

DAILY MEDITATIONS

MONDAY: It's interesting to note that, as the paralyzed man's faith-filled friends lowered him down from the roof in front of Jesus, Jesus was surrounded by Pharisees and teachers of the law "from every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem" (Luke 5:17). The religious leaders came in droves. They were among the most educated of the Jews and happened to be among the ones who had gathered to see Jesus speak that day. And it was partly on account of large numbers of them gathering around Jesus that the friends of the paralyzed man could not reach Jesus without this radical move of opening the roof.

So what does Jesus do when He sees the paralytic lowered before Him from the roof? He told the paralytic that his sins were forgiven. Sadly, those words were immediately met with severe interior criticism from these religious leaders. Who but God alone can forgive sins?" (Luke 5:21). But Jesus knew their thoughts and decided to do one more act for the good of these religious leaders. The first act of Jesus, to forgive the paralytic's sins, was for the good of the paralytic. But the paralytic's physical healing, interestingly, appears to be primarily for these pompous and self-righteous Pharisees and teachers of the law. Jesus heals the man so that they will "know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (Luke 5:24). As soon as Jesus performs this miracle, the Gospel tells us that everyone was "struck with awe" and glorified God. Apparently, this included the judgmental religious leaders. He wanted to win them over.

TUESDAY: This Gospel passage goes on to say that the man who finds that one stray sheep "rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not stray." At first, this might seem unfair. Why not primarily rejoice over the ninety-nine who did not stray. The first thing this interpretation reveals to us is that the Son of God was clearly sent on a mission to seek out each and every one of us after we strayed far from the Father in Heaven. The Father did not sit back and wait for us to return. Rather, He sent the Son on a diligent mission of seeking us out to bring us back into His divine fold. As we reflect upon this passage, it is important to see the zeal and determination of our Lord as He seeks us out. A second thing this passage reveals is the joy in the Heart of the Son of God every time He finds us and carries us away from our sin.. But if we understand the extent to which the Son of God went, so as to find us when we stray. If we can understand the joy in His heart upon finding us and carrying us away from sin, then we will more readily open ourselves to Him, to His gentle invitations, and to His merciful Heart every time He comes to us by grace.

WEDNESDAY: One of the most delightful and healthy activities in life is sleep. This is especially the case when one is able to enter into a deep and refreshing sleep. Upon awakening, the person who has slept deeply feels refreshed and ready for a new day. Of course, the opposite is also true. The same is true in our spiritual lives. For many people, "spiritual rest" is something foreign to them. They may say a few prayers each week, attend Mass, or even make a holy hour. But unless each one of us enters into a form of prayer that is deep and transforming, we will not be able to experience the interior spiritual rest we need. Jesus' invitation in today's Gospel to "Come to me..." is an invitation to become transformed, interiorly, as we allow Him to relieve us of the burdens of our daily lives.

THURSDAY: From time to time, Jesus' words are difficult to understand. This passage above presents us with one of those situations. Of this passage, Saint Josemaría Escrivá states that the "violent" are Christians who have "fortitude" and "boldness" when the environment they find themselves in is hostile to the faith (See *Christ is Passing By*, 82). Saint Clement of Alexandria says that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs "to those who fight against themselves" (*Quis dives salvetur*, 21). In other words, the "violent" who are taking the Kingdom of Heaven are those who vigorously fight against the enemies of their soul so as to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven. What are the enemies of the soul? Traditionally, we speak of the world, the flesh and the devil. These three enemies have caused much violence within the souls of Christians who are striving to live within God's Kingdom. So how do we fight for the Kingdom? By force! Some translations say that the "attackers" are taking the Kingdom by force. This means that the Christian life cannot be one that is purely passive. We cannot simply smile our way into Heaven. The enemies of our soul are real, and they are aggressive. Therefore, we must also become aggressive in the sense that we must directly take on these enemies with the fortitude and boldness of Christ. How do we do this? We take on the enemy of the flesh by fasting and self-denial. We take on the world by remaining grounded in the Truth of Christ, the Truth of the Gospel, refusing to conform to the "wisdom" of the age. And we take on the devil by becoming aware of his malicious plans to deceive us, confuse us and mislead us in all things so as to rebuke him and reject his actions in our life.

FRIDAY: What does Jesus mean when He says "We played the flute for you..." and "we sang a dirge..."? The Church Fathers clearly identify this "flute" and "dirge" as the word of God that has been preached by the prophets of old. In our day and age, we have so much more than the prophets of the Old Testament. We have the incredible witness of the saints, the infallible teaching of the Church, the gift of the Sacraments and the life and teaching of the Son of God Himself as recorded in the New Testament. Yet, sadly, so many refuse to listen. So many fail to "dance" and "mourn" in response to the Gospel. We must "dance" in the sense that the gift of Christ Jesus, by His life, death and resurrection should be the cause of our wholehearted rejoicing and eternal adoration. In your own life, how fully have you allowed the Gospel to affect you? How attentive are you to the voice of God as it has been spoken through the lives of the saints and through our Church? Are you tuned in to the voice of God as He speaks to you in the depths of your conscience in prayer? Are you listening? Responding? Following? And giving your whole life in the service of Christ and His mission?

SATURDAY: The last of the Old Testament Prophets was Malachi. Malachi prophesied that a "messenger" would come before the Messiah so as to prepare the way before Him. Malachi goes on further to say that "Elijah the Prophet" will come before the day of the Lord (See [Malachi 3:1-24](#)). Jesus clarified to the disciples that the "messenger," who was to be the new Elijah, had already come in the person of John the Baptist. Jesus also clarified that the scribes were not accurate in their attempt to interpret the Scriptures and were actively misleading the people on account of their errors. If we can always remain humble before all that God has revealed to us, then we will more easily be open to those deepest and most beautiful truths God wants to speak to our hearts.

St. Mary's Catholic Church

4255 Highway
Yonges Island, SC 29449-6011
(843) 889-8549

Emergency 843-731-1162
Email: stmarys165@charlestdiocese.org
Web site: www.stmarysvongesisland.org



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 4, 2022

Mission Statement

Our mission is to form Christian Communities that will glorify God by our loving and serving one another, and to extend our love, support, and compassion to the needy.

Most Rev. Jacques Fabre-Juene
Bishop of Charleston

Rev. Jesuprathap Narichetti
(Father JP)
Pastor

Email:
jnarichetti@charlestdiocese.org

(843) 731-1162

MASS SCHEDULE

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Sunday | 8am |
| Sunday | 9:30am |
| Wednesday | 9:00am |
| Friday | 9:00am |
| Adoration | following 9:00am Mass 1 st Friday of each Month |

CONFESSION:

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| Sunday | 7:15-8am |
| Wed/Fri | 8:30-9am |

Diocesan Office of Child Protection Services
843-261-0430

Diocesan Victim Assistance Minister 843-856-0748

PARISH NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

WELCOME: We welcome all our visitors to St. Mary's. We hope you find St. Mary's to be spiritual and welcoming as you join us today in celebrating this Mass. **Please help us maintain the respect and reverence of the Church and our parishioners by exiting after Mass quietly. We hope you will enjoy socializing outside of Church and join other parishioners for coffee following 9:30am Mass.**

WELCOME Rita and Robert Gribben to our Parish family.

CONGRATULATIONS: Miriam Nunez, daughter of Salvador and Georgiana Nunez on her quinceanera yesterday at St. Mary's.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION: THURSDAY, DEC 8th is a Holy Day of Obligation. Mass will be celebrated at: Sts. Frederick and Stephen at 9AM St. Mary's at 6PM.

ADVENT WREATH: Today, we light the second candle on our Advent Wreath. It symbolizes **FAITH** and is called the "Bethlehem Candle" reminding us of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.

ANGEL TREE: Please return UNWRAPPED gifts with the angel tag attached NEXT SUNDAY. The gifts will be wrapped at the Air Force Base for a specific child.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER: "May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus." Strengthen, renew, and rekindle your marriage sacrament by attending the next Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience on Jan 27-29, 2023 in NORTH MYRTLE BEACH, SC and May 5-7, 2023 in HICKORY, NC. Early sign up is recommended. For more information visit: <https://SCMarriageMatters.org> or contact us at applications@scmarriagematters.org or 803-810-9602.

ST. MARY'S BOOK CLUB: The book club will meet at **1PM on WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14** at 4199 Hwy 165. We are watching a series of videos on "What Do Catholics Believe". Everyone is welcome to attend at any time. Call (843) 729-1644 for more information.



Pray For Us: Trina Aquino Haj, Hazel Basilio, Chester Broton, Jr., Betty Butler, Allison Condon Chappell, Jack Cooper, Cherry Constable, Patrick Coryell, Maryanne Cortez, J. Gould, Jacob Matthew Dupree, Frances Enos, Ken Fleming, Elizabeth Good, Hugh Gorman, Sally Gorman,

Krist Groover, Buddy Green, DeeDee Huck, Petrina Jacques, Henry Kerr, Mary & Rod Jaros, Eileen Killenmerger, Yvonne Livingston, Gus Long, John Lucas, John North, Susan Mance Kelly Meyer, Ann Mitchum, Jane Morley, John North, Nirmala Mary Narichetti, Sarah Proulx, Elizabeth Smith, Landon Smith, Bill Smyer, Diane Stokes, Eloise Stroud, Larry Walker, Ellie Wilson, Mary Wilson, Mike Winn, Edward Wolf, Jose Yabut, and All Parishioners of our parish family.

Record of Faithfulness Nov. 27, 2022

| ENVELOPES | AMT | SECOND COLLECTION | AMT |
|--------------|--------|--------------------------|-------|
| PARISHIONERS | \$2015 | Guatemalan Mission | \$636 |
| LOOSE | \$104 | | |
| VOTIVE | | Campaign For Human Devel | \$25 |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| SUB TOTAL | \$2119 | SUB TOTAL | \$661 |
| TOTAL | \$2780 | | |

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|--------|----|--------|----|-------|----|
| 8:00am | 20 | 9:30am | 55 | Total | 75 |
|--------|----|--------|----|-------|----|

Second collection Today is for our Christmas Flower Offering.

Second collection next Sunday is for the Retirement Fund for the Religious.

ST MARY'S OUTREACH: Outreach is selling beautiful St. Mary's Christmas Cards and Christmas ornaments. They are in the back of the Church. The cost of the cards is \$10 for 5 cards. The ornaments are \$10 each. Please leave your cash or check (payable to St. Mary's) in the envelope on the table. ALL donations are used for Parish events.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance." Matthew 3:7-8

This was both a very intense and yet very holy encounter. It was intense in that Saint John the Baptist, who had become quite popular and respected and was considered a great prophet, spoke harshly toward the Pharisees and Sadducees. "You brood of vipers!" he says. This was not the way the Pharisees and Sadducees were normally spoken to.

John speaks this way because it was the truth. These religious leaders were not leading anyone closer to God. One only needs to ponder all that Jesus would eventually say to the Pharisees and Sadducees to understand what kind of people these religious leaders had become.

So this passage is certainly intense. But it is also very holy. It is holy because this "brood of vipers" needed to be chastised. They needed to be condemned and challenged. They needed to be humbled. And there is nothing more humbling than sincerely repenting of one's sins in a public way.

Notice that John does not dismiss the leaders outright. Rather, he requires of them "evidence" of their repentance. Why? Because of the spiritual damage these men did to the people of Israel on account of their pride, self-righteousness, hypocrisy, love of public honors, condemnation of others, etc. They had so distorted the faith that the good of their souls required public repentance. It required that everyone see sincere good fruits flowing from their lives as a sign that they had changed. Though this is a tall order for the Pharisees and Sadducees, it's the way to holiness for them.

The same is true for us. If you have allowed yourself to fall into some of the same traps as the Pharisees and Sadducees, then you, too, will greatly benefit from clear and humble public change. If you have struggled with self-righteousness, a critical tongue, a "holier than thou" attitude or a judgmental attitude toward others, then you might have great need for a humble and public repentance.

Reflect, today, upon the Pharisees and Sadducees. Try to understand their sin and the reason John called them a "brood of vipers." If you see any of their pride and self-righteousness within your own soul, then listen to this exhortation from John the Baptist as if it were spoken to you directly. "Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance." Do this, and God will free you through the gift of true humility.

My humble Lord, You call all people to repentance with great humility and sincerity. Please help me to see my sin and to never shy away from facing it, so that You can free me from that filth and set me more firmly on the path to holiness. Jesus, I trust in You.