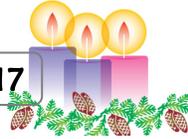


December 17, 2017



Last Sunday **John the Baptist** was introduced and **NOW WE COME TO A SHARPER FOCUS ON HIM AS TO, 'WHO HE IS'**. Although he dressed like Prophet Elijah, and preaches repentance and judgment, he is not Elijah. Not in the flesh but he had the spirit of Elijah in his mission. Nor is John the Messiah, though he has been anointed by the Spirit since the womb. In his own words, he is not the messiah, but someone who is not even worthy to stand before the messiah.

John prepares the way for the Lord. His baptism is symbolic, not sacramental. It is a sign given to stir our hearts to repentance. John points too us the One upon whom the Spirit remain; the One who fulfills the promise. In Jesus' baptism we are reborn and the Spirit opens a fountain that purifies us and gives to all a new heart and a new Spirit.

John comes to us in the Advent readings to show us the light that we might believe in the One who comes at Christmas. Today's Responsorial psalm tells us that the Mighty One has come to lift each of us up, to fill our hunger with bread from heaven.

And as St. Paul exhorts in today's second reading, we should rejoice, give thanks, and pray without ceasing that God will make us perfectly holy in spirit, soul, and body—that we may be blameless when our Lord comes.

Fr. Michael



CHRISTMAS SEASON IS HARD FOR MANY PEOPLE — If you, or someone you know, has been impacted with the affects from an abortion, consider the healing and freedom that can be experienced from participation in a Rachel's Vineyard retreat: "It was amazing and restorative—a safe beginning of healthy grieving and acknowledgement—initiating a beginning of the ability to move forward in other aspects of my life." May this holy season of fulfilled longing and hope through our Savior, lead you toward a life change at a Rachel's Vineyard retreat Where mercy, compassion, and forgiveness bring Jesus' healing. The next weekends are in Portland **February 16-18 (2018)**, and in **Medford April 27-29 (2018)**.. For more info on Oregon retreats, call: 541-942-2861, or email: projectaurora@aol.com, or visit: www.project-aurora.org, or visit the national websites: www.project-aurora.org.

RETRouvaille — FIND A NEW BEGINNING FOR YOUR MARRIAGE by attending a Retrouvaille retreat Do you feel alone? Frustrated or angry? Arguing or just not talking to each other? There is hope! For confidential information or to register for the **January 19-21 (2018)**. 1 weekend, go to: www.helpourmarriage.org or call 1-503-225-9191.

ASH WEDNESDAY RETREAT — Offered at **Our Lady of Peace Retreat House** (Beaverton, OR), on Wednesday, **February 14, 9:00am—2:30pm**, with Retreat Master Rev. Vincent Kelber, O.P. Includes Mass, Eucharistic Adoration and quiet reflection time. Suggested donation is \$40/person (lunch included).
For info: sisters@olpretreat.org or 503-649-7127.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND — The next Marriage Encounter Weekend is **February 23-25 (2018)**, at Mt. Angel Abbey. Learn how to once again foster **COMPASSION AND FORGIVENESS IN YOUR MARRIAGE**. For more information call 503-853-2758, or at www.rediscoverthepark.org. Additional dates and locations are listed on-line.

AREA NEWS



SAVE the DATE! It's the *Roe v. Wade* Rally on Sunday, **January 14th** (2018), at the Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland! Featured speaker is Archbishop Sample. The Knights of Columbus will be hosting a bus for the trip — no set cost, but a free-will offering appreciated. The bus will be at South Eugene High School parking lot, boarding at **11:30am**, and leaving promptly at **12 noon**, arriving back in Eugene approx. 6:30pm. Questions? Contact Eric Walter at 541-554-2074 ... dress warmly and bring a sack lunch. No reservations necessary, but seats are on a first come basis.

CARMELITE DRAWING: St. Peter was able to contribute \$805.00 to the Carmelites, from the ticket sales to the Carmelite's handmade quilt! The winning ticket belongs to Cindy Leavitt, from St. Jude Parish.



EUGENE'S OWN YOUNG ADULT group (ages 21-39, married or single) meets on Thursday evenings, **6:45pm**, at St. Mary Church (in the St. Matthew classroom—Par. Ctr.). For inquiries: eugeneyoungadults@gmail.com or 541-270-9329 or [facebook.com/EugeneCYA](https://www.facebook.com/EugeneCYA).

FAITH SERIES: CATECHISM THROUGH THE YEAR

DO CATHOLICS COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAD? ...

The eerie story of King Saul's dealings with the medium Endor illustrates the dangers of "necromancy" — the attempt to initiate communication with the dead (1 Sm 28:3-19). Saul, himself, had previously driven mediums out of the land, in keeping with god's consistent warning to the Israelites against adopting this practice of their pagan neighbors. So grave was the crime of necromancy, and so pernicious its consequences, that God actually prescribed the death penalty for it (Lv 20:6,27).

WHY IS THE MATTER SO SERIOUS?? BECAUSE HUMAN BEINGS CANNOT CONVERSE AT WILL WITH THE SOULS OF THE DEAD ... WHEN THEY ATTEMPT TO DO SO, THEY OPEN THEMSELVES TO DIABOLICAL DECEPTION.

On the other hand, God himself may at times permit a departed soul to appear to the living (called an "apparition"), and even to disclose things unknown to them. This would be true even in Saul's case. If the apparition of the prophet Samuel was, indeed, genuine, it was not because the medium had any powers to summon the dead, but simply because God took the opportunity to rebuke the king through the otherworldly visitor he was seeking out.

The gospel accounts provide much clearer cases of departed souls being allowed ty God (or even sent by God) to encounter the living. When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain — while Peter, James, and John watched and listened — the departed saints Moses and Elijah appeared and conversed with him (Mt 17:1-9). After our Lord's resurrection, a number of departed saints returned to Jerusalem and "appeared to many" (Mt 27:52-53).

When Catholics talk about prayer to the saints or about apparitions of Mary or saints, they are not advocating necromancy. Asking for the saints' intercession is not an attempt to conjure up the dea; it simply acknowledges that those who are in heaven, perfected in Christ, are able and willing to help us by God's grace. After all, "He is not God of the dead but of the living" (Mk 12:27). At the same time, genuine apparitions of the saints are typically a startling surprise to those who experience them, not the result of someone seeking out a contact beyond the grave. Mary and the saints appear unexpectedly with a common message: repent, believe, and draw closer to God! Nothing could be further from necromancy.

RECOMMENDED READING: Excerpt taken from The NEW Catholic Answer Bible
Dt 18:10-12 · 2 Mc 15:11-16 · Wis 3:1-6 · Mk 9:2-8 · Lk 9:28-36 ·
& Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) Nos. 946-962 · 2683 ·