

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

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ADVENT

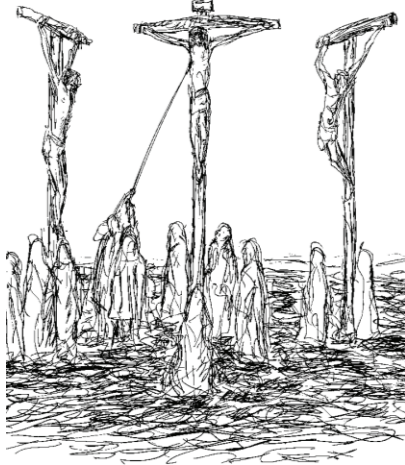


prepare the way...

It is Right and Just

The truth of the Gospel is intended to be the backdrop, the standard by which we view and judge all things in this world and in our own personal lives. As we grow and increase in the life of faith, a healthy and holy *fear of God* should be evidenced in the life we are living. This fear of God will keep us on the straight and narrow. Fear of God doesn't mean that we are afraid of what God will do to us if we don't repent, in fact, choosing to remain unrepentant for our sin is a refusal of God's grace, mercy and forgiveness.

The unrepentant thief, who heaped abuse on Our Blessed Lord on the cross, demanded that Jesus save Himself and save both of them. But the 'good thief', who also hung on a cross alongside Jesus, said to the unrepentant thief opposite: "Do you not fear God since you are under the same judgment?" (Luke 23:39-40)



This good thief didn't ask

to be taken down, as did the opposite thief, but instead, through his words to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your Kingdom", asked to be taken up.

So, fear of God is a right attitude and approach to God whether He be on the great throne in heaven, as in the Book of Revelation, or on the throne of the Cross where He reconciles, for all time, sinful humanity to Himself. This truth is also echoed in the *Act of Contrition* where we say "...and I detest all of my sins because I fear the loss of heaven and the pains of hell **but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love.**" The first part centers on myself with the fear of not going to heaven and going to hell, which is human and a right sense of protection of the self. However, the bold part pertains to a real relationship with God and not just my bodily good alone. It is an acknowledgement that my sin is an offense to God and His relationship to me because He is God.

Our Advent of waiting is a personal preparation to meet Jesus in our life here on earth and in the fullness of time when he returns as both Judge and Saviour. If we have a fear of God that is rooted in a profound sense within ourselves that God is God and I am not God, we are drawn all the more to a truly awesome (filled with awe) relationship with Christ who has revealed to us not only His greatness and His power but also His Sacred and beautiful Heart. He loves us, me, like no one else could or would. He wants me to choose on my own to draw close to Him so that He in turn will draw close to me: "Make your home in me as I make my home in you". (John 15:4) Living in the world and for the world on its own is the result of a personal choice to not follow

the Lord, a choice not to be headed in the direction of heaven, the eternal, the unbelievable and that which is truly opposite to Christ.

The danger, and it is a real and present danger for the soul, is to assume the love of God and our end in heaven without acknowledging Him in our life today. It believes this life is just this life and I can do whatever I want with it, and that heaven and living forever is a default that everyone receives. And it is a lie, a horrible lie that will cost us everything and result in a forever of our choosing, without God.

Where does it start? It starts in the here and now, in today, by giving God His due. The Third Commandment, "Keep holy the Sabbath day" means that we must dedicate one day in our relationship with God to praise Him, thank Him, listen to Him and worship Him. We cannot do that at Walmart or Costco or on the golf course or even in the woods, though we are in the presence of God always, and even though Adam and Eve, after they had sinned, thought they could hide from God's presence. For, in the Mass, the priest, in praying the preface, first dialogues with the people which really states why we are at the Mass in the first place and why we also must be at the Mass for our own good and wellbeing: Priest: *The Lord be with you.* People: And with your spirit. Priest: *Lift up your hearts.* People: We lift them up to the Lord. Priest: *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.* People: **IT IS RIGHT AND JUST!** And there we have it. Why must we go to Mass every Sunday, without exception save for illness? Why must we gather with other sinners, who have come to believe, in a church building on Sunday, the every-weekly celebration of the Resurrection of Christ? Why must we bring our children to Mass when there are other things (sports, entertainment, leisure) they can be doing instead? Because it is right and just! We say it ourselves at every Mass, at least those who actually come to Mass. Never mind a pandemic that has only realized a great falling away from the practice of faith, even of those who came to church and now, after lockdowns, no longer do. What do we owe to God? Everything. We owe Him our living and our lives, our children, our families, our obedience, our faithfulness, our struggle with the things of faith in the midst of a world with none. We owe Him our hearts and minds, our thanksgiving and our questioning. And since worship, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* clearly teaches, is reserved for God and God alone, we read in 1070:

"The liturgy then is rightly seen as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. It involves the presentation of man's sanctification under the guise of signs perceptible by the senses and its accomplishment in ways appropriate to each of these signs. In its full public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members. From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of his Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree." The greatest gift, therefore, for yourself and for others, for Christmas and every Sunday, is to go to Mass because, as every Mass proclaims by the people: "It is right and just!" (Fr. Charles)



Tuesday Dec 20
8:30am Intentions of the Guerrero Family

Wednesday Dec 21
7:00pm +Denis Fonseca
Requested by Marie Fonseca & Family

Thursday Dec 22
8:30am +Liz Rybka
Requested by Genevieve Carson

Friday Dec 23
7:30am Holy Hour
8:30am +Greg Cudney
Requested by the Cudney Family

Saturday Dec 24
4:30pm Christmas Eve
6:30pm Christmas Eve

Sunday Dec 25
9:00am Christmas Day
11:00am Christmas Day

Our Sanctuary Lamp Burns
For the Parishioners of St. Mary's
From Dec 18 to Dec 24, 22



Please Pray for the Sick

Chelsea Cando, Dorothy Dynes, Margot Brandreth, Ken Buchan,
Jean Ferguson, Rose Flanagan, Fred Coulson, Andrew Vella,
Gwen Collard, Janine Wright.

Pray for those who have died recently

Mihaly Sutka

Weekly Offering Dec 11 \$5045.00 (Inc PAG)
ShareLife \$40,804.00



2023 Offertory Envelopes

2023 Offertory are in the hall for pick up, they are in alphabetical order. Please note that some people's envelope numbers may have changed as I ordered less envelopes to reduce the amount that are wasted every year. So please look for your name not your number. There are also envelopes for people who wish to start using them, all we ask is that you put your name and address on the envelope for the first couple of uses.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

The Masses for Christmas will be as follows:

Saturday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)
4:30 pm and 6:30 pm

Sunday, December 25 (Christmas Day)
9:00 am and 11:00 am

Feast of the Holy Family / New Year's Eve

Saturday, December 31
4:30 pm

Sunday, January 1 – New Year's Day
9:00 am and 11:00 am

Senior Wish Collingwood

Thank you to St. Mary's Parish for your incredible support of the Senior Wish Association in Collingwood and area. We feel so blessed to have received your support. Through local donations, we are able to bring some of the holiday spirit to over 70 Seniors in our community. We are starting our deliveries in the next few days and are so excited to see the response. I hope you will watch for some pictures on our [Senior Wish Association Collingwood](#) Facebook page.

4th Sunday of Advent
December 18, 2022



ShareLife agencies need your support, now more than ever

NEW: Your year-end gift will double in value! From now until the end of 2022, your contribution to our parish's ShareLife campaign will be matched by an anonymous donor up to a total of \$1 million.

Did you know that, through your support, no one is turned away from ShareLife-funded agencies due to inability to pay? One of these agencies whose work you make possible is Catholic Crosscultural Services (CCS).

"The pandemic has affected the newcomer and refugee communities we serve greatly," the agency reports. Thanks to you, CCS continued its settlement and mental health services for this marginalized population without interruption.

Please give at the parish using a ShareLife envelope, online through our parish website, or at sharelife.org/donate.



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