



# faith FORMATION

ST. JUDE CATHOLIC CHURCH // VOLUME 1 // ISSUE 13 // DEC. 9, 2022

## *In the Beginning...*

*Martin Smith, Director of Religious Education*  
*msmith@stjudes.net | 616-364-7488*

It's the third Sunday of Advent already! Before long, Christmas will be here. For a week, our time of preparation turns to joy. On the advent wreath, the candle is pink.

The purple candles signify royalty and repentance. Purple sets quite a somber tone. However, Advent is both a penitential season and a hopeful season. In the midst of such solemnity, the church still recognizes that Christians are never a people without joy.

When true repentance occurs, joy is the result. Joy is not only a fruit of the Holy Spirit's work in an individual's life but also a characteristic common in God's Kingdom. And so we have a pink candle to remind us that in times of preparation, repentance and even suffering, there is joy to be found.

Joy is different from happiness. While they are often found together, joy can persist where happiness has faded. So often we see Christians who, in the midst of suffering, somehow exude joy. Their faith is deep and their hearts have been opened wide to receive the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. On this third week of Advent, let us pray that we too may open our hearts and experience that joy.

St. Jude will be having a night of Adoration and Reconciliation on December 13 at 7:00pm. What a great week to have an occasion to experience such joy!

### IN THIS ISSUE

[In the Beginning...](#)

[First Holy Communion  
& Reconciliation Prep](#)

[Sunday Gospel  
Reflection by Scott  
Hahn](#)

[The Gospel at Home](#)

[Did You Know?](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

### Confession

Saturday: 2:00 - 3:30PM  
Also, by appointment

### Daily Mass

Tuesday: 8:30AM  
Thursday: 8:30AM  
Friday: 8:30AM

### Weekend Mass

Saturday: 4:00PM  
Sunday: 8:30AM, 10:30AM

# FIRST HOLY COMMUNION & RECONCILIATION PREP

Chris Stefanick asks "What is the Eucharist?" Hmm...

Check it out:

[You Are Loved: Episode 5](#)

If you haven't signed up for [Formed.org](#) yet, what are you waiting for??? Click the link, Search "49525" and click on

St. Jude then follow the sign up instructions. It's FREE!

We have our schedule for parent meetings and other events leading up to First Holy Communion. Please see below. You can reach out to Janet and Marty with any questions:

Janet DeBoe: [jdeboe@stjudes.net](mailto:jdeboe@stjudes.net)

Marty Smith: [msmith@stjudes.net](mailto:msmith@stjudes.net)



## SAINT JUDE FIRST HOLY COMMUNION / RECONCILIATION DATES TO REMEMBER

### PARENT MEETINGS

Sunday, January 15, 2023 5:30- 7 PM

Sunday, February 19, 2023 5:30 - 7PM

Sunday, March 19, 2023 5:30 - 7 PM

### FAMILY MASS & BREAKFAST

Sunday, April 16, 10:30AM Mass

Breakfast after Mass

Student decorate Communion Plates

### RECONCILIATION REVIEW & CHURCH TOUR

Students only

Sunday April 23, 2023 5:30 - 6:30 PM

### RECONCILIATION SERVICE

Thursday April 27, 2023 6:30 PM

### FIRST COMMUNION PRACTICE

Thursday May 4, 2023 6:30PM

### First Holy Communion Mass

Sunday May 7, 2023 10:30AM

Previous Signs of Grace  
Episodes of  
"You Are Loved"  
(about the Eucharist)

[Episode 1](#)

[Episode 2](#)

[Episode 3](#)

[Episode 4](#)

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute" (CCC 2221).

Although the parish helps to form our children in the faith, no one can take the place of the parents' role in forming holy individuals. As parents, we should be well equipped to answer questions and to act, not only as the first teachers, but as the first witnesses of faith. This page is intended to help you in the journey as we work together to prepare your children for this special moment in their lives!



# SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTION

By Scott Hahn

Readings:

[Isaiah 35:1-6, 10](#)

[Psalm 146:6-10](#)

[James 5:7-10](#)

[Matthew 11:2-11](#)

[LISTEN HERE](#)



John questions Jesus from prison in today's Gospel—for his disciples' sake and for ours.

He knows that Jesus is doing “the works of the Messiah,” foretold in today's First Reading and Psalm. But John wants his disciples—and us—to know that the Judge is at the gate, that in Jesus our God has come to save us.

The Liturgy of Advent takes us out into the desert to see and hear the marvelous works and words of God—the lame leaping like a stag, the dead raised, the good news preached to the poor (see Isaiah 29:18-20; 61:1-2).

The Liturgy does this to give us courage, to strengthen our feeble hands and make firm our weak knees. Our hearts can easily become frightened and weighed down by the hardships we face. We can lose patience in our sufferings as we await the coming of the Lord.

As James advises in today's Epistle, we should take as our example the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Jesus also points us to a prophet—holding up John as a model. John knew that life was more than food, the body more than clothing. He sought the kingdom of God first, confident that God would provide (see Matthew 6:25-34). John did not complain. He did not lose faith. Even in chains in his prison cell, he was still sending his disciples—and us—to our Savior.

We come to Him again now in the Eucharist. Already He has caused the desert to bloom, the burning sands to become springs of living water. He has opened our ears to hear the words of the sacred book, freed our tongue to fill the air with songs of thanksgiving (see Isaiah 30:18).

Once bowed down, captives to sin and death, we have been ransomed and returned to His Kingdom, crowned with everlasting joy. Raised up, we now stand before His altar to meet the One who is to come: “Here is your God.”

"Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?” And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me.”

MATTHEW 11:2-6

# The Gospel at Home

## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### Gospel Reading

Matthew 11:2-11

Jesus tells John the Baptist of the signs of the kingdom that are being worked through him and praises John as more than a prophet.

### Background on the Gospel Reading

The third Sunday of Advent is traditionally called Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is the Latin word meaning “rejoice.” This Sunday is so named because “Rejoice” is the first word in the entrance antiphon for today's Mass taken from Philippians 4:4,5: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near.” Some people mark this Sunday on their Advent wreath with a pink candle instead of a purple candle. This Sunday is a joyful reminder that our salvation is near.

This week's Gospel Reading continues our Advent reflection on the person and message of John the Baptist. Last week we heard John speak about his relationship to the coming Messiah, Jesus. This week, we hear Jesus' message to John the Baptist, now in prison, about the signs of the kingdom found in Jesus' ministry and Jesus' assessment of John's role in the Kingdom of God.

The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of John's arrest in chapter 14:3-12. In today's Gospel, John sends word to Jesus from prison, asking if Jesus is the Messiah for whom he has been waiting. Jesus responds by pointing to the miracles that he has worked and invites John and the other hearers to make their own determination. In his next breath, however, Jesus praises John for his role in preparing the way for Jesus. Then Jesus says that all of those who work for the Kingdom of God will be as great as John and even greater.

Jesus' message to John about the signs of the kingdom being performed recalls the salvation described by the prophet Isaiah. This passage is a reminder that the beginning of salvation is already mysteriously present to us, but also yet to be fulfilled. Salvation is already in our midst as manifest in the miraculous deeds of Jesus and in the Church. But salvation is also to be fulfilled in the coming reign of God. Even as we observe our world today, we can find glimpses of God's work among us. Even more, we help to prepare the way for God's kingdom by our words and our deeds. This message is indeed a cause for rejoicing.

### Family Connection

It is easy to look at our world and become discouraged by the apparent absence of God and signs of God's salvation. Advent, however, is a season of hope, in which we acknowledge that salvation is both mysteriously present, even in our world, and yet to be fulfilled. Read together today's Gospel. Think about John's question to Jesus: Are you the One? Jesus does not answer directly, but points to the signs of the kingdom present in his midst. Together as a family, look through the newspaper for signs of hope that God is at work in our world. Pray that the world will know God's salvation by praying together the Lord's Prayer.

"As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? Why then did you go out? To see a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, those who wear soft raiment are in kings’ houses. Why then did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

MATTHEW 11:7-9



# Did You Know?

Bethlehem  
means "house of  
bread" in Hebrew.



An ancient manger in Israel. They were often made of stone.

In Hebrew, Bethlehem means "house of bread" and in Arabic it means "house of meat." A manger is a feeding trough for animals. John called Jesus the "Lamb of God" not because he was gentle, kind and loving, but because he knew Jesus would become the sacrifice of the new covenant. Christ being placed in a manger was intentional. There was something greater going on in salvation history other than having "no crib for a bed."

Christmas has often been called a Eucharistic feast because of the rich symbolism of the manger scene. Here's what some great saints have said about it:

St. John Chrysostom in the 4th century encouraged his congregation to attend Mass on Christmas Day, where they could approach the altar as if they were going to the manger.



St. John Chrysostom

"For if we approach with faith we shall surely behold him lying in a manger. His holy table will supply the place of a manger. For there will be spread the body of our Lord, not wrapped in swaddling clothes as then, but on all sides surrounded by his Holy Spirit."

St. Cyril of Alexandria in the 5th century explains, "The setting of Christ's birth points us to the Eucharist. Since through sin man becomes like the beasts, Christ lies in the trough where animals feed, offering them, not hay, but his own body as life-giving bread."



St. Cyril of Alexandria

St. Bede in the 7th century also saw this symbolism.

"He is confined in the narrow space of a rude manger, whose seat is the heavens, that He may give us ample room in the joys of His heavenly kingdom. He Who is the bread of Angels is laid down in a manger, that He might feed us, as it were the sacred animals, with the bread of His flesh."

Now think of the wise men as they journeyed from great distances to give their gifts and pay homage at the manger in a prefigurement of the mass where we come with our gifts and kneel before the altar.



St. Bede

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Opportunities to Grow in Faith

### **Sunday, December 11:**

10:30am - Children's Liturgy of the Word during the 10:30am Mass

11:30am - RCIA after the 10:30am Mass

5:30pm - Religious Ed classes for grades 1-8

### **Monday, December 12:**

7:00pm - Women's Bible Study in the Thaddeus Center

### **Tuesday, December 13:**

7:00pm - Eucharistic Adoration. Reconciliation will be available. Through the national Eucharistic Revival, we are called into the mystery of communion with our Lord and invited to renew our belief in the Real Presence. Exposition of the Holy Eucharist will be celebrated in almost all parishes of the diocese to adore our Lord, offer our lives with Christ, and celebrate our unity as a local church.

### **Wednesday, December 14:**

8:30am - Senior Men's Group in the Thaddeus Center.

### **Thursday, December 15:**

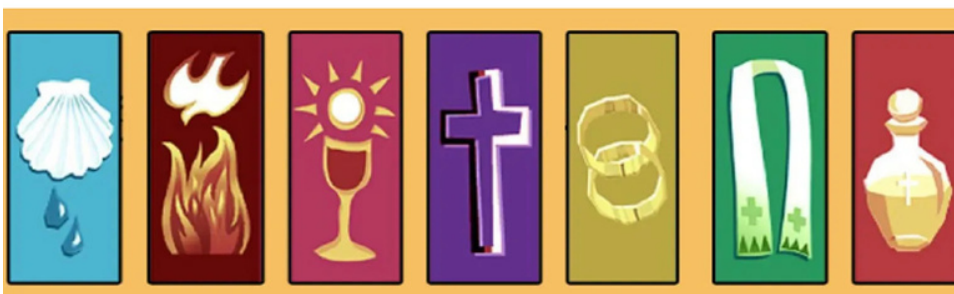
7:00pm - "The Sacraments" with Marie Cirenza. This week Marie talks about the Eucharist. Come join us as we dive deeper into the source and summit of Christian life. See the updated schedule below.

### **Friday, December 16:**

6:00pm - SOMA Youth Group Black & White Party. A night of dinner and dancing for all 9th - 12th graders. Cost is \$20. For more info and to register:

<https://stjudes.net/blackandwhite/>

## Thursday Evenings | 7:00 PM Brophy Center



Have you ever wondered what the sacraments are all about and why we have them? Do you know the basics about the sacraments and would like to know more? Come join us to discover why the sacraments are an essential part of the Catholic faith!

Oct 27: Introduction to the Sacraments

Nov 3: Baptism

Nov 10: Confirmation

Dec 1: Testimony

Dec 8: Eucharist Part 1

Dec 15: Eucharist Part 2

Dec 22: Eucharistic Adoration

Jan 5: Anointing of the Sick

Jan 12: Testimony

Jan 26: Marriage Part 1

Feb 2: Marriage Part 2

Feb 9: Testimony

Feb 16: Reconciliation Part 1

Feb 23: Reconciliation Part 2

Mar 2: Penance Service

Mar 9: Holy Orders

March 16: Testimony

\*Some dates are tentative and could change. We'll update you as soon as any changes are made.

For more information please contact Marie Cirenza at  
[mariecirenza@yahoo.com](mailto:mariecirenza@yahoo.com)

"Jesus replied,  
'The first is  
this: 'Hear, O  
Israel! The Lord  
our God is Lord  
alone! You shall  
love the Lord  
your God with  
all your heart,  
with all your  
soul, with all  
your mind, and  
with all your  
strength.'"

MARK 12:29-30

### **Confession**

Saturday: 2:00 - 3:30PM

Also, by appointment

### **Daily Mass**

Tuesday: 8:30AM

Thursday: 8:30AM

Friday: 8:30AM

### **Weekend Mass**

Saturday: 4:00PM

Sunday: 8:30AM, 10:30AM