

Saint Bernadette Parish

Saint Mary Parish

1343 Wheeling Road NE (740) 654 • 1893
LANCASTER, OH 43130-8701

602 Marietta Street (740) 569 • 7929
BREMEN, OH 43107

stbernadetteparish . net



Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews

In today's Gospel reading the taunt of the soldiers was

“If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

Above him there was an inscription: ‘This is the King of the Jews.’”

The prayer to Jesus of Dismas, the repentant thief was,

“Remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

To which Jesus responded “Indeed, I promise you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Such is the king, reigning from the Cross, whom we celebrate today.

The Crucifixion is a panel in the central part of a large altar piece painted between 1457 and 1459 by Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506) for the high altar of San Zeno, Verona, Italy

in the Louvre, Paris

the Feast of Christ the King

NOVEMBER 20, 2016

our parishes

AT BOTH PARISHES

Fr Thomas Kessler	pastor	(614) 634-0499	<i>wnthomaskessler @ icloud . com</i>
Kathy Kehnast	pastoral coordinator	(740) 654-1893	<i>stbermparish @ yahoo . com</i>
Angie & Kent Kerns	religious education	(740) 654-2588	<i>kwkerns @ gmail . com</i>
Julie & Chase Stalford	youth ministry	(740) 808-7294	<i>maristellaspirt @ gmail . com</i>
Nikki Schmelzer	bookkeeper	(740) 654-1893	<i>businessmstbparish @ yahoo . com</i>

AT BREMEN ST MARY PARISH

Ben Factor	liturgical music		<i>b_factor @ lancaster . k12 . oh . us</i>
Jim Schmelzer	maintenance chair	(740) 215-3894	
Tyna Fox-Schmelzer	religious education	(614) 371-7702	<i>schmelifax @ earthlink . net</i>
Bremen St Vincent de Paul		(740) 569-3710	
The St Mary Parish office is at the church vestibule.			
Hours are 9-11 AM, Tu	602 Marietta St, Bremen, OH 43107	(740) 569-7929	

AT ST BERNADETTE PARISH

Deacon Mark Scarpitti		(740) 438-3970	<i>dcn . mark @ frontier . com</i>
Deacon Jeff Carpenter		(740) 681-9918	<i>carpenter.277 @ osu . edu</i>
Ann Essman	pastoral minister	(740) 653-9347	<i>aessman001 @ att . net</i>
Steve Huber	facilities coordinator	(740) 654-3137	<i>shuber57 @ yahoo . com</i>
Liz Latorre	liturgical music	(740) 243-1872	<i>lizlatorre @ gmail . com</i>

The St Bernadette Parish office is in the Mary Good Center, across the back parking lot from the school.
Hours are: 9 AM-1 PM, M W Th F; 11 AM-1 PM, Tu 1343 Wheeling Rd NE, Lancaster, OH 43130

AT ST BERNADETTE SCHOOL

Pam Eltringham	principal	(740) 654-3137	<i>peltring @ cdeducation . org</i>
Barb Huber	secretary	(740) 654-3137	<i>bhuber @ cdeducation . org</i>

Saint Bernadette School is at 1325 Wheeling Rd, Lancaster, OH 43130-8701 *stbermlan@ cdeducation . org* [www . stbernadetteschool . com](http://www.stbernadetteschool.com)

our sacramental life

BAPTISM

To have a child baptized, you must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnast will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. The next session will be Wednesday, Nov 30. Take the class before your child is born. If you are expecting, call Kathy to register for the class.

Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; they are in the same wonderful boat as you are.

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. **Both godparents need to be practicing Christians, at least one a practicing Catholic.** If you don't attend Sunday Mass regularly, there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass. If you can't come (health, severe weather, employment requirements, etc.), speak to your confessor. He will help you.

PENANCE

The priest is available for Penance

1. at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
2. at St Mary Bremen on Sunday at 8 AM.

In addition to Advent and Lenten Penance Services, every Catholic priest is available whenever there is a need. There are Penance opportunities for

parochial school children **four times during the year so that they will learn the** beauty of frequent confession. The Church's law requires us to receive the sacrament of Penance at least once a year.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

The Sick receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick **when dangerously ill, facing major surgery, or suffering from the ravages of old age.**

We celebrate the sacrament communally at a Sunday Mass before Advent and during the Easter season so that we can all pray with you for "health of mind and body."

And, we are happy to bring Penance, Anointing, and Holy Communion to the homes or hospitals of the sick or shut in. It is very helpful to **call the parish office to let us know before a hospitalization or when it has been too long** since the sacraments were last available.

HOLY MATRIMONY

Couples wishing to marry sacramentally should contact the parish office six months before they wish to celebrate the sacrament. Why so long? Because **this sacrament, not just the ceremony, requires serious preparation.** And the Church needs to be involved in that preparation. She tries to support couples through the years of their married life. For this reason our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn how, watch the weekly bulletin.

let us pray together

WITH THE CHURCH THIS WEEK

Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God,
the constant gladness of being devoted to you,
for it is full and lasting happiness to serve with constancy
the author of all that is good.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

WITH THE HOLY FATHER DURING NOVEMBER

His universal intention is :

That countries which take in a displaced persons and refugees
may find support for their efforts which show solidarity.

His evangelization intention is :

That within parishes,
priests and lay people may collaborate in service to the community
without giving in to the temptation of discouragement.

Mass times and intentions

at St Bernadette		at St Mary
4 PM for the people of the parish	Saturday, Nov 19	
	Sunday, Nov 20	8:30 AM for the people of the parish
11 AM for the people of the parish	Sunday, Nov 20	
8:20 AM Jack McGuire	Monday, Nov 21	
	Tuesday, Nov 22	8:20 AM David Stretton
8:20 AM Elisabetta & Yolanda Mazzoli	Wednesday, Nov 23	
	Thursday, Nov 24	8 AM Cyril Adam Rider
10 AM Ethel Christian	Thursday, Nov 24	
8:20 AM Linda Hinton	Friday, Nov 25	
ADVENT: Holy Mother the Church begins a new year of grace!		
4 PM for the people of the parish	Saturday, Nov 26	
	Sunday, Nov 27	8:30 AM for the people of the parish
11 AM for the people of the parish	Sunday, Nov 27	

in our parishes

anointing the sick

We will celebrate the **Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick** at Sunday Mass today. You should be anointed if you are a Catholic, age 7 or more, in the state of grace, and suffering serious health problems (like chronic or dangerous diseases, old age, or the prospect of major surgery). Determine before Mass begins if you will receive the sacrament, sit in the front row or at the end of the pew, and come to the altar when you are called (or notify an usher to ask the priest to come to your place in the pew if coming forward is difficult). Everybody else: Pray for our sick. Keep them in your prayers.

a holy union

We extend our best wishes and a promise of many prayers for **Brett Smith** and **Shawna Swisher** who received the sacrament of Holy Matrimony at St Bernadette on Saturday, Nov 12.

red cross blood drive

The **next St Bernadette blood drive** will be Saturday, Dec 3, from 9 AM-2 PM in the parish hall. This is a great way to support our community blood needs. To **make an appointment** to donate, go to www.redcrossblood.org or call Joyce Guenther at (740) 974-5040. As always there will be lunch, cupcakes, and crafts for children.

On Saturday, Nov 12, St Bernadette parishioner Red Cross biomedical chair **Joyce Guenther** received a **Blood Ambassador Award** for her work in creating awareness of blood need in the central Ohio Region. This award would not have been possible without the work of our St Bernadette donors and volunteers. Since 2007 we have held 4 drives a year and collected over 1,300 units, saving as many as 4,000 lives. We have also inspired our area Catholic parishes to hold regular blood drives. Only about 5% of eligible donors ever give blood, so it's an important gift to give. Please be generous.

thanksgiving

Yes, Thanksgiving is one holy day that was initiated by Protestant Americans. But that certainly doesn't keep it from being a very

good idea. A very good day for Catholics to give thanks to Almighty God.

The Greek word for giving thanks is "eucharistein" (pronounced "you ka ris tain"). That is, pretty obviously, where we get our word "Eucharist", which connotes something very dear and very central to our Faith. For the holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the great moment of giving thanks, the way Jesus gave us to thank God. That being the case, why not come to one of our parish churches for Mass, the Holy Eucharist, on Thanksgiving morning? We will celebrate the Eucharist

- at Bremen St Mary at 8 AM and
- at Lancaster St Bernadette at 10 AM.

youth choir

The **Saint Cecilia Society** (St Bernadette's parish youth choir) meets on Sundays at 6 PM in the church. All parish students in grades 2-8 (public, parochial, or home school) are invited. SCS members in grades 4-8 are also invited to be members of the Handbell Ensemble, which meets on Sunday evenings at 7 PM, right after the full SCS gathering. **Mrs Latorre can answer questions** and provide registration materials after Mass, or you may call or text her at (740) 243-1872.

adult choir

St Augustine once said, "**He who sings, prays twice.**" The St Bernadette adult choir has resumed practicing on Wednesdays at 7 PM in the church. Our adult choir is both a vocal ensemble devoted to **making beautiful music for the Lord** and a small faith family within our parish. We love to welcome new members into this family. Membership in the choir is an opportunity to be involved in the parish and grow in your faith. Contact Liz Latorre at (740) 243-1872 if you have questions.

psr (aka parish school of religion)

PSR has begun but it is not too late to enroll students. Remember: Catholic parents have a **solemn moral duty** to see that their children are **properly and completely instructed in the Catholic Faith**. And they have a duty to see that their children attend every week (barring health or weather deterrents). And children will find **getting to know Jesus and his Church is an irreplaceable and joy-filled part of their upbringing**.

advent family fun day

Begin the Advent Season with an Advent Family Fun Day on Sunday, Nov 27, from 12-2 PM in the St Bernadette parish hall. There will be a **pancake breakfast** fundraiser for **youth attending Catholic Youth Summer Camp**, seasonal crafts, cookie making, as well as an opportunity to purchase Advent Wreaths and seasonal books. If anyone with a child attending CSYC this summer would like to help raise funds to offset the cost, please contact Kara . tencza @ gmail . com.

christmas baskets at bremen

The Bremen Community Food Pantry is in need of **turkeys and cookies for Christmas** baskets for families. Drop off ...

- **cookies** on Thursday, Dec 15, between noon and 6 PM and
- **turkeys** on Saturday, Dec 17, at 8 AM at the Calvary United Methodist Church.
- Bring **monetary donations** or **nonperishable food** items to Bremen St Mary Church.
- To make **other arrangements**, or if you can donate a turkey for the baskets, call Mary Shumaker at (740) 569-4796.

If you would like the gift of a Christmas Basket, sign up at the **Next to New Sale** at the Bremen United Methodist Church on Friday, Dec 2, from 9 AM to 5 PM or Saturday, Dec 3, between 9 AM and noon. Baskets will be distributed on Saturday, Dec 17.

bremen thanksgiving service

A Bremen **ecumenical Thanksgiving Service** will be held at the Bremen United Methodist Church today, Sunday, Nov 20, at 7 PM. St Mary parishioners are welcome to attend.

parish contributions

The **St Bernadette offertory** for Nov 13 came to \$6,448.
The **St Mary offertory collection** for Nov 13 came to \$4,223.

st vincent de paul

The Lancaster St Vincent de Paul Society tells us that their biggest need these days is for non-perishable foods, paper products (kleenex, paper towels, toilet paper), personal hygiene products (deodorant, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes), and laundry products including detergent. So that's what they ask us to provide. Don't worry about too much of any of these items. There won't be too much, for the Society will share surplus items with the St Francis Center in McArthur. This drive will last **through the four Sundays of Advent**. Our drop off point will be in the vestibule between the school entrance and the church.

collection to help the ministry to catholic veterans and soldiers, sailors, marines, and coast guards

The Archdiocese for the Military Services (AMS) Collection happened last week. The AMS provides **the same pastoral care and services as any other Catholic diocese, to Catholics serving in the United States Armed Forces, or undergoing treatment at any Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers**, as well as persons working in civilian jobs for the federal government beyond US borders. The collection for the AMS coincides with Veterans Day and is held only every third year. Thank you for your generosity last week.

campaign for human development

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development is dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty by funding **community programs that encourage independence**. Your generous donations today will give those in poverty the support they need to make lasting changes. We can make a difference in families and communities across the country. Please donate prayerfully and generously.

in the diocese of columbus

catholic youth summer camp

Catholic Youth Summer Camp is Ohio's one week-long, residential high adventure camp for students entering grades 6-12. Activities typically include jet skis, water tubing, paintball, blobbing, high ropes, archery tag, zip lining, rock climbing, giant swing, and mountain boarding. CYSC offers **a truly Catholic and safe environment with daily catechesis that awakens faith and builds missionary disciples**. A week at camp includes daily Mass, adoration, reconciliation, small group conversations, worship, service and authentic community. This is especially valuable for young people who are not now receiving other catechesis as well as to reinforce catechesis for those who are. Go to www.cysc.com for information and to register for 2017 dates: high school sessions run the weeks of June 11, 18, 25, and July 2; middle school sessions run the weeks of July 9, 16, 23, and 30. Registration is open now.

happily ever after ... despite the rough spots

Come to a Marriage Encounter weekend and learn ways to use your marriage's ups and downs to deepen your love for each other and for God. Why not **try a Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend**? The next weekend in central Ohio is Feb 17-19. For information or to register, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit www.wmcecolumbus.org.

advent morning of reflection

Are you a member of a small faith sharing group? Are you looking for an Advent activity? Do you want to keep the hustle and bustle at a distance during the holidays? Take some time to reflect, pray and share during the season of Advent with an Advent Morning of Reflections hosted by the Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center on Saturday, Dec 10, from 9 AM-noon. Led by Sr Louis Mary Passeri, the theme is "**Here I Am**": God is always near us waiting to be found. We are called to deepen our awareness of God's presence and desire to share our lives more intimately. The day will consist of prayer, presentations, silence and opportunity to share reflections. The cost is \$20 per person and includes continental breakfast. Reservations are made by emailing [info @ stpeterandpaulretreatcenter . org](mailto:info@stpeterandpaulretreatcenter.org) or by calling (740) 928-4246.

the gift of a retreat

Are you looking for a gift that is one size fits all? Why not give the gift of a stay at the Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center? Their gift certificates are perfect for holiday gifts, thank you presents, anniversary presents or employee appreciation. Choose either a flat dollar amount or pick specific rooms, meals, and number of nights for a gift as tailored as you like. Gift certificates available by email at [info @ stpeterandpaulretreatcenter . org](mailto:info@stpeterandpaulretreatcenter.org) or by calling (740) 928-4246.

sts peter & paul retreat center needs help

Have you or a member of your family ever participated in a group or personal retreat at the Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center? If you have, the experience was spiritually uplifting and rejuvenating for your soul. They ask for our prayerful consideration and our continued support of the Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center. They need assistance through our tax deductible donations that will help **update and improve their facility**. They will continue to operate the Retreat Center in a frugal manner so that more retreatants will be able to enjoy the peace, tranquility and spirituality that Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center offers. The needed updates and required improvements to enhance current and future retreatant experiences include:

- energy efficient boiler system (replacing the unit from 1955)
- wifi accessibility
- refrigerated storage unit (compressors and condensers)
- air conditioning the chapel and north hall.

Mail your tax deductible donation to: Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center, 2734 Seminary Road, Newark, OH 43056.

healing Mass

A Mass of Healing will be celebrated on Monday, Nov 21, at 6:30 PM at Saint Joseph Cathedral. After the Mass there will be exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, veneration of a relic of the True Cross of Christ, an opportunity for each person to speak individually with a priest, and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, and Benediction. **All who seek Christ's healing are invited** – especially those with physical illness and infirmities and those seeking emotional and spiritual healing. Caregivers, family members, and members of the medical community are urged to attend. If you have questions, call the Cathedral at (614) 224-1295.

catholic men's luncheon club

The next Catholic Men's Luncheon Club will feature a talk by Father Daniel Swartz, **one of the youngest and newest priests of our diocese**. Father Swartz' talk will describe his path to the priesthood. It happens Friday, Dec 2, at St Patrick Church in downtown Columbus. Holy Mass begins at 11:45 AM followed by lunch and Father Swartz's talk until 1 PM. No reservations are necessary. \$10 covers the lunch and meeting. Bring a friend. For information on Catholic Men's Luncheons, visit www.ColumbusCatholicMen.com or contact Tim Merkle, CMLC President at htm@ejhlaw.com.

thanksgiving party

Looking for a fun evening to kick off your Thanksgiving weekend? Join Fisher Catholic Alumni and Friends on Wednesday, Nov 23, from 7 PM-midnight at FC Alumni Hall. Local band **Bad Influence** will rock the place with live music. Food and legal beverages available. If you would like to help sponsor this free event, contact Jim Faulkner at (614) 284-9369 or Jfaulk51@hotmail.com.

catholic record society

The Catholic Record Society will have a Fall quarterly meeting at 2 PM on Sunday, Dec 4, at St Andrew Church in Upper Arlington. The speaker will be author, historian and longtime Catholic Record Society member, Ann N Hansen. Her topic will be **A Long Road to the Church**, highlighting her travels in 63 countries, with emphasis on certain religious structures and their architecture, including the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk, England. Following the presentation there will be a reception and a business meeting of the Catholic Record Society, featuring a silent auction of surplus Society materials. **All are welcome**. For information contact Chairman Mike Finn at fcoolavin@aol.com or (614) 268-4166.

in the deanery

prison christmas party

On Saturday, Dec 3, Lancaster area churches will sponsor the **"Wings" Christmas party** at the Southeastern Correctional Institute for the inmates and their families. Fifty volunteers are needed that day, from 10 AM - 4 PM. Donations of sugar cookies are needed for decorating. Cookies should be delivered to the First Presbyterian Church on Wednesday, Nov 30. For information or to volunteer, call Jayne Brook at (740) 654-7822.

circleville employment opportunity

St Joseph Church in Circleville, Ohio, is hiring a **full-time (30/week) parish secretary**. For information, visit <http://www.saintjosephcircleville.com/employment-opportunities/> or contact the parish office: office @ saintjosephcircleville.com or (740) 477-2549, x300.

fisher catholic open house

Fisher Catholic High School will hold an **Open House** today, Sunday, Nov 20, from 9 AM to 1 PM. Fisher Catholic is dedicated to the development of Catholic Christian values, academic skills and social experiences by providing a strong academic foundation within the Catholic tradition. Meet faculty, staff, and coaches; take a guided tour of the facilities; and hear presentations from the principal, Mr Joe Jasinski, and guidance office at 9:30 AM. Come explore Fisher Catholic and register to win a \$500 tuition grant and other door prizes. Contact Julie Kilbarger at (740) 654-1231 or jkilbarg@cducation.org for information.

An **Irish4Life Pancake Breakfast** happens simultaneously from 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM. The menu includes blueberry, chocolate chip or regular pancakes, sausage, coffee, milk, and juice. Eat as much as you like; the cost is your generous donation.

the year of mercy

the last day of the year of mercy

This the very last day of the Year of Mercy. Pope Francis designated the year extending from the feast of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Dec 8, which last year was the fiftieth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, through the Feast of Christ the King (today).

Yes it ends today. But perhaps there is some takeaway. Mercy, Pope Francis reminded us is "the beating heart of the Gospel"

Pope Francis writes: "It is absolutely essential for the Church and for the credibility of her message that she herself live and testify to mercy." Mercy, he says, is "**the beating heart of the Gospel**." To live mercy, we must rediscover both the spiritual works of mercy, and the corporal works of mercy. Which spiritual works of mercy might Christ be calling you to practice? Which corporal works of mercy?

The spiritual works of mercy are:

- counsel the doubtful
- admonish sinners
- forgive offences
- pray for the living and the dead,
- instruct the ignorant
- comfort the afflicted
- bear patiently those who do us ill

And the corporal works of mercy:

- feed the hungry
- clothe the naked
- heal the sick
- bury the dead.
- give drink to the thirsty
- welcome the stranger
- visit the imprisoned

These are all for all of us, all of the time. It might prove more likely that we practice them if, before the year is out, we write them out. By pen, on paper. And post them on the refrigerator.



catholic media

He is the light of the world

Enrich your faith this **Advent and Christmas with special programming throughout the season** on EWTN. Attend Mass in Vatican City with Pope Francis, enjoy concerts from Europe and

travel to the sacred sites of the Holy Land. Find EWTN in your area by visiting www.EWTN.com/channelfinder.



ministers at Mass at st bernadette							
			lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion		
Saturday,	Nov 19	4 PM	Becky Kuhn	Abby, Mary, & Sam Frazier	Rosalie DeFillippo Brad Rider	Craig Shaw Mickey Steyaert	Shelia Taylor Kathy Wagner
Sunday,	Nov 20	11 AM	Jim Merk	Isabelle Gentile, Ashlyn & Brennan Quaintance	Tara Craaybeek Patrick Gins	Jean Robertson Bob & Angie Christy	Teresa Scarpitti
Monday,	Nov 21	8:20 AM	Mary Jane Vajen	Joey Mannella, Sarah Woo	Pat Dreyer	Kathy Kehnast	
Wednesday	Nov 23	8:20 AM	Bob Christy	Becca Fuller, Lexi Utz	Mary Guinan	Mary Jane Vajen	
Thursday,	Nov 24	10 AM	Patrick Gins	Brianna Hilyard, Gunner Robertson	Lee Guinan	Paul Lonergan	
Friday,	Nov 25	8:20 AM	Jim Merk	Jack Gentile, Carley Matson	Jim & Rita Merk		
Saturday,	Nov 26	4 PM	Brad Rider	Gus & Olivia Spiegel, Cady Tipple	Marguerite Grimm Joyce Guenther	Lee Guinan Kathy Kehnast	SandyLandefeld DeniseMcGuire
Sunday,	Nov 27	11 AM	David Shonk	Logan & Tori Loy, Addy Myers	Pat Dreyer Larry Sanford	Anna Seigny Jim & Rita Merk	BeckyWickham

ministers at Mass at bremen st mary							
			lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday,	Nov 20	8:30 AM	Linda Qualls	Brooke Holt Jillian Wilkinson	Jim Schmelzer, Tyna Schmelzer-Fox, Angi Skinner	James Noll Jr family	Joe Young
Tuesday,	Nov 22	8:20 AM	Jim Schmelzer				
Thursday,	Nov 24	8 AM	Jeanne Schmelzer				
Sunday,	Nov 27	8:30 AM	Jeanne Schmelzer	Abby Skinner Nicole Terry	Dismas Schmelzer, Damian & Deborah Schmelzer	Maurice Schmelzer family	Damian Schmelzer

the Church's plan for reading God's word this week										
Sat	Nov 19	Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe	2 Samuel	5:1-3	Colossians	1:12-20	Psalm	122	Luke	23:35-43
Mon	Nov 21	Presentation of the Virgin Mary	Revelation	14:1-5			Psalm	24	Luke	21:1-4
Tues	Nov 22	St Cecilia	Revelation	14:14-19			Psalm	96	Luke	21:5-11
Weds	Nov 23	St Clement I, St Columban, Bl Miguel Agustín Pro	Revelation	15:1-4			Psalm	98	Luke	21:12-19
Thurs	Nov 24	St Andrew Dung-Lac & Companions	Revelation	18:1-19:9			Psalm	100	Luke	21:20-28
Fri	Nov 25	St Catherine of Alexandria	Revelation	20:1-21:2			Psalm	84	Luke	21:29-33
Sat	Nov 26		Revelation	22:1-7			Psalm	95	Luke	21:34-36
Sun	Nov 27	First Sunday of Advent	Isaiah	2:1-5	Romans	13:11-14	Psalm	122	Matt	24:37-44

confessions & weekday Mass nearby		These times sometimes change, though, so be sure to call ahead!						
parish	confessions	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Bremen	St Mary	8 AM Sunday	8:20 AM					
Lancaster	St Bernadette	5:30 PM Thursday, 3 PM Saturday; 8:30 AM on 1 st Sat	8:20 AM	8:20 AM	6 PM	8:20 AM	1 st Sat @ 9 AM	
Lancaster	St Mary	4 PM Saturday	7 AM	9 AM	7 AM	9 AM		
Lancaster	St Mark	5:30 PM Saturday	8 AM	8 AM	6 PM	8 AM	8 AM	
Sugar Grove	St Joseph	½ hour before Mass	8 AM	NOON	8 AM	NOON	8 AM	
Circleville	St Joseph	4 PM Saturday	9 AM	7 PM	9 AM	9 AM	10 AM	
Logan	St John	4 PM Saturday	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM	8 AM	9 AM	

Some great seasons ... if we can keep them!

Thanksgiving is Thursday. It is **the one great Protestant holy day**. It celebrates something we can cheerfully and devoutly join in on. It is the great day for saying “thank you” to God. Some greeting card companies have decided it is a good day for sending thank you cards to your mail carrier or your customers or to ... to anyone you should say “thank you” to more often. It is good to thank them. But the day is not all-purpose thanks; it is about **thanksgiving to God**. Let’s keep God in Thanksgiving.

There will be parades on television all morning. Then comes the biggest family dinner of the year (for many families), with turkey (etc.) and some of the best leftovers of the year. Turkey is a very good thing. But it is not good enough to rename the thanksgiving holy day “turkey day.” Unless, of course, there is something shameful about giving God thanks.

Thanksgiving dinner is often followed by an awful lot of televised NFL football. Or an awful lot of computer games. It is not out of the realm of possibility for a family to gather together at least for a while during the afternoon and evening **without the synthetic hearth of a computer screen or a television screen**. Just saying.

Some folks go to some places to shop on Thanksgiving. It used to be Black Friday which was the heaviest shopping of the year—the make or break bargain event for some retailers and some ambitious shoppers, hordes of shoppers saving, or attempting to save, billions on Christmas gifts. But now it has spilled over into the great family holy day.

If we **avoid shopping on that day**, we will avoid contributing to the necessity of many employees to leave their families and go to work on an important family holiday. If you or I go **bargain-shopping** anyway on Thanksgiving, it might not make a difference in the requirement that store personnel have to work anyway. Not right away. But if Christians as a whole stayed a way, boycotted shopping just for a day, it might send a message to retailers. I know, the secular people might get most of the bargains. But there are other issues at stake. In ancient Israel on the observance of the Lord’s Day, the Hebrew people were required not only to avoid unnecessary servile labor but to avoid making their dependents workers—or even their livestock!—miss the day of leisure. Thanksgiving isn’t the Sabbath and we Christians are not bound by the details of the ancient Hebrew law. But there may be a lesson for modern Christians in this Biblical outlook.

Then comes next Sunday. On that day a number of years ago, I consulted an expert (an attendant at a very busy service station on the Pennsylvania Turnpike) who told me that the Sunday after Thanksgiving is the heaviest travel day of the year. This year it will be the First Sunday of Advent. This year Advent will be as long as Advent ever gets, weighing in at four full weeks.

So now it is Christmas. Right? Well, not exactly. Five weeks from today it will be Christmas. But the Christmas decorations are going up — are already up — and the Christmas music has been on the radio for a while now. In fact, the music and many of the decorations will be gone by five weeks from tomorrow.

But it isn’t even Advent yet. Won’t be until next Sunday. Today is the Feast of Christ the King. Okay, you might be tempted to say, but doesn’t life have two compartments? There is church where Christmas might last from December 25 through the Twelve Days of Christmas until the Feast of Epiphany. But in ... **real life** ... there is the holiday season: doesn’t the season of bright lights and festival music span the time from a little before Thanksgiving until Christmas Day itself?

There are some important questions about all that. First, is that “real life”? Or is it the **artificial life** that has become detached from reality? If the coming into the world of the Savior of the world — “for us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven” and dwelt among us — if that is the meaning of Christmas and if that is the origin of Christmas, then it is the great reality we have for celebrating in the coming weeks. If we let other forces, other peoples’ agendas, shape the kind of Christmas we will celebrate, we will probably get the whole thing wrong.

And then there is the problem of **forgetting how to wait**. One of the first things to get right in our celebration of the Coming of our God is a restoration of one of the first lessons we learned about Christmas: the benefits of a disciplined waiting. As little children, we had to wait. We knew that there were going to be special foods, special music, special decorations, and special gifts. But not until Christmas itself. We didn’t like waiting; waiting can feel so unnecessary. As children we learned that **eagerness was actually enhanced by the slight discipline of Advent**: the abstaining from meat on the eve of the great feast, the postponement of the parties and gift-giving until Christmas Day itself.

Willingness to wait—in eager but patient expectation—for something wonderful enhances the joy of celebrating what is wonderful. If we lose that discipline of waiting, we are the losers. Of course **we want to be gratified now**. And it is hard to see any point to the postponement. Culturally we have **a hard time understanding that wait**: the wait **until adulthood**, the wait **until marriage**, the wait **until we have saved up** for the things we want. But **it is worth the wait**, even if the culture around us says no.

And the season of waiting teaches us about all that. Advent is the season of the expectant mother Mary. She couldn’t do a thing to make the gestation of that Child go any faster; she couldn’t induce his birth any sooner. But he was—is—worth the wait. And the time of waiting is a specially graced time of preparing the way of the Lord. There is a lot to be done to get ready.

So, is it violating my own principle in talking about Christmas in November? Perhaps so. But perhaps this is the time to get ready. On the Feast of Christ the King, we can contemplate the coming of our King; we can meditate on why his Kingdom is worth waiting for. And preparing for. The Psalmist teaches us “Be strong-hearted and wait for the Lord!”

— *Father Kessler*

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