

MASSES & INTENTIONS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2018

4:30 P.M. MASS – Fran Meaux, Ladies Altar Society, Ursin & Lillie Carrier, Benton Smith, Egbert McGee, Evelyn Sandell, David Dugas, Helin McCauley Fly., Liv. & Dec., Willie Mae LeJeune, Rodney & Pereda Fontenot, LeRoy & Ophelia Fontenot, Paul LaFleur, Marcalene Ceaser, Freddy Gorman, Joe, Katherine, Ray & Louis Karam

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2018

7:30 A.M. MASS – *Pro Populo* (For the People)

10:00 A.M. MASS – Carol Deshotel, Leonard Beaubouef & Sons, Matt Taylor, Edward & Ora Peloquin, Deacon Glen Viau

MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2018

6:30 A.M. MASS – D. C. Reed, Jr.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2018

NO MASS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2018

6:30 A.M. MASS – Frank Mougeot

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2018

6:30 A.M. MASS – Roy Frank

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2018

6:30 A.M. MASS – Adia Fontenot

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2018 – Rorate (Candle) Mass

6:15 A.M. MASS – Priestly Vocations for Diocese of Lake Charles

4:30 P.M. MASS – Fran Meaux, Jack Johnson, Cecile Sonnier, Benton Smith, Evelyn Sandell, Francis & Beulah Dugas, Elby & Aza Deshotel, Elaine Dugas, Vernon Dugas, David Dugas, Brent Meaux, Willie Mae LeJeune, Ophelia Fontenot, Berlinger, Marcantel & Horton Fly., Liv. & Dec., Oliver & Armosa Victorian, Marcelene Ceaser, Paul LaFleur, Freddy Gorman, Jean Manuel

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2018

7:30 A.M. MASS – *Pro Populo* (For the People)

10:00 A.M. MASS – Lucas Orsot, Carol Deshotel, Leonard Beaubouef & Sons, Matt Taylor

Last Week's Collection	\$5,642.96
BSA Total to Date (Quota - \$11,609.00)	\$7,787.88
2nd Collection – BSA	\$753.88
Maintenance Fund to Date	\$11,718.15
2nd Collection this weekend – Maintenance Fund	
2nd Collection next weekend – Priests Retirement Fund (quota \$1,409.00)	

PRAYER LIST

Tyler Alexander, Robert Andrews, Amy Bairnsfather, Phil Beard, Charles Beaubouef, Georgia Bell Baggett, Tyler Bellow, Jocie Bergeron, John O'Neal Bergeron, Alvin Billodeaux, M/M Lincoln Briscoe, Margaret Briscoe, Deanne LeBlanc Broussard, Ambrose Bushnell, Bernice Bushnell, Belle Carrier, David & Natalie Carrier, Linda Beaubouef Cazes, JoAnn Cormier, Gordon Cotton, Brittany Courville, Jeane Daigle, Aiden & Renlee' Darbonne, Louise Guidry Darbonne, Donna Dunneho, Pam McDaniel Elliott, Noah Ferry, David Fontenot, Zaylen Frank, Tim Germany, James & Jill Gilbert & Fly., Elaine Giles, Tim Giles, Phielomone Goodly, Becky Gorman, Dixie Granger, Rachael Granger, Vergie Granger, Charlene Guidry, Juanita Guidry, Harrison Harmon, Joseph Harmon, Mildred Harmon, Esther Harmon, Jackie Hebert, Gwen Holder, Bob & Charlene Ireland, John, Shenita & Perella Jackson, Joey James, Cindy Langley, Essie Langley, Jessica Lindsey, Brian Manuel, Jennifer L. Manuel, Kevin Manuel, Marlin Manuel, Wilson Manuel, Larry Marcantel, Brandy McCarty, Christina McNutt, Josh Miller, Patricia Mikas, Brad Morgan, Clifton & Carolyn Morgan, Howard Patin, Sonya Pickett, Hannah Popillion, Ena Prudhomme & Fly., Jimmy Prudhomme, Ann Reed, Brenda Dodd Reed, Dara Reed, Gary Reed, Linda Reed, Leah Rexrode, Don & Debra Rider, Salis & Janice Rider, Ann Rooney, Fr. Fred Russi, Pat Abshire Savant, Helen Sheeman, Lois Singleton, Yvonne Smith, Donald Taylor, Ken & Wylene Taylor, Diana Tichy, Matthew Truman, Dollyanna

Victorian, Kyle Vidrine, Hannah and Linda Voeller, Linda Weldon, Nicole Young

Vocations Candle and Cross – Gerry Beaubouef & Family

SJoA Crafts

Crafts made by SJoA parishioners will be sold after Mass outside the church on Sunday, December 9th. Proceeds benefit SJoA.

Ladies Altar Society Fundraiser "2018 A Sweet Year!"

The LAS are selling raffle tickets after Masses for \$1.00 per chance. One winner will be chosen to receive 12 homemade Desserts – one per month during the 2019 year. The drawing will be held **Sunday, December 16th**. Tickets are also available at the rectory. Proceeds will go towards the purchase of two electric stoves for the hall.

Creations on Canvas Holiday Painting Night at SJoA

Looking for a fun night out? SJoA youth group is hosting a "Creations on Canvas" painting night Thursday, December 20th from 6 – 8 P.M. Bring your favorite beverage, a snack and relax. The talented artist Mary Donaldson will guide you step by step through the night's holiday painting. The class is \$30 per person and is open to ages 14 and older. Tickets are available by contacting Mrs. Corinne at the rectory or calling her cell at 337-523-3336 by Monday, December 17th. Proceeds benefit youth attending March for Life in Washington, D.C. January, 2019.

Poinsettias for Christmastide

Poinsettia donations of \$30 are being accepted in memory of or in honor of a loved one in the collection or bring it to the church office.

New Hours for St. Vincent de Paul's Closet

The St. Vincent de Paul's Closet is open on Tuesdays from 9 – 11 A.M. and Wednesdays from 5 – 7 P.M.

SJoA Christmas Mass Schedule ...

Tuesday, December 25th

- 12:00 am Midnight Mass (confessions 1 hour prior)
- 7:30 am Mass (confessions 1 hour prior)
- 10:00 am Mass (confessions 1 hour prior)

+++++ **This Week @ SJoA** +++++

- ❖ Sunday, December 9th – Ultreya at 5:00 P.M.; Holy League at 5:00 P.M.; Holy Hour at 6:00 P.M.
- ❖ Monday, December 10th – Knights of Columbus at 6:00 P.M.
- ❖ **Wednesday, December 12th – ADORATION 7:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.; CCD and Youth Group**
- ❖ Saturday, December 15th – Rorate (Candle) Mass at 6:15 A.M.

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SAVE THE DATES

Ember High Mass

Saturday, December 22nd at 9:00 A.M.

Pontifical Mass at the Cathedral

Friday, December 28th at 5:30 P.M.

New Year's Food and Fireworks

Tuesday, January 1st at 12:00.01 A.M.

SJoA Confirmation Day of Reflection (Mandatory for all Confirmation Students)

Monday, January 21st (Martin Luther King Holiday) at the Cursillo Center in Prairie Ronde.

FROM FATHER CONNER

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL & SPIRITUAL WARFARE

The Devil and the forces of evil, which this iniquitous spirit unleashes, are not resisted with a "business-as-usual" attitude, nor has what some would call a "Catholic-lite" approach ever proved effective in facing challenges to the Church and the Gospel. When the disciples of our Lord complained that their attempt at combatting a demon was ineffective, they asked, "Why could we not drive it out?" (Matthew 17:19, Mark 9:28). To which our Lord answered, "But this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting" (cf. Matthew 17:21, Mark 9:29).

- Bishop Provost, Letter of 12/2/18

In mandating the St. Michael Prayer after each and every Mass in every parish within the Diocese of Lake Charles, our good Bishop has reminded us that every Christian must put on the "full armor of God" (Ephesians 6:11 ff). This world we live in is indeed good, but it is fallen, and it is filled with danger for the soul. The Devil is real. He seeks to "sift" our souls and drag them down to hell (cf. Luke 22:31). Satan is not a figment of the medieval imagination. He is real; he's a fallen angel who wages war, even today, on the children of God (cf. Revelation 12:9; Luke 10:18).

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL – DEFENDER OF GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE

In His Providence, God has set up St. Michael as the defender *par excellence* of His Sovereignty and has established him as a special protector of His people:

- When Satan and the other fallen angels rebelled against God and warred against His authority, St. Michael rose up to the defense (cf. Revelation chapter 12);
- After sin inundated the whole of the created order, St. Michael (it is believed) stood guard at the entrance of the Garden to guard it against the entry of evil (cf. Genesis 3:24);
- To preserve the Israelites from the sin of hero-worship, St. Michael kept the location of the burial place of Moses' body concealed (cf. Jude 9);
- When the Israelites were vassals of Persia, St. Michael championed their rights and became for them a special protector of their synagogue (cf. Daniel chapter 10);
- St. Michael will defend God's elect at the time of the Antichrist (cf. Daniel chapter 12).

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL – DEFENDER OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Catholics have always found a strong and sure "defense" in St. Michael:

- We seek St. Michael's intercession in our litany prayers.
- St. Michael has a special feast day – September 29th. In the OF, St. Michael shares the day with Sts. Gabriel & Raphael. In the EF – that is, the *much older* form of the Mass – St. Michael has the feast all to himself. The feast of St. Michael was so important, at least until recent times, that it was treated with much festivity, devotion, and anticipation. The day even became known as "Michaelmas".
- In EF Masses, the intercession of St. Michael is sought in these prayers:
 - During the Confiteor ("I confess"), St. Michael is asked to intercede for the remission of our sins.
 - During the Offertory of a Requiem Mass, a prayer is made that St. Michael would lead the soul of the deceased person for whom the Mass is offered to heaven.
 - At a high Mass, St. Michael, who stands at God's right hand, is besought to bless the incense.

We need to get back to honoring St. Michael appropriately ASAP!!! Pray the St. Michael prayer daily; pray it throughout the day; pray it every time you are tempted by the Evil One. Pray the St. Michael Chaplet. Go to SJoA's website for more information on St. Michael the Archangel.

EVERY FRIDAY OF THE YEAR IS A DAY OF PENANCE

Bishop Provost has decreed:

That the faithful follow the universal law of the Church that all Fridays of the year are days of abstinence from meat; although, on Fridays outside of Lent, one may choose another suitable penance.

- Decree of 12/2/18, Number 5

Over the past 5 years, I have explained many times that each and every Friday of the entire year is (1) a day of penance and (2) abstinence from meat is presently the UNIVERSAL law for the entire Latin Rite Church. I have also explained that for a few decades now a special permission (known as an “indult”) has existed in the United States whereby Catholics of this region *may* substitute the penance of abstaining from meat on Fridays with another **appropriate** penance. Sadly, many Catholics no longer realize that every Friday of the entire year (unless it is a “solemnity”) is a day of penance where abstinence is expected of them. Equally sad are those Catholics who, once informed of the Church’s law, ignore the weekly penance obligation. Finally, it is shocking that so many Catholics hold in contempt the heroic efforts of their ancestors who happily abstained from meat every Friday in honor of the Lord’s Passion, in reparation for sins (theirs & others’), and for the conversion of sinners.

With this Decree, Bishop Provost is politely informing YOU that he expects YOU, beginning no later than January 1, 2019, to abstain from meat each Friday of the entire year. Canon law currently prevents Bishop Provost from obliging you under pain of sin to abstain from meat on Fridays. Nevertheless, since the Bishop is not able to command obedience from you in this regard, **what *should* you do?** Should you ignore what he asks because he can’t *make* you stop? Or, should you acknowledge that it is highly probable that ultimately it is not Bishop Provost who is asking this sacrifice of you, but God? If you are unsure, I’m happy to connect the dots: it’s God. **God, through your good and devout Bishop, is politely informing you that you should refrain from eating meat on any and every Friday of the year for the rest of your life.** Given the importance of Friday abstinence to Catholic identity; in light of the magnitude of sin and corruption we find in the Church at this present time, it should be easy to see that this Decree is more than just common sense. It is a sincere **plea to do what is necessary** in assisting Holy Mother Church correct the present course of her wayward children. And while Bishop Provost has made the request in his typically polite fashion, I, on the other hand, will be more pointed. I would frame this aspect of the Decree in this way:

When you die (trust me, you will die and stand before the judgment seat of God), how do you think it’s going to go over when God brings up *your lack of docility* and the *willful enslavement of your passions*? At your judgment, you will see and hear yourself looking foolish as you said here below: “I like meat and I’m gonna eat it whenever I want! I don’t care what day of the week it is!” Can a person with such an attitude possibly expect to be pleasing to God?

When you die (trust me, you will die and stand before the judgment seat of God), how do you think it’s going to go over when God brings up *your arrogance* in refusing a reasonable request from your Bishop, one that is important to your Catholic identity, to the edification of your neighbors, and is also an important work of reparation? At your judgment, you will see and hear yourself looking foolish as you said here below: “I don’t care what that Decree says. Ain’t nobody gonna tell me what to do.” Oh really. *No one?* Trust me, at our death, Someone will indeed tell us what to do. And with an attitude like these, such a person will not like what he is told. When God speaks on that day, even if it isn’t liked, two things will in fact happen: first, we **will** do what we are told; and secondly, we will wish we would have been more docile, more generous, more loving, more faithful, more humble. This Decree gives us a wonderful opportunity to do something truly beautiful for the Lord and for souls. Don’t let selfishness or pride ruin it for you.

RORATE CAELI HYMN

We are using a special Mass setting in Advent which has been used by the Church for hundreds of years. It’s listed as **Mass 17** in the *Roman Gradual* (a special book issued by the Vatican with various Mass settings). **It’s worth noting that, even to this day, the Church continues to recommend Gregorian chant at holy Mass.** This Advent we are also using the traditional Advent hymn known as the “*Rorate Caeli*”. For the past few years we have used this hymn in English. This year we have opted for the original Latin version. **In addition to its mystical beauty, the Rorate Caeli hymn is profound in its ability to capture the true spirit of Advent.** In this it has an important formational value: namely, it reminds Christians that rather than parading around and singing *Jingle Bells*, and/or attending a slew of Christmas parties, they should use the Season of Advent to prepare for *the* advent of the Lord. Sacred Scripture teaches that God will visit His people (cf. **Isaiah 35:1-5**). The question is, though, will His people be prepared to receive Him? In a few weeks hence, Christians will celebrate the Nativity of the Lord. For this to be a fruitful celebration, the proper observance of Advent is essential. **What will the Lord find when He visits you?** Will the *house* of your soul be “holy and beautiful” or will the grace of holy Baptism have “faded like a leaf”? Will your soul be too full from celebrating to permit Him space (such as was the Inn), or will it be receptive, warm and clean (such as was the manger)? With this in mind, the *Rorate Caeli* hymn makes for an important meditation. Print outs of the Latin chant are at the entrances of the church. Please pick up a copy as you enter and follow along during holy Mass. I have made print outs (found near the bulletins) of an English translation of the hymn. I encourage you to take a copy home with you and consult it as a part of your Advent preparation.

WHAT WE BELIEVE...WHY WE BELIEVE IT

Grace in a Bird Cage

The Jesuits used to be known as the Pope's Army, because they would go anywhere the Holy Father asked them to go—no matter how dangerous or how difficult the mission territory could be. In 1618, on the island of Omura near Japan, sat a miserable thatched hut about twenty feet long and fourteen feet wide, in which Jesuit Father Spinola and thirty-two of his companions were imprisoned for the faith.

The indignities and pain they suffered are hard to imagine. There was only one tiny window in the hut, and it was through that window that they received their food. There was so little floor space that it was impossible for any of them to ever lie down. They were never allowed to leave the hut under any circumstances, which means they even had to relieve themselves there, so the hut was filthy and full of stench. The weather also brought great suffering, as there was neither fire for warmth nor protection from inclement weather. They were never allowed to bathe or have clean clothes, so they eventually became infested with lice and scabies and had sores covering their bodies.

They never ceased to suffer from the torture of hunger. Every day, all they received for food was two little spoonfuls of cold rice cooked in water, a cup of some bitter liquid, and a little salad. Their greatest luxury was a piece of moldy black bread.

For four years they languished in this little bird cage under these horrible conditions, but God didn't neglect His holy servants. The local Christians smuggled in to them hosts, wine, candles and everything they needed to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Fr. Spinola would say Mass every day, and drew his strength, cheerfulness, courage and perseverance from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

After his release, in a letter to his superior he wrote, "This Bread of Holy Communion gives new strength to soul and body. This heavenly wine inflames my heart so much, that I not only regard all my former sufferings as light and easy, but would willingly suffer far greater pains and offer up my life a thousand times for Him, who gives Himself to me with so much love and generosity in this holy Sacrament."

A first glance of this story, we see only the suffering of a priest of the living God and his companions. At least, that's what we see through our natural eyes. However, if you learn to look at this story—indeed, all events surrounding us—through spiritually sensitive eyes, there is far more going on than mere suffering. Viewing this through our natural eyes, we wonder how people can endure such suffering and still have the ability to write what Fr. Spinola did to his superior. But the perspective given through spiritually sensitive eyes tell us the whole story.

All seven of the sacraments have sacramental graces; that is, actual graces specific to a particular sacrament. There is an obvious abundance of sacramental graces being given by God and accepted by Fr. Spinola from five of the seven sacraments. The sacramental graces of Baptism led Fr. Spinola to the priesthood in the first place, and they gave him the desire and willingness to go to Japan to spread the Gospel. The sacramental graces of Confirmation gave him the courage to remain steadfast in his faith under the immense suffering from the persecution he was exposed to. The sacramental graces of Holy Orders enabled him to stay true to his priesthood, encourage his companions, be able to state his willingness to suffer even more for Christ, and to be able to risk life and limb for that greatest of all sacraments the Holy Eucharist. Finally, it was the sacramental graces of the Holy Eucharist that enabled Fr. Spinola to say he "would willingly suffer far greater pains and offer [his] life a thousand times for Him, who gives

Himself to [us] with so much love and generosity in this holy Sacrament."

Most of us, no matter how hard we may try, can't seem to make it through a single day without failing Our Lord by the commission of sin—mortal or venial. I can't speak for you because only you and God know the state of your soul, but I know that's true of me, so I'm guessing it's true for you as well. Personally, over the years our good God has given me a horror of mortal sin, and I really can't remember the last time I committed one, but I sin nonetheless every single day. Fact is, I see myself as the worst Catholic I know. So I still offend God every day.

Despite that I fail God daily, my willingness to try anew each day comes from following the example Jesus gives us from the Stations of the Cross. Jesus carried the sins of the world on His shoulders in the form of the cross, just as we carry our own sins on our shoulders. During His death march to Calvary, Jesus fell under the weight of those sins three times. Each time He fell, he got right back up again to move forward to accomplish what the Father intended for Him to accomplish. Each time we fall by the commission of sin, we must also follow His example and get back up and move forward. That's not always easy, though, because it can become disheartening to know that you fall daily...sometimes multiple times each day. But there are many ways we can make falling less frequent and getting back up easier. The focus today is on one of those many means God gives us—sacramental graces.

Assuming you are Catholic (and at least 99.9% of Joe Sixpack readers are), you have received the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Most of you were baptized as an infant, so you don't remember it, but you have no doubt witnessed at least a few baptisms that should make you think of your own. And your Confirmation, if you're like most young people, was forgotten soon after receiving the sacrament and all the trappings that traditionally come with it. And unfortunately, many of us receive Communion without really thinking about it, thus taking it for granted. But God hasn't forgotten your reception of any of those sacraments, and He continues to provide you with the graces specific to each of them. You see, the sacraments aren't mere rites that Church rules say we have to receive. The sacraments are divinely instituted means of grace that allow us to be able to obtain eternity in heaven.

The sacramental grace of Baptism gives you all you need to avoid sin. The sacramental grace of Confirmation gives you the courage to accept your baptismal graces and avoid sin by standing up to do the right thing, even when it's difficult to do so. The sacramental grace of the Holy Eucharist enables you to love God so much that you would be willing to suffer any humiliation or torment to avoid offending Him, which is why it's a great thing for you to receive Him in Communion every day, if you are able to do so. God bombards us with these graces every waking moment of the day. It's up to us to be attuned to them. So if you make it a habit to ask God every day to make you aware of those sacramental graces, you will find it much easier to recognize and respond to them when they come. Once I got into the habit of daily asking Him to make me aware of them, I then found myself asking for them often throughout the day, which makes avoiding sin much easier. So will you.

There are a number of other means God provides for us to live out our reason for existence—that is, to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this life so we can be forever happy with Him in the next—and we'll be looking at those from time to time, but for now you would do your soul well to focus on the wonderful and infinite gifts of the sacramental graces He offers all day, every day, twenty-four seven.