



The Light Side of the Dark

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

There's something to be said for kindness. Often when we say to ourselves that something is an act of godliness, it's when someone is kind, especially when it seems to come out of the blue. It's what John the Baptist seemed to be thinking when he said we would be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with the sort of passionate fire that warms and gives off light. Henry James, the British novelist, once said that three things were important in life—the first, be kind; the second, be kind; the third, be kind. Long before Henry James said it, St. Paul wrote to the Christian community in Philippi: "Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near" (Philippians 4:5). God's presence seems to be nearer when someone is kind.

It is curious how in the darkest moments of life, the light of kindness shines more brightly. Natural calamities seem to bring out kindness toward those who suffer. So too, at times of personal tragedies or disasters, when others are grieving the death of someone they love, as well as countless other times when people find themselves lost in the dark. Little wonder then how during this time of year when the days are shortest, and the nighttime dark is longest, that the days of Advent and Christmas seem to be laced with kindness for one another. Then the veil that hides God from our eyes grows thinner, and we catch glimpses of "God with us." ●

Reflect

***Have you made kindness
a regular practice?***



**The peace of God that surpasses all understanding
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.**

PHILIPPIANS 4:7



Holy Trinity



St. Thomas More



St. Patrick

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Adoration Room at STM
Open Monday - Sunday
Regular Hours
9 am - 6 pm

Rav/Tort Group taking orders now
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Website for the Three Churches
www.bureaucatholic.org
and on Facebook at
"Bureau Catholic Churches"

Facebook for the Three Churches
Use Link on Home Page
www.bureaucatholic.org

Emergency Number for all 3 Churches 779-248-2164



CCD Classes

Sunday, December 15th - 6th & 7th grade
Sunday, December 22nd - No Classes

Daily Mass Intentions for the Week of December 16, 2024

Monday	12/16			+ No Mass
Tuesday	12/17	9:00 am	STM	+ Robert Magnani
Wednesday	12/18	5:30 pm	HT	+ Cindy Loebach
Thursday	12/19	9:00 am	HT	+ Daisy Kopek
Friday	12/20	9:00 am	STM	+ Gene & Josie Weberski

Mass Intentions for the weekend of December 21 - 22, 2024

Saturday	12/21	4:00 pm	St Thomas More	+ Norma Templeton
Sunday	12/22	8:30 am	Holy Trinity	+ For the Parishioners
		10:30 am	St Patrick	+ Bernard Schwamberger

REJOICE, THE MESSIAH IS ON HIS WAY

This Third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete (rejoice) Sunday. Pope Francis has consistently called us to live with joy, most especially in his apostolic exhortation "The Joy of the Gospel," in which we find the word *joy* 110 times.

The first reading is taken from the writing of the prophet Zephaniah, a minor prophet. Although we know little about him, Zephaniah presents us with a remarkable image of God. He depicts God as One whose very nature is to forgive, "The Lord has removed the judgment against you [and] is in your midst." Then comes the greatest novelty of Zephaniah's image of God: "[God] will rejoice over you with happy song, renew you by love, [and God] will dance with shouts of joy for you as on a day of festival.

In today's gospel, Luke tells us that when soldiers and tax collectors came to John, he instructed them to do their work with integrity and respect. He didn't expect to turn selfish or bullying people into instant saints. Even a little change of their ways would help others immensely and, by changing their behavior, they were on the road to more.

These people demonstrate the freedom that Paul recommends to the Philippians. The ability to give from their want frees them from anxiety. They know and show by the way they behave that the good news is happening in their midst.

Paul teaches the Philippians how to pray as a community whose life presents good news to the poor. Paul tells them to pray with thanksgiving and to ask for what they need because they know that a praying community will do everything possible to ensure the good of all.

What about us? Acting as a gentler John the Baptist, Pope Francis tells us, "The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience." He addresses this to all of us: common people, business owners and soldiers, pastors and plumbers, migrants and refugees, young and old, absolutely everyone alive today.

(Excerpted from "ncronline.org")



2025 Envelopes

Envelopes are now available in the back of the churches. Don't forget to pick yours up. If you do not see your name contact the church office. SP Parishioners please note: anyone of you who would like your 2025 envelopes please let the office know. Also, if you know of a homebound parishioners, and they would like their envelopes brought to them, help the church do so. Thank you for your last year contributions to our churches.

SP Christmas Eve Choir Practice

There will be choir practice on Monday, December 16th and Thursday, December 19th at 6pm at St. Patrick Church. All Parishioners who are interested in joining the choir for Christmas caroling please attend these practices.

Latest Offering's

Dec 8th Weekend

HT- \$1464 -Rfund \$30

Cath School \$20

SP - \$516

STM - \$986- Rfund \$24

Year End Contribution Letter

Parishioners who would like a 2024 tax year contribution letter please contact the church office.



Confessions

Confessions will be on

Sat. Dec 21st

10:30 am—11:15 am at

St. Thomas More

In the hall

Dear Padre,

My family, friends, and coworkers seem to be uncomfortable when I tell them that I've been praying for them. Should I just keep it to myself?

There is nothing fundamentally wrong with telling people you have been praying for them. Most people are probably grateful for such care and support. But it can be a little tricky. If the person believes the praying is actually a judgment and not a blessing, it may provoke a less-than-grateful response. This is where honest discernment on your part is invited. Are you coming across as prayerfully concerned, or is there some criticism or judgment in what seems to be an innocent blessing? People are able to perceive the difference.

Another consideration—and this is not at all unusual as a response in the culture of today—is that some people are very defensive about any religious expressions and do not react favorably. Think, for example, about the different reactions to “Merry Christmas” or “Happy Holidays,” which can often provoke the familiar idiom “them’s fightin’ words.” My best advice is to keep praying for everyone, as no one truly understands or fully appreciates the power of prayer. That being said, temper your announcement when you suspect it will not be well received. This demonstrates a grateful and blessed heart, which is what you intend and hope for, after all. ●



MARY JONES / SHUTTERSTOCK

Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
December 16	December 17	December 18	December 19	December 20	December 21	December 22
<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	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	Sg 2:8–14 or Zep 3:14–18a Lk 1:39–45	Mi 5:1–4a Heb 10:5–10 Lk 1:39–45



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

[The crowd asked John the Baptist,] “What shall we do?” By suggesting this question, the Gospel reminds us of something important: life has a task for us.... Each of us—let us not forget this—has a mission to accomplish. So, let us not be afraid to ask the Lord: what shall I do?

ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 12, 2021