between nuclear weapons and climate change, we humans seem more and more capable of ending the world ourselves, at least the world as we know it. These are serious issues and we need to pray and educate and work to address them in our community. Yet we draw hope from God’s promise that God will strengthen our hearts at the Lord’s coming and that our “redemption is at hand.”

The message is clear in the Gospel: Christians should be prepared to face any challenge and should live their lives with vigilance. Christian lives should not be characterized by dissipation, drunkenness and the cares of this world which make us dull. What is needed is prayer and alertness. Those who remain alert in prayer have nothing to fear from the coming of the Son of Man. For them there is no distress or confusion. For them it is a time of liberation. This is a sound advice because Christians face persecutions and troubles at all times. Even in our modern and enlightened times Christians are not free from persecutions. In the vast Asian continent, they are persecuted because they are a minority. Hence, Jesus’ advice to his disciples is ever valid.