

THE LAMB OF GOD – THE BEARER OF FORGIVENESS!

John the Baptist boldly points to Jesus as the Lamb of God – as the bearer of forgiveness.

References are an important part of any job application. We choose them with great care, often searching for people with authority and responsibility. We ask their permission to use their names and give them freedom to speak honestly about us. In addition to knowing us, they must be trustworthy and honorable – able to assess our strengths and weaknesses and to articulate them. A lot depends on their judgement. When John came to write his Gospel, he saw Jesus as God’s candidate, and John the Baptist as the one giving the reference. The Baptist gives us a credible and trustworthy reference, boldly proclaiming the truth about Jesus as Savior. Today, we hear part of that holy reference.

First, John refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. To the Jewish people and to an early Judeo-Christian Church listening to this Gospel, the image of the lamb would immediately evoke memories of the feast of Passover – that great celebration of liberation from slavery in Egypt. By referring to Jesus as the Lamb, John references him as the bearer of forgiveness, the liberator whose self-sacrifice brings reconciliation and deliverance from sin, and invites all to taste the freedom of God’s children.

Second, John speaks of Jesus as the one who comes after him but ranks ahead because he existed before him. Clearly John has intimate and deeply spiritual knowledge, revealed by God, about who Jesus truly is. He knows that Jesus was born after him in time but that He existed before him – a clear reference to Jesus’ divinity.

Finally, John refers to the event we celebrated last week: the baptism of Jesus. With complete conviction, he speaks from the heart as he recalls the voice of the Father and the anointing of the Spirit: Now I have seen and testified that He is the Son of God. That is one extraordinary reference! How should we respond to this reference? Shouldn’t it give us confidence that Jesus truly is who He claims to be? It’s a reference that is confirmed over and over in the lives of the saints. Saint Paul gives his reference today when he describes Jesus as the sanctifier and the Lord. But as with all references, they can only bring us so far. In many ways, they are really second-hand knowledge.

For it is only in the personal, intimate knowledge of Christ, found in the life of faith and service, that we truly witness to what we believe about Jesus. May our reference this week on behalf of Jesus be one that speaks from our hearts, and gives honest assessment of the difference he makes in our lives so that others might just be intrigued and might ask the question: How can I, too, encounter the Lamb of God?

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

| | | |
|------|--------|--|
| Mon | Jan 16 | Heb 5:1-10, Mk 2:18-22 |
| Tues | Jan 17 | Heb 6:10-20, Mk 2:23-28, Eph 6:10-13, 18, Mt 19:16-26 |
| Wed | Jan 18 | Heb 7:1-3, 15-17, Mk 3:1-6 |
| Thur | Jan 19 | Heb 7:25-8:6, Mk 3:7-12 |
| Fri | Jan 20 | Heb 8:6-13, Mk 3:13-19 |
| Sat | Jan 21 | Heb 9:2-3, 11-14, Mk 3:20-21, 1 Cor 1:26-31, Mt 13:44-46 |
| Sun | Jan 22 | Is 8:23 – 9:3, 1 Cor 1:10-13, 17 Mt 4:12-23 or 4:12-17 |



YOUR SUNDAY TITHING AND

CONTRIBUTIONS

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Regular Collections | \$13,731.90 |
| Nativity Elem. | \$ 671.00 |
| Capital Improvement | \$ 210.00 |
| Miscellaneous | \$ 1,096.82 |
| TOTAL COLLECTION | \$15,709.72 |
| CASH NEEDED | \$14,400.00 |

SPECIAL APPEAL – MAINTENANCE FUNDS

Our original goal of \$150,000 has been met. However, payments, as scheduled on current pledges, will not be completed until the end of January, 2017. Please continue to use the orange envelopes for these payments. Likewise, many of you who did not pledge are participating by weekly or monthly gifts through the orange envelopes. Please continue your generosity. The response from you, our parishioners, has been extremely gratifying and will enable us to complete all the maintenance items delineated in our original appeal letter in January 2016. After our original survey of maintenance items, additional needs have developed. We assure you all funds received will be prudently expended.

| | |
|--|------------------|
| TOTAL GIFTS AND PLEDGES TO DATE | \$168,578 |
| PAYMENTS TO DATE | \$160,193 |
| BALANCE TO COMPLETE PLEDGES | \$ 8,385 |

NATIVITY BVM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*Nativity School will not be in session on Monday, January 16th, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday.

* Friday, January 20th is not only Inauguration Day, but also the 100th day of our school year! We give thanks to God for all of the blessings that we have received and we thank each of you for your support of our school! *Please remember that our school collects/saves the following: Box Tops for Education; UPC codes from Community Coffee products, aluminum beverage cans. Thank you! *Mark your calendars! The annual celebration of Catholic Schools Week begins on Sunday, January 29th. Our Nativity School Choir will lead the singing at the 9:00 Mass at the Nativity Cathedral. *Congratulations to Chris Caldwell, the January winner of the Nativity School Raffle. The next drawing for \$3,000 will be on Thursday, February 2nd at 8:30 a.m. *Thank you for saving Box Tops for Education for our school. Over our Christmas break, we received a check for \$576.20.

SCHEDULED LAY MINISTERS FOR NEXT WEEKEND

| EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS | LECTORS | ALTAR SERVERS |
|---|---|--|
| Jan 21 4:00 pm 1. Helen Languirand 2. Andrea Gilich 3. Rhonda Clark 4. Ann Kavanagh 5. Hugh Kavanagh | Jan 21 4:00 pm Michael Bruffey | Jan 21 4:00 pm Carlo Ashton Brinden Butterfield |
| Jan 22 7:00 am 1. Vicki Howard 2. Dale Dorcik 3. Marcia Mayfield | Jan 22 7:00am Jim Compton 9:00 am Terry Simons | Jan 22 7:00 am Makayla Pfarrer Wyeth Stewart |
| 9:00 am 1. Maggie Landry 2. Linda Welter 3. John Brauchle 4. Barbara Ziz 5. Barry Gilmore | 11:00 am Peter Abide 5:30 pm Youth Ministry | 9:00 am Morgan Newman Rhys Newman Rush Newman McKinzy Mathis |
| 11:00 am 1. Sandy Steckler 2. Judy Steckler 3. Brad Butterfield 4. Rocky Greathouse 5. Edward Warner | CANTORS Jan 21 4:00 p.m. Nicolas Radolfich Jan 22 9:00 a.m. John Welter 11:00 am CHOIR | 11:00 am Aidan Tarrant Michael Pfarrer Haydn Hollis 5:30 pm Jacob Arguelles Nicholas Arguelles Dylan Mitchell Sydi Wills |
| 5:30 pm 1. Roland Creel 2. Tricia Creel 3. Angela Cannon | | |

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan 16 Women of Mary 5:30 p.m.
 Nativity Cathedral Rectory Closed
- Jan 17 - Men of St. Joseph, 7:00 a.m. – SHC
 - RCIA at 6:00 p.m., SHC
 - BINGO Mania, 5:30 p.m. - Bingo Hall
- Jan 18 - **Cleaning Team “B”**
 Mass at Seashore Retirement Home, 3:00 p.m.
 CCD Classes at 5:30 p.m.
- Jan 19 Mass at Greenbriar Nursing Home, 10:00 a.m.

BINGO MANIA

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday. The following families are scheduled for January 17th. Amos (Albert & Dorothy), Codella (Armondo & Renae), Cromar (Jason & Keelin), Foster (Jay & Sheila), Fountain (Brent & Bonnie), Jordan (Robert & Aimee) and Mitchell (Joseph & Michele). **REMEMBER!** If you are unable to attend, it is your responsibility to secure a replacement.

ST. VINCENT de PAUL SOCIETY

The SVdP Society provides assistance each Tues from 9-11:00 am. Your continued support helps to ensure the SVdP is able to provide support for those in need.

NATIVITY CATHEDRAL RECTORY

Nativity Rectory will be closed on Monday, January 16th, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

2017 CALENDARS

The 2017 Calendars are in the back of the Cathedral for purchase. Each calendar is \$3.00 and all proceeds go to our St. Vincent de Paul Society,

Mass Intentions

| | | 6:30 a.m. | 8:00 a.m. |
|------|--------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Mon | Jan 16 | Betty Lou Callegari/ Collins Sims Fly. | Glen Skelton |
| Tue | Jan 17 | Boise Ray “Skip” Butterfield | Swepe King |
| Wed | Jan 18 | Richard Wells | Jean Kridle |
| Thur | Jan 19 | Chester Balius Fly. | Deceased Husband & Son |
| Fri | Jan 20 | Hebert & Bertha McDonnell | Thomas Duston |
| Sat | Jan 21 | 8 – Dan Williams | 4 Boise Ray “Skip” Butterfield |
| Sun | Jan 22 | 7 – Mary Rosella McAuliffee | 9 - For the Parishioners |
| | | 11 – Sonny & Helen Ross | 5:30 - Jerry O’Keefe |

PLEASE KEEP OUR SICK IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Tiffany Whitehead, Lena Marchioni, Anna Jo Wentzell, Kay Lawson, Jeanie Harbison, Mickey Roberts, Holly Hill, Georgia Bellais Dominick, Maxine Kiddinger, Marie Manning, Lisa Walker Kirkman, Raymond Egers, Betty Hilton, Walter Blessey, Mary Lancaster, Joe Powell, Patsy Smolcich, Danny Boney, Sr., Kathleen Hebert, Gwen Gollotte and Clair Sekul Hornsby.

R.C.I.A.

This week the RCIA class will be learning about the Fourth Commandment with Father James Smith, and LaTanya Nowak will be leading our Prayer Service. Please pray for the Catechumens, Candidates and Sponsors as they study the beliefs and traditions of our faith and continue this journey together. If you would like further information, please contact Greg or Penny Payne 228-365-6348.

CCD CLASS INFORMATION

CCD classes are held on Wednesdays, from 5:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m., in the Sacred Heart Center.

NATIVITY YOUTH MINISTRY

On Sunday, January 22, those interested will attend a March for Life Mass at Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos church at 1:00 p.m. followed by a March to the Biloxi Lighthouse/Visitors Center. That evening, a Youth Mass will be held here at Nativity Cathedral at 5:30 p.m. If any youth in grades 6-12 would like to take part in the Mass, please contact Kristy Arguelles or Kim Audo (nativityyouthministrybiloxi@gmail.com). A Youth Meeting will follow Mass in the Youth Hall from 6:45 - 8:00 p.m. in order to plan for our Upcoming Diocesan Youth Celebration, which will be held March 17-19, 2017. We are, again asking for your help in supporting our trip and we are selling Ads for the Convention book. This is a great way to supports our Parish Youth and advertise your business! You will find an Ad form in Church bulletin. The Ad can be mailed in, dropped off at Nativity Elementary or the Diocese Office on Poppys Ferry Road. PLEASE just remember to reflect that it is for Nativity Youth Ministry.

PARISHIONER REGISTRATION

When planning a baptism, marriage, or for subsidized tuition rates for our Catholic Schools, you must demonstrate that you are a practicing Catholic and that you attend Mass. Using envelopes helps maintain a record of Mass attendance. The parish registration form can be found online at www.nativitybvmcathedral.org, or at the entrance of the Cathedral in the vestibule.