

The Work of the People
The Second Sunday of Advent

Today we celebrate Second Sunday of Advent and in all three cycles of the Sunday Readings this Sunday and the next reintroduce us to the second of the four great figures of Advent, John the Baptist. The first of these four is the prophet Isaiah although this year we hear from Isaiah only in the daily readings. The prophets of this cycle of readings are Jeremiah – from whom we heard last week – Baruch, Zephaniah, and Micah. The last two figures are Mary, whose great Solemnity we celebrate this week on December 8, and Jesus.

John the Baptist is the embodiment of a willingness to anticipate, receive and proclaim the Messiah who comes, and it is John's story that will dominate the readings of Advent. For John, nothing is more important than the task of exhorting those around him to prepare for the Lord. He speaks to us as "voice of one crying out in the desert", reminding us that there is no task more pressing or, for that matter, more wonderful than proclaiming the coming of the one who will offer Baptism in Spirit and in fire.

The words of the Reading from the Prophet Baruch are addressed to exiles who still remember the pain of being "led away on foot by their enemies." The prophet's promise is one of complete reversal. God will remember his people and return them to their home from which they were snatched. God will clear the way for their return, leveling the lofty mountains and filling in the "age-old depths."

The Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians is a letter of joy written from prison. Paul reminds us that the work of conversion lasts a lifetime. God begins "a good work" in us at Baptism initiating a lifelong process of growth that doesn't end until we stand before our God. Paul encourages the Philippians to continue doing what they've been doing, only more.

After last week's reading from Luke's Apocalypse, we move to the beginning of Luke's Gospel. God's salvation approaches and nothing will stand in its way. Mountains will be leveled, and valleys filled in so nothing can impede the progress of God's Kingdom. Luke situates John the Baptist within a very specific historic and geographical context with a clear nod to the Roman authorities and the religious elite who will prove to be the Kingdom's first opponents.

The reflection for this Sunday is from *Advent of the Heart* by Fr. Alfred Delp (1907-1945) who was a German Jesuit imprisoned and executed by the Nazis for anti-Hitler activities.

The Word of the Lord! In such times, one must be motivated, not from willfulness, or personal whim, or personal programs, but really from the very heart and center of reality after having subjected oneself to God the Lord and wrestled with His Word. Then such a person will touch the minds of those who ask and beg for the word, for the instruction, for the insight to cope

with this historical time and situation—and with the distress, and with the yearning, and the darkness and all the unspeakable things. He will truly enkindle a fervor and frenzy in these souls. But then they must subject themselves to the Word of the Lord and stand by it. They must stand, not make bargains as if it were hopeless, and not be silent as if it were hopeless.

Think of it: Tiberius, Pontius Pilate, Herod, Philip, Lysanias, Annas, Caiaphas. When was there a more hopeless hour?

And then the Word of the Lord came to John. The Word of the Lord! . . . The fear of other people disappears. Anxiety, that unworthy, inner subversion of mankind, fades away.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Is. 35:1-10/Lk. 5:17-26
 Tuesday: Is. 40:1-11/Mt. 18:12-14
 Wednesday: Gn. 3:9-15, 20/Eph. 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk. 1:26-38
 Thursday: Is. 41:13-20/Mt. 11:11-15
 Friday: Is. 48:17-19/Mt. 11:16-19
 Saturday: Sir. 48:1-4, 9-11/Mt. 17:9a, 10-13
 Sunday: Zep. 3:14-18a/Phil. 4:4-7/Lk. 3:10-18

RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The annual collection for our Retired Religious will be held in parishes on December 11th and 12th. This collection has significant benefits for the retired Sisters in our diocese, as well as for the over 30,000 retired religious throughout the country.

The Retirement Fund for Religious offers financial support for those Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests who worked for years for little or no stipends. Last year, the people in this diocese contributed more than \$150,000 to help defray the costs of medication, nursing care, medical equipment, transportation, physical and occupational therapy and other necessary needs.

The pandemic has been especially hard on communities of our elderly religious. All of our large convents in Erie have suffered through bouts of COVID with two Sisters dying of the illness. Strict COVID-19 protocols and visiting restrictions, along with additional costs, have taken an emotional toll of loneliness and isolation for our senior religious. Your generous gift provides vital support for their ongoing health care, helping them to age with dignity, in safety and comfort.

Senior Religious are a treasure of the Church. Some of you may not presently know consecrated men and women, but they have affected your lives through their ministry to your parents and grandparents and through the many organizations now in place due to their foresightedness and generosity. Their dedication and hard work laid the foundation for Catholic schools, religious education programs, hospitals, social service agencies and countless other ministries throughout our diocese; many still serve those in need, today. I join you in praising God for their faithful and generous service to the Church in the past and in the days and years to come.

I understand you are asked to support many worthy causes. I invite you only to be as generous as you can. Most importantly, please continue to pray for an increase of vocations to the consecrated life and for God's blessing on all our women and men religious. Know you remain in their prayers and in mine.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
 The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
 Bishop of Erie

WORSHIP

Monday, December 6
 8:00 am + John E. Auer
 Tuesday, December 7
 AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 5:00 pm + Leo Wronko
 (Joan Rembielak & Phyllis Wronko)
 Wednesday, December 8 - Immaculate Conception
 Of the Blessed Virgin Mary
 AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 5:00 pm + Emily Mott (Family)
 Thursday, December 9
 8:00 am + Josephine Haluch (PNA Lodge 1540)
 Friday, December 10
 8:00 am + Kathleen Nowak (Bill & Jean Chernicky)
 Saturday, December 11
 4:30 pm + Living & Deceased Parishioners
 Sunday, December 12
 8:00 am + AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 Rick Baker (Pauline Baker)
 9:30 am + AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 Craig Beck (Jim & Ginger Beck)

ADDITIONAL TIMES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION FOR ADVENT

At St. Anthony of Padua
 Friday, December 10 - 4:00 - 5:00 pm
 Sunday, December 12 - 1:00 - 2:00 pm
 Friday, December 17 - 4:00 - 5:00 pm
At St. Bernadette Mission
 Monday, December 13 - 4:00 - 5:00 pm
 Sunday, December 19 - 1:00 - 2:00 pm

MINISTERIUM EMERGENCY FOOD BANK

The Ministerium Emergency Food Bank is low on EVERYTHING (except pasta and cereal). With the upcoming holidays they want to be sure to be able to minister to our community. You can drop off donations in the Gathering Space. Thank You.

NOTICE

The 2022 Collection Envelopes and 2022 Calendars for both St. Anthony of Padua and St. Bernadette Mission will be delayed because of a shortage of workers to fill the orders. We ask you to please continue your donations by using a plain mailing envelope. Please make sure your name and envelope # are on it. Thank you

PARISH EVENTS CALENDAR

Monday, December 6
 After Mass - St. Anthony Novena
 5:00 pm - Doors open for BINGO
 Wednesday, December 8
 12:00 Noon - Ministerium Advent Serv. & Luncheon
 at CMA Church - Cambridge Springs
 Friday, December 10
 4:00 - 5:00 pm - Sacrament of Reconciliation
 For Advent at St. Anthony of Padua
 Saturday, December 11
 3:30 - 4:15 pm - Confession (or by appointment)
 Sunday, December 12
 1:00 - 2:00 pm - Sacrament of Reconciliation
 For Advent at St. Anthony of Padua
 Monday, December 13
 4:00 - 5:00 pm - Sacrament of Reconciliation
 For Advent at St. Bernadette Mission

SPECIAL RETREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG ADULTS BETWEEN 19 - 35

The Diocese of Erie is sponsoring a five day retreat for college age and older young adults this January 3rd to the 7th. It will take place at the beautiful Villa Maria Education and Spirituality Center south of Sharon, PA. Applications are still being accepted but space is limited. For more information contact either of the retreat organizers, Jillian Zasczyk (JZACZYK@ERIERCD.ORG) or Dave Roncolato (droncola@allegheny.edu). The application for the retreat can be found under Young Adult Ministry (Silent Retreat) at WWW.ERIERCD.ORG/YOUTH

~~~~ PLEASE NOTE THE MASS SCHEDULE FOR THE HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION ON DECEMBER 8TH.

**ST. BERNADETTE MISSION STEWARDSHIP**

Offertory **\$255.00**  
 TOTAL **\$255.00**

Catholic Services Appeal  
 Pledged: \$7,100.00 Paid: \$7,100.00

**ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA STEWARDSHIP**

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Offertory         | \$1,527.00        |
| Maintenance       | 203.00            |
| Candles           | 48.00             |
| Altar Flowers     | 25.00             |
| Christmas         | 25.00             |
| Energy            | 5.00              |
| Initial Offering  | 20.00             |
| Catholic Campaign | 10.00             |
| Latin Mass        | 245.00            |
| TOTAL             | <u>\$2,108.00</u> |

Catholic Services Appeal  
 Pledged: \$29,065.00 Paid: \$27,509.00

**CHURCH NAME: ST. ANTONY OF PADUA**

**CHURCH NO.:**

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:**

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