



Say to the fearful of heart:  
Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God,  
he comes with vindication;  
With divine recompense  
he comes to save you.

ISAIAH 35:4



## The Gift of Questions

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSSR

**W**e sometimes imagine that a sign of a strong faith is firm conviction and freedom from doubt. However, despite our imaginings, the authentic experiences of saints and ordinary people alike seem to point in another direction. The question of John the Baptist today—"Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3)—suggests that John is filled with questions, and these are important questions because they are asked from the depths of King Herod's prison, which is not exactly the place of idle musings or concerns.

If John, who is a great saint and a man who encountered Jesus and witnessed the powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit at his baptism, can have a question, doesn't it suggest that questions are acceptable—perhaps even needed? Perhaps questioning is an indication of faithfulness, not a lack of faith. Questions do not suggest that something is missing; rather, they confirm that something is growing and developing. The Baptist could just have easily said, "Jesus, you are doing and saying more than I ever imagined possible. Please help me to understand," or, to quote an unnamed saint, "I do believe, help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

God will not shatter, and faith will not collapse, because you have questions or doubts.

Experience suggests that questions and doubts strengthen our belief and our commitment to a life of faith. ●



SCAN TO  
LEARN ABOUT  
AUTHOR  
FR. THOMAS M.  
SANTA, CSSR

### Reflect

*Do I welcome questions, mine and others, as a way to grow in faith?*

# ST. BARBARA PARISH

302 Chestnut Street  
Dalzell IL 61320

Phone 815-894-2006  
Email: StBarbaraParish2@outlook.com  
Website: www.bureauatholic.org



**St. Thomas More Site**  
302 Chestnut Street  
Dalzell IL



**Holy Trinity Site**  
**Parish Office**  
212 S Main Street  
PO BOX 159  
Cherry IL

## Adoration Room at STM Site

Open Daily from 9 am-6 pm

### Confession Info

Saturday morning, alternating  
between STM Site & HT Site  
in the Confessional between  
10:30 am-11:15am

### Church Office Info

Pastor: Father Thaddeus Tran  
Pastoral Assistant: Melissa Pasillas

**Emergency Number: 779-248-2164**

Email: Melissahtc@outlook.com

Office Hours at HT: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9am-1pm

Ongoing Parish Fundraising: STM Rav/Tort. Sale | call 815-252-2215 (leave name/phone #/order) \$9.00/bag



### CCD Classes

**Sunday, December 14th - 6th - 8th Grade (10:00am-11:30am)**

**Sunday, December 21st— January 4th NO CCD Classes/Christmas Break**

### St. Barbara Daily Mass Intentions for the Week of December 15, 2025

Monday	12/15			† No Mass
Tuesday	12/16	9:00 am	STM Site	† Kathy Sondgeroth
Wednesday	12/17	5:30 pm	HT Site	† Skeffington-Cassidy Family
Thursday	12/18	9:00 am	HT Site	† Wes & Rita Hoscheid
Friday	12/19	9:00 am	STM Site	† Gina Shaw

### St. Barbara Mass Intentions for the weekend of December 20-21, 2025

Saturday	12/20	4:00 pm	ST. Thomas More Site	† Norma Templeton/ Bob Lehn
Sunday	12/21	9:00 am	Holy Trinity Site	† For the Parishioners



# JOY, THE MEANING OF LIFE

We have come to the Third Sunday of Advent in search of joy, and believe it or not, joy is essential to being human and to following Christ. Joy is the light that helps us see, the solid ground that helps us walk, the song of life itself that opens our ears to hear. So yes, we are seeking it, whether or not we know it.

That might sound preposterous, but only because we've often confused "joy" with "happiness" or "luck" or "good vibes," or whatever terms we used to describe good feelings or good things happening to us. Not that those things are inherently bad—it's just that they're in no way guaranteed or consistent enough to base the purpose of our lives on.

But joy? Joy is something else entirely. Joy isn't about the seemingly random events of our lives happening to line up so nicely. It's about God's gracious will, which "orders all things mightily." And often, that ordering requires some re-ordering, some re-creating, or at least the hope, the conviction, that God will one day restore all things to peace, harmony and unity.

Joy then, is our awareness of hope, of God's presence with us, and our sense of the conviction that God has and will renew all things. Which means that it is a mindset, a "psychological paradigm," and one that can have emotional content. If anything, it's far closer to "homeostasis" or "healthy regulation" than "bliss" or "good vibes."

But it's a mind set that God invites us into, leads us into, as we encounter him and love our neighbor as ourselves. It's nothing less than God's gift of purpose and meaning in our lives. It can get us up in the morning and get to work, for the welfare of our communities, for justice and well-being for all, and for the increase of faith, hope and love. It can sustain our relationships with friends, family, and newcomers, enabling us to both celebrate and grieve with others and open ourselves to their presence in our lives. Joy can feel good at times, but also guards us from despair, limits its claim on our imaginations, during our inevitable times of doubt and sadness. And it becomes our prayer, at the end of the day, that "In peace I will lie down and fall asleep, for you alone, Lord, make me secure." (Psalm 4:8, NAB) whatever our circumstances.

Because joy doesn't depend on good things happening to us and not bad things. It depends on who God is, what God has done in his Anointed One, and what he promises to do at the End of Time. Gaudete indeed !

(Excerpted from "slmedia.org")

## Announcements

### Christmas Decorating

Christmas decorating may begin after December 20th. This weekend is the last time to donate for Christmas flowers, please don't forget to take a Christmas flower envelope at the back of each Church.

### Christmas Eve Choir Practice

There will be a 30 minutes Christmas Caroling before Christmas Eve Mass at STM site; parishioners who are interested in joining the choir for this joyful event please come to practice on Monday, December 15th and Monday, December 22th at 6pm at Holy Trinity site.

### The Christmas Schedule for 2025 is as follows:

Christmas Eve Mass— 5pm at STM site

Christmas Day— 9:30am at HT site

### Year End Contribution Letter

Parishioners who would like a 2025 tax year contribution letter please contact the church office.

#### Latest Offering's

December 6th Weekend

St. Barbara Parish

Total Collections:

\$4,338.00



#### Next Confessions

Confession will be  
Sat. December 20th

HT site in the  
Confessional



# Dear Padre,

## ***Does the Bible say that Mary was in her sixth month of pregnancy at the Annunciation?***

The announcement of Jesus' birth in Luke begins, "In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph...and the virgin's name was Mary" (Luke 1:26-27). This Scripture passage taken out of context could possibly give the impression that "in the sixth month" refers to Mary. However, it refers to Mary's cousin Elizabeth, who was in the sixth month of her pregnancy with John the Baptist. The proper context is a few verses before this one that reads, "Elizabeth conceived, and she went into seclusion for five months" (Luke 1:24).

Regarding Mary's pregnancy, at the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel tells her, "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.... The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1:31, 35). Gabriel also informs Mary, "And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren" (Luke 1:36).

In general, women already in their sixth month of pregnancy would likely be aware of their condition, and it would not be easy to conceal from others. ●



**Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / DearPadre.org**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
December 15	December 16	December 17	December 18	December 19	December 20	December 21
<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i>
Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a	Zep 3:1-2, 9-13 Mt 21:28-32	Gn 49:2, 8-10 Mt 1:1-17	Jer 23:5-8 Mt 1:18-25	Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a Lk 1:5-25	Is 7:10-14 Lk 1:26-38	Is 7:10-14 Rom 1:1-7 Mt 1:18-24



### **A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV**

***There are many settings in which the Christian faith is considered absurd.... Yet, precisely for this reason, they are the places where our missionary outreach is desperately needed. A lack of faith is often tragically accompanied by the loss of meaning in life, the neglect of mercy, appalling violations of human dignity, the crisis of the family, and so many other wounds that afflict our society.***

**HOMILY, ROME, MAY 9, 2025**