

## *Our Lady of the Desert*



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**Padre: Victor C. Yakubu,**  
**Administrador Parroquial**

**Padre: Julius Kayiwa, Vicario Parroquial**  
**Confesión el Sábado:**  
**Por cita en (Español y Inglés)**

**Rosario el Sábado: Y Letanías de la Santísima**  
**Virgen María—3:20pm**

**Misa el Sábado: (Vigilia) / Inglés 4:00 p.m.**

**Rosario el Domingo: Y Letanías de la Santísima**  
**Virgen María— 9:40am**

**Misa el Domingo: Español /10:00 a.m.**

### **Liturgia en los Días de la Semana**

**Cada Día a las Doce: Angelus/Regina Caeli**

**Lunes: Adoración 7:30am y Misa a las 8:00am**

**Martes, Miércoles Jueves, Viernes:**

**Adoración 7:30am y Misa 8:00am**

**Viernes: a las 6:00pm Rosario Reina de la Paz**  
**con Adoración**

**Sábado: Adoración: 7:30am y a las 8:00am**

**Misa en Honor de Virgen María**

## *Third Sunday of* **ADVENT**



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## **December 17th, 2023**

**Rev. Victor C. Yakubu, Parochial Administrator**  
**Rev. Julius Kayiwa, Parochial Vicar**

### **Confession on Saturday:**

By appointment English/Spanish

**Saturday Rosary:** With Litanies of the Blessed Virgin  
Mary - 3:20pm

**Saturday Mass (Vigil):** English -4:00 p.m.

**Sunday Rosary: With** Litanies of the Blessed Virgin  
Mary—9:40am

**Sunday Mass: Spanish 10:00am**

### **Liturgy of the Weekdays**

Every day at Noon: Angelus/Regina Caeli

**Monday: 7:30am Adoration & Mass 8:00am**

**Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday:**  
**Adoration 7:30am & Mass 8:00am**

**Friday: At 6:00pm Rosario of Queen of Peace with**  
**Adoration**

**Saturday: Adoration: 7:30 a.m. & 8:00 a.m. Mass**  
**In Honor of the Virgin Mary**

Reflection for Third Sunday of Advent : Year B  
Third Sunday of Advent – December 17, 2023  
Fr. Timothy Eck

Readings: Is 61:1–2A, 10–11 • Lk 1:46–48, 49–50, 53–54 • 1 Thes 5:16–24 • Jn 1:6–8, 19–28 [bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/121723.cfm](http://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/121723.cfm)

This third Sunday in Advent is known as *Gaudete* Sunday, which is Latin meaning Rejoice! And truly our Mass this day is one of rejoicing. From our entrance antiphon where we sing “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near,” to our opening Collect, we hear of celebrations and rejoicing, and so to this theme continued throughout our readings and psalm.

But there is a natural question which we should ask ourselves: Why are we rejoicing? Sure, we are already at the seventeenth of December, we have made it through some of our Christmas parties. We are only eight days away from Christmas itself. The hurry of December is quickly coming to a close. There is reason to rejoice for some, and anguish, I suppose, for others.

Turning back to our readings, though, what is the occasion for rejoicing there? From the prophet we heard a prophecy concerning John the Baptist; we heard of a messenger of the Lord proclaiming a message of *glad tidings, healing to broken hearts, liberty to captives, and a year favored or blessed by the Lord*. That all sounds great. Who does not want liberty? Or who does not want a heart healed, particularly when this time of year can bring forth such vivid memories of times past?

At the heart of this proclamation is a message of salvation, and so when we look into our hearts, do we desire or see a need for salvation? These last two weeks have provided the recurring theme of being on the lookout for the Lord’s arrival. When he arrives, he will bring salvation, and so what does that look like? From what do we need to be saved? From what is the Lord coming to save us?

It is quite easy to call Christ our savior; but the thing is, he came to save us from particular *things*, not just anything. He came to free us from sin and death. This is why he will be born shortly; he needed a body so that he might be able to die for our sins. And we will readily profess this truth. We have repeated it since childhood. And yet, are we not disappointed at times with this supposed salvation from sin and death? Do we not still struggle with sin; do not people still die? As to the point on death, we can quote St. Paul and say, “If then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.” (Rm 6:5) Christ in his salvation did not promise that we would not physically die, but only that bodily death would not be the final end of our lives, that having shared in a death like Christ’s we shall share in the bodily resurrection when he returns at the end of time.

But even so, we still sin, we still experience sin, what salvation

has been achieved here? The first point to note is that sin is like a disease. And so on the one hand it takes time to heal. Cancer does not go away after one session of radiation, and even after radiation treatment is concluded, there is a period of rehab. If this is what healing looks like for the body, why should the soul be any different? To experience the promised salvation from sin we must persevere in reception of the medicine of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, and we must do the rehab of developing a spiritual life and charitable works.

On the other hand, like a disease, if we do not treat it or withhold treatment, that often only leads to the disease’s greater festering and in turn causes worse damage to the body. God does not force our salvation upon us. He wants us to freely open ourselves to his healing, and this is often why we stall in growing in God and overcoming sin; there is often some place within us that we will not welcome God into. Frequently this is some past harm which we will not or cannot forgive. So long as we withhold offering forgiveness, we put off receiving the saving treatment of God.

The second point is that we often do not know how to determine if we are growing in grace and away from sin. We do not know what it looks like to live a life filled with God’s grace. Now yes, joy is a sign of having received God’s salvation. That is why it has such a prominent place in our liturgy today. But we can at times reduce joy to the emotion of joy and think that there is something wrong if we are not feeling joyful all the time. This can become quite distorted, where we suppress all “negative” emotions, which can cause us to not allow God to heal those harms which prevent us from experiencing the emotion of joy.

Joy is not just an emotion, but is also an internal spiritual disposition. Our second reading gives us another word to help understand this dynamic: peace. The redeemed Christian should experience peace in this life, even during the midst of the storms of life. And so we can ask ourselves, are we at peace? When we look at our lives, are we at peace? In the midst of the many activities of this advent season, have we been at peace? And if not, why not? Our God is a God of peace, he gives peace, as we grow in relationship with him, we will grow in peace. That is one of the key indicators of how we have progressed in our relationship with God.

This *Gaudete* Sunday let us rejoice in the Lord, in his goodness to us, and on account of his imminent arrival both upon this altar and at his Nativity. In our joy let us take stock of the reasons for our joy and the peace which we have received. May we each come to this Christmas ever more joyfully to celebrate the birth of our Lord. Amen.

*Our Lady of the Desert*

## Sunday's Readings

### First Reading:

I rejoice heartily in the LORD,  
in my God is the joy of my soul. (Is 61:10)

### Psalm:

My soul rejoices in my God. (Is 61:10b)

### Second Reading:

May the God of peace make you perfectly holy  
and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body,  
be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord  
Jesus Christ. (1 Thes 5:23)

### Gospel:

"I baptize with water;  
but there is one among you whom you do not  
recognize,  
the one who is coming after me,  
whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie."  
(Jn 1:23)

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Psalm Responses from Lectionary for Mass © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on  
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## Live The Liturgy Inspiration of the Week

God sends a John the Baptist into every person's  
life — someone who prepares His way, who calls  
out His truth. Look for the John the Baptist  
in your life. Pray you can be this person for  
someone else.

## Observances for the week of December 17, 2023

**Sunday:** 3rd Sunday of Advent

**Thursday:** St. Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of  
the Church

**Saturday:** St. John of Kanty, Priest

**Next Sunday:** 4th Sunday of Advent; Christmas Eve



## Saint of the week

Blessed Maria Franziska Schervier was a German Catholic nun who devoted her life to serving the poor and the sick. She founded the Franciscan Sisters of Aachen and began chapters in the United States where she and her sisters also founded a number of hospitals.

## Prayer

Almighty, just and merciful God, Blessed Frances Schervier spent her whole life giving back to You all the gifts that You had given her. She cared for the poor and the sick and radiated Your loving presence to all that she met. We beseech You now to glorify your servant, Frances. Give her the honor of sainthood if it is in accordance with Your will.

We ask this through Jesus, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

(Prayer Source: [http://franciscansisters-en.sfp-poor.org/images/stories/2016/PDF\\_2016/pr\\_canoniz\\_en.pdf](http://franciscansisters-en.sfp-poor.org/images/stories/2016/PDF_2016/pr_canoniz_en.pdf))



## (PRACTICING) CATHOLIC

### Testimony

When my grandmother heard the news that my cousin had fallen from a second-story window, she immediately went and washed her hair.

Grandma had been sitting alone in her house, listening to the morning radio when the announcer shared a news bulletin stating that the previous night, a little boy with the same name as her grandson, living in the same community and of the same age, had fallen onto the pavement from a window on the second floor of his house. He had been rushed to the hospital but miraculously survived his injuries.

She thought she was hallucinating and wanted to look pretty when the “men in white coats” came to take her away. Thus, the hair-washing.

As it happens, the whole story was true — it was her grandson, but this was before the age of mobile phones and had happened so late at night that his parents had been unable to notify any family members before the whole thing showed up on the news.

It wasn't until my grandmother received a phone call from another relative corroborating the story that she realized it hadn't been a figment of her imagination. What a waste of styled hair, no hospital committal for her that day.

There are certain truths that we cannot accept unless they are supported by the testimony of others. We find them to be unbelievable without the reassurance of another person whispering, “It's okay. I see it, too.”

This is the value of testimony, and the purpose of John the Baptist and every saint who ever died with the name of Jesus Christ on their lips. And this is the sacred duty of all the baptized, to give testimony with our words and our actions.

How will you testify today?

*“He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.”  
— John 1:8*

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

### Why do we do that? Catholic Life Explained

#### Question:

Why do Catholics give the sign of peace to one another at Mass?

#### Answer:

The sign of peace is a part of the Mass that takes place immediately after we offer the Lord's Prayer. Inspired by the Jesus' words to his first followers, we stand together in a spirit of communion to pray as Jesus taught us: “Our Father who art in heaven...” In this prayer, we call for the coming of God's kingdom in all its fullness and ask that God provides for our needs — “Give us, this day, our daily bread” — to forgive our sins and to bring us to the joy of heaven.

It is almost natural, then, that the rite of peace would follow. As the celebrant prays that Christ's peace will fill our hearts, our communities, the Church, and the whole world, we extend to those around us a sign of peace (usually a hug or a handshake) as a symbol of the communion that we experience now and will experience forever in the fullness of the reign of God.

We are also reminded of Jesus' teachings that if we are at prayer and remember that a brother or sister is holding something against us, then we are to go and seek reconciliation with them before we continue our prayer (see Matthew 5:23). And so, the sign of peace also reminds us of the need to truly be in communion — united in love and peace — with God and one another before we approach the altar to receive the Eucharist.

So, the next time you're at Mass and the time comes for the sign of peace, remember that this is a moment to celebrate the gift of Christ's peace that each of us has received from God and to pass that peace along to those around us. We need this moment to practice, because this is also the same peace of Christ that we are instructed to carry out into the world at the end of Mass when the priest or deacon says to us, “Go, in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.”

*Fr. Victor is scheduled  
To be at “Our Lady of the Desert”  
the 4th Sunday of every month.  
(Dates are subject to change)*



## Gospel Meditation

### Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

Why do we believe in Jesus and the Catholic Church? Why should we continue to do so? We've never seen him face-to-face (at least not most of us, I assume). Most of us have never had mystical visions of angels or saints. We live in the same world as our atheist and secularists friends. Why do we believe in Christ if we've never seen him?

The simple, symbolic answer the Gospel presents to us this week might surprise us: we believe because of John the Baptist. Early in John's Gospel we hear: **“There was a man sent from God, his name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him.”** The Baptist powerfully announces Jesus. This is a historical fact, and it is also now a pattern at work in our lives.

John the Baptist stands for the entirety of the old covenant, everything entrusted to the Jewish people. And yet he prophetically opens the door to something entirely new in Jesus, to the revival and fulfillment of God's promises. In every generation, and in every human life, God continues to do this. He has done it through people named Augustine, Francis, Catherine, Theresa, and countless others. In my life, the Baptist's spirit has come through persons named Eric, Paul, Mary, and Ron. I challenge you to name at least three people through whom God has announced the coming of Jesus in your life. Consciously thank God for their testimony. And let's commit ourselves to listening to the spirit of John the Baptist testify again this week so that we might more strongly believe in the light.

— Father John Muir

## Readings for the week of December 17, 2023

### Sunday:

Is 61:1-2a, 10-11/Lk 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54  
(Is 61:10b)/1 Thes 5:16-24/Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

### Monday:

Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19/Mt 1:18-25

### Tuesday:

Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17/  
Lk 1:5-25

### Wednesday:

Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6/Lk 1:26-38

### Thursday:

Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Ps 33:2-3, 11-12,  
20-21/Lk 1:39-45

### Friday:

1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd/  
Lk 1:46-56

### Saturday:

Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and  
14/Lk 1:57-66

### Next Sunday:

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5,  
27, 29 (2a)/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38





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