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Mission: Live Catholic teachings,
Participate in Sacramental and Liturgical Celebrations, Serve our Community

ST. PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH

2020 State Rte 146 E, Vienna, IL – 62995
Sun - 10:00 a.m.

Weekdays – Wed 6:30 pm & Fri 12 pm
Parish Council Chair: Steve Pobst
Trustees: Matthew Slife, Jared Bergmann

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CHURCH

Mulberry Street, Stonefort, IL – 62987
Sunday - 8:00 a.m.

& First Saturday – 8:30 am

Trustees: Myron Cole, Stan Treat

No Offense, But...In the [First Reading](#), the prophet Isaiah predicts that when the Messiah comes, he will make the blind see, the deaf hear, the mute speak, and the lame walk and leap. In the [Gospel Reading](#), when John the Baptist sends his disciples to ask Jesus whether Jesus is the one the Israelites have been waiting for, Jesus says they should tell John that Jesus has done all these things and more. Even the dead are raised!

This is, of course, a spectacular list of wonders. Anyone who can make the blind see is amazing. Anyone who can raise the dead is working great miracles. And so a person who does what Jesus did clearly has the power of God. For that reason, he is to be admired, loved, and feared.

So why does Jesus finish his list of miraculous deeds by saying “Blessed is the one who takes no offense at me?” *Offense? Offense at what?!*

Well, think about it this way. What is God anyway, philosophically? Pure act? Being itself? Utterly unknowable by us? Those phrases have a lot of dignity about them, don't they? Somehow, they seem worthy of the Deity. Why would we think our puny minds could know anything about something so magnificent, so great, as God? Why wouldn't God be something totally other than any of his creatures?

But notice that it's hard to have a personal relationship with being itself, and pure act doesn't seem like a person who can seek you first. At any rate, if God is unknowable by you, then you don't have to worry about facing him on a daily basis. You can't face what you can't know.

And for how many people is that subterranean thought deeply comforting?

But Christ wrecks it. Christ is not unknowable, and he is not something abstract like being itself. He is a particular person, and he has a face. True, he is God incarnate, and his face is human. But, still, his face is the face of God. If you have seen me, you have seen the Father, Jesus tells Philip ([John 14:9](#)).

So we can know God, and we can see God's face in the face of Jesus. God is present to us as a person in the person of Christ. And God in the person of Christ is always with us ([Mt 28:20](#))! We can know him and face him every day.

Blessed is the one who takes no offense at this.

Eleonore Stump

Vol 20 #49 Third Sunday of Advent, December 15, 2019

Schedule of Masses

Sun	Dec 15	8:00 am	SFD	For Parishioners
		10:00 pm	SP	Frank & Mary Wojnowski
Tue	Dec 17	9am, 11am		Shawnee, Vienna DOC masses
Wed	Dec 18	5:30 pm	SP	General Intention
Fri	Dec 20	12:00 pm	SP	General Intention
Sun	Dec 22	8:00 am	SFD	For Parishioners
		10:00 pm	SP	Agnes Schwartz

Birthdays

Dec 19 Lizzie Zmuda

St Paul, Vienna

Sun, Dec 15 10 am
Server: M Bergmann, E Zmuda
Lector: Zach Garrett
Gifts: Mitch, Leslie Miller
Usher: *J Slife, D Zmuda
 S Widowski, Geri Tesina
E Minister: S Belske,
 BPalmer, P Widowski
Greeter: C & M Ouerrev

Sun, Dec 22 10 am
Server: C Bergmann, M Palmer
Lector: Leslie Miller
Gifts: Children Liturgy
Usher: *J Nelson, Jm Nelson
 J Bergmann, F Dueker
E Minister: V Anderson,
 D Hopkins, Lee Givens

Sun, Dec 24 6:00 pm
Server: M Palmer, M Bergmann,
Lector: Joe Nelson
Gifts: Marc, Beth Palmer
Usher: *S Widowski, J Slife
 F Dueker, L Hinton
E Minister: Md Slife
 D Bishop, M Nelson
Greeter: Marc, Beth Palmer

St Francis DeSales, Stonefort

Sun, Dec 15, 8 am
Server: Christine Deaton
Lector: Mary Treat
Gifts: Parks Family
Usher: Stan Treat
E Minister: Myron Cole

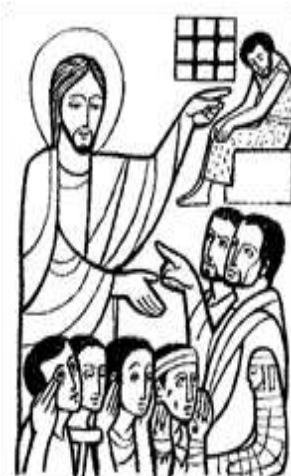
Sun, Dec 22, 8 am
Server: Mary Treat
Lector: LaVonne Herbert
Gifts: M Cole, F Deaton
Usher: Fred Deaton
E. Minister: Christine Deaton

Sun, Dec 25 10 am

Server: E Zmuda, C Bergmann,
Lector: Joan Galey
Gifts: Volunteers
Usher: *D Zmuda, L Givens
 M McMahan, R Beanland
E Minister: P Kalicki,
 S Belske, V Anderson

THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Sun Dec 15	3 rd Sunday of Advent
	Angel Tree Gifts due today
	St Francis DeSales Mass.....8:00 am
	Christmas Choir Practice9:00 am
	St Paul Mass.....10:00 am
	St. Paul Christmas Pageant & Potluck.....11:00 am
Tue Dec 17	Shawnee & Vienna DOC.....9 & 11:00 am
Wed Dec 18	Weekday Mass at St Paul.....5:30 pm
	Merged Parish Council Mtg.....6:30 pm
Thu Dec 19	Reconciliation St. Joseph, Marion.....6:30 pm
Fri Dec 20	Weekday Mass at St Paul.....12:00 pm
	Deadline for Flower Memorials
Sun Dec 22	Christmas Decoration of Church
	St Francis DeSales Mass8:00 am
	St Paul Mass & Children Liturgy of Word..10:00 am



ST PAUL PAGEANT AND CHRISTMAS POTLUCK is today. Please join us in this parish celebration. Marsha Nelson and PSR instructors are providing a children's pageant. The potluck meal will be followed by visit from Santa and some singing of Christmas Carols.

ANGEL TREE ORNAMENT GIFTS are due this Sunday. **THANKS** to our parishioners who donated gifts for our Advent Angel Tree. Also thanks to CCW members who filled the rest of our Advent Angel requests. Your generosity is appreciated by the Johnson County school staff who gave us the family gift requests.

CHRISTMAS CHOIR PRACTICE was today before Mass. If you are still interested then please contact Pam Shallenberger at 217-714-4568

2020 CALENDARS AND CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES Please check in the foyer for a household religious calendar for the new year, and contribution envelopes

MERGED PARISH COUNCIL meets Wednesday, Dec. 18 at 6:00 p.m. Members are asked to pick up their agendas and minutes in the church foyer this Sunday..

CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS deadline will be Friday, December 19 in order to be included in the Christmas program.

OPPORTUNITY FOR RECONCILIATION St. Joseph, Marion Parish Reconciliation service is on Thursday Dec. 19, at 6:30 p.m. Opportunity for individual confession will be offered at St. Paul, Vienna on Dec. 21 from 5:00-6:00 p.m. and at St. Francis DeSales, Stonefort Dec. 22 at 7:15 a.m.

CHURCH CHRISTMAS DECORATION will follow mass on December 22. Helping hands will be appreciated.

CHRISTMAS EVE CAROLS AND MASS will be celebrated at St Paul on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 5:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS DAY MASS is Dec 25. Mass at St. Francis DeSales is at 8:00 a.m. and at St. Paul at 10:00 a.m.

CHRISTMAN COLLECTION FOR DIOCESAN NEEDY A special collection is annually taken up in parishes of the diocese on Christmas to provide resources to assist requests of needy households in the diocese. The distribution of the funds are managed through the Catholic Urban Program supervised by Joe Hubbard. Envelopes for the collection are in the boxed set.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Dec 29 Holy Family Sunday; Dec 31, 7 pm at SF-Jan 1, 6:30 pm at SP-Mary Mother of God Holyday; Jan 5 Epiphany with Home Blessing

Who Is the Messiah? When even the land sings God's praise, how can we not do the same? When God comes for the blind, deaf, lame, and mute, how can we not care for the same? When we know Christ has both come and is coming yet again, how can we complain about anyone? How will the words I speak be filled with what God is up to in this world? How will the deeds I do attend to mercy work for blind, deaf, lame, and mute children of God? I will stop complaining this week about _____?

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-6,10; Psalm 146; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

Amos preached social justice. Hosea demonstrated compassion. Jeremiah was undaunted in the pursuit of truth. The Hebrew Scriptures prophetic books challenge us to witness these values in our own time. Prophets are deeply involved in society's concerns.

The author of Isaiah 35, in the sixth century B.C., encounters a dispirited community of exiles. Defeated in battle and driven from their homeland, they are without hope. The prophet responds by recalling the joyous memories of the exodus from Egypt. A second exodus is in store, symbolized by the healing granted to the blind, the dead, the lame, and the mute.

The author of James tells the suffering Christians to be like the Palestinian farmer who eagerly anticipates the winter and spring rains. Suffering demands patience. This was the case for the Hebrew Scriptures prophets who spoke out in spite of persecution. Modern prophets must be equally strong.

Matthew initially describes John the Baptist as a fiery preacher of judgment and reform. Now he addresses the Baptist's dilemma during his imprisonment. John learns that Jesus is not preaching fire and brimstone but curing the sick, raising the dead, and consoling the poor. John must have wrestled with this seeming contradiction, yet he remained true to his personal call. As a result, John found himself not in Herod's palace but in Herod's prison.

Baptism is a call to a prophetic career. The expression may vary with each individual: speaking out against injustice; denouncing leaders interested only in personal gain; offering hope to the distraught; embracing the lonely and the sick. These examples may not seem as dramatic as the adventures of an Isaiah or a John the Baptist, yet they are in that same great prophetic tradition. To be prophetic is to become involved.

-- John Craghan, Th.D., S.S.L.

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION “See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth.” How does this statement relate to Advent? What part does nature play? What was the farmer doing? What do you do? What does God do in you during this time? How is patience involved in both situations?

Explain in both the literal and the metaphorical senses, “the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised.” John asked Jesus if he was the one who is to come.” Jesus answered with the above statement. The people who came to John were seeking out the deepest desires of their hearts. How was Jesus’ response an answer to those desires?

John the Baptist might have expected a mighty one and was confused at the gentle, healing Jesus. Pope Francis invites us into the cell of John the Baptist to look into his soul, which was weighed down not only by chains, but by “the shackles of doubt.” Does God always come into your life the way you expect?

NEXT SUNDAY SCRIPTURES: **Fourth Sunday of Advent** Isaiah 7:10-14. Psalm 24.

Romans 1:1-7. Matthew 1:18-24