



Jerusalem, take off your robe
of mourning and misery;
put on forever the splendor of
glory from God.

BARUCH 5:1



**CHRISTMAS
COFFEE SOCIAL**
THIS Sunday
AFTER 10:15 Mass

Coming Home

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

Coming home can take place in many varied ways. Sometimes it's at the end of a long day when we come home to where we can be ourselves without any pretensions. Sometimes it's going back to the neighborhood we grew up in, to the old haunts that remind us of the dreams we had and how they now seem tucked in every niche. Sometimes coming home is what happens after many wanderings, after we've sown our oats and harvested little and now have nowhere else to go. That too is a coming home, back to where it all began, back to where we dare to hope that life might begin again.

All of this is how the Hebrew people found themselves coming home to Jerusalem after eighty years of exile, coming back to start anew with the hope that their God would once again be proud of them, back to where they could be as God intended them to be. All of that is what we do when we decide we will try to be the sort of person we'd always hoped to become. It's when we attempt a second effort at making a marriage work, or a job productive, or maybe simply putting the pieces of our lives back in some sort of order. It's all about coming back home to God's dream for us, a kind of second Advent, when God comes into our lives and is born once again. ●

Reflect

Have you wandered too far from the values of your true home? Can you find your way back?



ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

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Pastor: Reverend Joseph F. H. Morley • Cell: 705 0236

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Weekend Masses: Vigil: 5:00pm, Sunday: 10:15am

Baptisms: by appointment 3 weeks in advance

Weddings: by appointment 6 months in advance

www.facebook.com/stmichaelpaget & "LIKE" us | Diocesan Webpage: www.romancatholicbermuda.bm

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Mass Schedule & Intentions

We welcome our parishioners and visitors who have come to St. Michael's to worship this weekend. May you be blessed by your presence here today.

MINISTRIES...

DECEMBER 7/8th - THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00PM Lector: Laura DeFrias EM: Karen Marsh
10:15AM Lector: Willie Forbes EM: Madelena Almeida
Collection: Carlos DeFrias

DECEMBER 14/15th - THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00PM Lector: Karen Marsh EM: Alberta Canonier
10:15AM Lector: Jesse Almeida EM: LaVerne Lau
Collection: Jesse Almeida

MASS INTENTIONS...

DECEMBER 7/8th - THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00PM The Intentions of St. Michael's Parishioners
10:15AM The Sick and Suffering

DECEMBER 14/15th - THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00PM St. Michael's Parishioners
10:15AM All Souls In Purgatory

You are welcome to attend Morning Masses at

St. Theresa's - 7:30AM Mon.-Fri.

St. Anthony's - 8:00AM Tues.-Fri. | St. Patrick's - 8:00AM Mon.-Fri..

ST. THERESA'S Daily Mass - 7:30am



November 30/December 1st: Collection: \$878.00

Christmas Flower Memorials to date: \$440.00

THANK YOU FOR YOUR STEWARDSHIP

ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE MADE ONLINE
to St. Michael's Church's

BNTB Account # 2000 6060 081824 100.

YOUR Weekly, monthly or quarterly transaction is appreciated.

When making your online transaction, be sure to include your name and "collection" as your memo on your banking transaction.

5 WAYS TO PREPARE YOUR HEART THIS ADVENT

1. **Prepare room at the Inn**
Make room in your heart for Jesus
2. **Clean out the cobwebs**
After an Examination of Conscience, go to Confession
3. **Hang new curtains**
"decorate" your heart with joy and hope.
4. **Get out the fine china and set the table**
Let your attitude be one of enthusiastic expectation.
5. **Open the front door and wait**
Wait for Christ's arrival silently and in a spirit of prayer



Bishop's Corner...



Dear Fellow-Catholics,

Pope Francis made a heartfelt invitation recently when greeting representatives of the Italian Motorcycle Federation when he encouraged them in their efforts to raise greater awareness of Italy's road safety rules. He pointed out that the lives of so many young people are at stake, especially those who admire "the champions" of motorcycling but who are "often unaware of the dangers" of riding. The Pontiff mentioned the importance of road and rules education and how the Federation's statutes provide for "courses to be held in schools" to promote greater awareness of the rules of the road.

The tragic reality of the high number of road accidents involving young people makes their work ever more critical, the Pope noted saying, "In many cases, poor knowledge or failure to apply safety rules endangers not only the safety of drivers, but also the safety of others."

He described their efforts to raise road safety awareness and enhance knowledge of road issues as "an investment in life."

Pope Francis offered them his hearty good wishes and blessings, asking them to pray for him, remarking that he needs their prayers as "my work is very high-speed and my 'bike' is old and not working very well!"

It looks like a greater awareness and more advanced education on the road safety is needed not only in Italy...

Have a good weekend and a productive week!

+ We: *W. J. [Signature]*



Word of Life:

"Perhaps one of your friends has become pregnant unexpectedly. As someone who has been there, I encourage you to support your friend in her new journey of being a mother." Learn how at respectlife.org/support-her.

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

"10 Ways to Support Her When She's Unexpectedly Expecting"

Pastor's Point

Dear Parishioners,

On this second Sunday of Advent, Luke's account of the Gospel introduces the adult John and his mission (in the words of the prophet Isaiah) to "prepare the way of the Lord" (3:4). His is the voice crying out in the desert, and he is the one who baptized those coming to him in repentance and moving toward a new direction. A way of preparing for the coming of the messiah when all "shall see the salvation of God" (3:6) is presented to those who are attentive and courageous enough to reflect on their lives and their way of proceeding, in relationship both with God and with other people.

The reading from Paul encompasses his thanksgiving, a component he typically adds to the conventional Greco-Roman letter. Paul expresses his joy with the Philippians at their lived manifestation of the Good News. The timeless summons of his prayer is for everyone to strive for the good of all. Seeking to find and be our best selves includes discerning what is truly of value. This is the hard work also bidden by the psalmist and envisioned by Baruch. The restoration of God's people after the exile is described as tears that lead to joy. The mercy and justice of God guide those in covenant with Him to be accountable in what they believe and do. This is the path to authentic satisfaction. Are you satisfied with your relationship with Jesus? Are you going to your priest for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) to have your sins washed away as we start the new liturgical cycle with the focus this year on the Gos of Luke? Do not be afraid. COURAGE!

God bless.

Fr. Joe, (acting) Pastor and Vicar General (DOHB)



Dear Padre,

If Christmas is on December 25, why is the Immaculate Conception on December 8, rather than sometime in March?

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception asserts that Mary was free of the stain of original sin from the time she was conceived in her mother's womb. Jesus was also free of the stain of original sin and his conception by Mary is referred to as the Incarnation of Christ. Mary's Immaculate Conception is often confused for Christ's Incarnation.

In the Church's liturgical calendar, Mary's conception is celebrated on December 8; her birthday is celebrated exactly nine months later on September 8. Likewise, Christ's conception is celebrated on March 25 on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord; his birthday is celebrated exactly nine months later on December 25.

Mary's Immaculate Conception was celebrated many centuries before Pope Pius IX defined it as dogma on December 8, 1854: "The doctrine that maintains that the Blessed Virgin Mary in the first instant of her conception, by a unique grace and privilege granted to her by Almighty God, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ the Savior of mankind, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful" (*Ineffabilis Deus*). In fact, eight years before, in 1846, the bishops of the United States had already adopted the Immaculate Conception as the patronal feast for Catholics in this country.

Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / DearPadre.org



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION BY PHILIP VEIT (1830) RENATA SEDMAKOVA / SHUTTERSTOCK

A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

By calling us to conversion, John urges us to go "beyond" where we presently are; to go beyond what our instincts tell us.... Let us ask for the grace to believe that with God things really do change, that he will banish our fears, heal our wounds.... Let us ask for the grace of hope....

HOMILY, ATHENS, DECEMBER 5, 2021



YARA NARDI / CNS

What is Happening in Our Diocese?

St. MICHAEL'S

- Emmaus Bible Study reviews the three upcoming Sunday readings. TUESDAYS 3:00pm -4:30pm.
- St. Charles 'Going Deeper', Bible Study. As the name suggests this takes an in-depth look at the Sunday readings. For further info call Fr. Joe at 705:0236. THURSDAYS 3:00-4:30pm.
NO BIBLE STUDIES during December. Classes will resume in January.

St. THERESA'S

- Daily Mass is celebrated at 7:30am and WEDNESDAYS, THURSDAYS and FRIDAYS at 12:10pm.

St. PATRICK'S

- The Rosary is recited every, WEDNESDAY at 10:00am.
- The Rosary followed by the PORTUGUESE mass every, WEDNESDAY at 7:00pm.
- Adoration at St. Patrick's on Thursdays during winter months will take place at 6pm. .
- A mass in Tagalog takes place on, THE SECOND FRIDAY of the month at 7:00pm.

St. JOSEPH'S

- A Filipino mass is celebrated every, THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH at 11:00am.

STELLA MARIS

- A Filipino mass is celebrated on the LAST Wednesday OF THE MONTH at 7:00pm

St. THERESA'S GIFT SHOP is open, TUESDAYS and SATURDAYS 10:00am-2:00pm.

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR FOOD DRIVE

During the 2024 Advent season, parishes throughout our Diocese are asked to support a "Reverse Advent Calendar Food Drive". Each day of Advent, add one item to your collection box. By Christmas, you will have a food basket which will be donated to those in need. See the flyer for details of items to be collected. Drop off details are also included in the flyer. Collection of the food baskets in each parish will be coordinated by the parish St. Vincent de Paul representative for this project is Karen Marsh, stmichaelsbermuda@gmail.com. If you have any questions, please contact Elaine Kelly at 236-4613 or email: ekelly@ibl.bm.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Christmas Food Voucher Programme - 2024

The St. Vincent de Paul Society is providing Christmas Food Vouchers again this year for those less fortunate and would like your help in registering people of your parish needing assistance. Please provide the person's name and telephone number, along with your name and telephone number in case we need to follow up with you. You can call 525-1191 and leave a message on the SVDP voicemail or speak to your SVdP parish representative, Karen Marsh 799 0842.

Deadline to receive names has passed. Distribution takes place Saturday, December 7, 2024.

Many thanks and God bless. SVdP Society Committee

UP COMING EVENTS in our Catholic community...

- **12th of December**, Thursday: 6:30pm - Stella Maris Parish Liturgical Feast
- **17th of December**, Tuesday: 6:00pm - 8:00pm - Advent Reconciliation Service at St. Theresa's
- **18th of December**, Wednesday: 4:00pm - 6:00pm - Advent Reconciliation Service at St. Patrick's



THIS SUNDAY - PLEASE ATTEND



Coffee Social

Please join us on **THIS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8th** following the **10:15am Mass** for our Christmas Coffee Social. Please consider sharing your favourite savoury or sweet offering, we would be very grateful.

Please make every effort to support and enjoy this social.

A PRAYER FOR THE Second Sunday of Advent

Jesus, you came among us with the irresistible power of a baby, requiring both our hands and captivating our whole hearts. Help us to cast aside the sin and brokenness that we cling to, so we might be ready to hold you when you come again.
Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

CANDLE OF Peace



The second candle, also purple, represents peace. It is called the "Bethlehem Candle" as a reminder of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.

Our Sunday Readings



And All Shall See

BARUCH 5:1-9

Reading closely

1. What all will God do for Jerusalem?
2. How do you envision Jerusalem before and after the city hears these prophetic words?
3. What imagery most captures your attention?

Living the word

4. Who might be uplifted by these words today?
5. Has God ever turned your sorrow to joy?
6. Is your path right now easy or difficult?

THE FIRST READING

Who's Baruch?

Baruch was a follower of the prophet Jeremiah, who lived during the Babylonian conquest of Israel in the sixth century BC. During this attack Baruch was taken into Egypt (Jeremiah 43:4-7).

However, scholars estimate that this book was written in the second century BC, when Baruch would no longer have been alive. By attributing the work to Baruch, the author of this work evoked the memory of the Babylonian invasion and all that provoked it.

Sin and mercy

The author invites his hearers to reflect on what caused the Babylonian invasion. Prophets like Jeremiah warned that God would punish his people for failing to uphold his laws. This book thus invites later generations to confess their own sins and seek forgiveness. As we hear in the passage for this Sunday, God protects and restores all who repent and seek his mercy.

A glorious restoration

The Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem before looting the city and killing or imprisoning the surviving inhabitants. When the city was rebuilt, it was a sign that God had forgiven his people.

This author personifies Jerusalem, urging her to exchange her sorrow and misery for symbols of glory and justice (vv.1-2). Everyone, including the city's enemies, will see this wondrous transformation (vv.3-4).

Jerusalem will then watch as those who left during the invasion return home. These people return like royalty (vv.5-6). God will make their journey comfortable by smoothing their path and providing food and shade (vv.7-8).

LUKE 3:1-6

Reading closely

1. Name your political leaders, from the president to your local representatives. Name your religious leaders, from the pope to your local pastor and/or other ministers. This list is your version of verses 1-2a.
2. What might it be like for John to receive the word of God?
3. Why might God have chosen John?
4. How might John feel about God's call?
5. How might John change because of his prophetic role?
6. How do you imagine people reacting to John?

Living the word

7. Have you ever felt called by God to do something?
8. In what ways do you need to prepare yourself for God's arrival?

THE GOSPEL READING

Setting the stage

Other Greek writers of Luke's era also began their literary works by naming local and regional rulers. They did this in order to establish the historical context of the events they wrote about. Such introductions also lend weight and solemnity to the events that follow. Some of the prophetic literature in our Old Testament begins the same way.

Luke makes other points with this introduction.

- Despite their positions of power, God doesn't call any of these people to announce the gospel
- Both John the Baptist and Jesus will come into conflict with people in power
- Although John's ministry begins in one small pocket of the Roman Empire, it has repercussions that stretch from Jerusalem to Rome itself (*all flesh shall see the salvation of God*)

The desert

The desert was a religiously significant place for the Jews. When God led their ancestors out of slavery in Egypt, he led them into the Sinai desert and formed a covenant with them.

Centuries after the exodus, God's people were conquered by the Babylonians. Some were forced to live in Babylon. Once this time of oppression had ended, God called prophets like Isaiah to urge people to make a new exodus by journeying through the desert to rebuild their homeland.

Time of salvation

John quotes the passage from Isaiah to declare that God is coming with salvation, but only for those who turn away from sin and accept this new era. He echoes other Old Testament prophets in saying that God is coming, so people must amend their ways or face condemnation.

Baptism

The Jordan river marks the eastern boundary of Israel and is that nation's largest river. Many significant events in Israel's history happened at the Jordan river, making it a richly symbolic place for John to begin his ministry.

Jews immersed themselves and objects in water as a way of ritually purifying them. John adapts this practice to suit his prophetic ministry. He makes baptism a sign that people want to turn away from their sins and embrace whatever is coming.

John's baptism isn't the same as Christian baptism. John's baptism is only a sign of contrition, whereas Christian baptism also takes away a person's sins. Christian baptism also immerses believers into the life and death of Christ and makes them part of a new spiritual community.

PRAYER

*Opening Prayer for the Second Sunday of Advent
(Roman Missal, 1985)*

God of power and mercy,
open our hearts in welcome.
Remove the things that hinder us from receiving
Christ with joy so that we may share his wisdom
and become one with him
when he comes in glory,
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



ADVENT

Mary's Immaculate Conception

On December 8, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which references Mary's conception in her mother's womb without the stain of Original Sin:

An essential part of God's plan for the mother of his Son was that she be conceived free from Original Sin. "Through the centuries the Church became ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception" (CCC, no. 491).

In anticipation that she was to bear the Son of God, Mary was preserved from the time of her conception from Original Sin. We call this the Immaculate Conception. No sin would touch her, so that she would be a fitting and worthy vessel of the Son of God. The Immaculate Conception does not refer to the virginal conception and birth of Christ, but rather to Mary's being conceived without inheriting Original Sin.

In the course of time, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception became more precisely enunciated, as its truth—long supported by the universal popular devotion of the faithful—was better understood by deepening theological inquiry. In 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed this dogma infallibly: that is, in his role as supreme teacher of the Church, he declared that this doctrine is divinely revealed and must be accepted with faith by the entire

Church. (*United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, 142-143)

Even before this tenet of the faith was formally declared, a long tradition of faith that held this belief that Mary was conceived without sin:

This feast was celebrated in some monasteries before the beginning of the eighth century and became widespread in the eighteenth century. In the United States, celebration of this observance predates the Declaration of Independence. The bishops commended the nation to the patronage of Mary under the title of the Immaculate Conception in 1846. It became a nationwide holy day in 1885. (*Essential Guide to Seasons and Saints*, 120)



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