

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

December 29th/December 30th 2018: Holy Family (English)

Sunday in the Octave of Christmas



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Pastor
Rev. Jim W. Booth

Religious Education
Ann Noblitt

SACRAMENTS and LITURGY

English Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m.

English Sunday Mass: 9:00 a.m.

Traditional Latin Sunday Mass: 10:45 a.m.

English Weekday Masses: 8:30 a.m. Monday to Friday

Latin Weekday Masses: 7:00 a.m. Wednesday and Friday, 6:30 p.m. on First Friday

First Saturday Latin Mass: 8:30 a.m. with confessions beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Holy Day Mass: As Announced

Confessions: Thirty minutes before Saturday and Sunday Masses and by request

Baptisms: By Appointment

Marriage Arrangements must be made with the Pastor **at least 6 months before the date of the wedding.** Talk to the Pastor before making any firm wedding plans. No destination weddings.

WELCOME to all of our visitors: We are glad you have attended Mass with us. If you wish to join Blessed Sacrament, please pick up a parish census form at the Religious Goods Counter located in the vestibule of the front entrance.

IN MEMORIAM: In memory of John Schauer, Jr., the sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of his soul from 30th to January 5th. The sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of Robert C. Bryant from January 6th until January 12th.

JANUARY 1ST: Tuesday, January 1st is the Feast of Mary, Mother of God (English) and the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord (Latin), is a Holy Day of Obligation. There will be an English Mass at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, December 31st and an English Mass at 9:00 a.m. and a Latin Mass at 10:45 a.m. on Tuesday, January 1st.

FIRST FRIDAY: We will have our First Friday English Mass on January 4th at 8:30 a.m. in the Rectory followed with Adoration and Benediction and a Latin Low Mass at 6:30 p.m. in the Church.

FIRST SATURDAY: First Saturday Mass will be offered in Latin at 8:30 a.m. on January 5th. Altar server training, choir practice, and Martha and Mary Altar Sodality will follow Mass.

FIRST SUNDAY: Next Sunday is the first Sunday of the month. There will be coffee and donuts following the 9:00 Mass.

CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES for 2019, arranged alphabetically, are in the vestibule at the back of the Church.

PARISH CALENDARS for 2019 are located in the vestibule at the back of the Church.

MASS & MARCH FOR LIFE: Bishop Baker will celebrate a Mass for Life at the Cathedral of St Paul on Saturday, January 12th at 9:00 a.m. Following the Mass, there will be a peaceful and prayerful rally and march at Brother Bryan Park at 10:45 a.m. Please come and speak out on behalf of innocent babies and others who can't speak for themselves against the culture of death.

MARDI GRAS DINNER DANCE: We will have a dinner dance in the Parish Hall on Saturday, March 2nd 2019 following the 4:00 p.m. Mass. All are invited to dine and dance.

TENTATIVE 2019 HIGH MASS SCHEDULE: Sunday, January 13th (Holy Family); Sunday, February 10th (Fifth Sunday After Epiphany); Sunday, March 31st (Laetare Sunday); Thursday, April 18th (Holy Thursday); Sunday, April 21st (Easter); Sunday, May 26th (1st Communion); Sunday, June 9th (Pentecost); Thursday, June 20th (Corpus Christi); Thursday, August 15th (Assumption of BVM); Sunday, September 8th (Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost); Sunday, October 27th (Christ the King); Sunday, December 8th (Immaculate Conception); Sunday, December 15th (Gaudete Sunday); and Tuesday, December 24th (Christmas Eve).

PRAY FOR OUR SEMINARIANS: Please pray for our seminarians: Deacon Justin Ward, Daniel Sessions, Charles Deering, Doug Hess, Luis Reyes, Matthew Gubenski, and Cristian Padilla. We need to fervently pray for those who are discerning a call to the priesthood.

ADVENT ANGEL TREE: The families helped by this year's Angel Tree express their deep gratitude for making Christmas special.

CONTACTING THE FRANCISCANS: the Franciscans of the Fraternity Poor of Jesus Christ, Friar Gabriel, Friar Rafael, and Friar Leticio, can be contacted at (205) 578-2988, on facepage @poorofjesuschristalabama, and via e-mail at franciscanspjcalabama@gmail.com

PARISH SUPPORT: The collection for last weekend was \$7484 and \$1265 were collected for the Preservation Fund. The Christmas Collection was \$5395 and an additional \$1530 was collected for the Preservation Fund. Many thanks for your generosity.

MASS SCHEDULE AND INTENTIONS: (*Mass in Rectory Chapel)

Sat, Dec 29: 4:00 p.m. † Pete Searcy (by Bill & Marian Dinan)
Sun, Dec 30: 9:00 a.m. Pro Populo
10:45 a.m. † Patricia Durward (by Vinita Kelley)
Mon, Dec 31 *8:30 a.m. Special Intention for Ryan Gagnon (by Peter & Sharon Gagnon)
4:00 p.m. Special Intention for Hannah Gagnon (by Peter & Sharon Gagnon)
Tues, Jan 1: 9:00 a.m. Pro Populo
10:45 a.m. Private Intention
Wed, Jan 2: *7:00 a.m. Special Intention for Thomas Rumore (by Peter & Sharon Gagnon)
*8:30 a.m. Special Intention for Br Simeon Gagnon (by Peter & Sharon Gagnon)
Thur, Jan 3: *8:30 a.m. Private Intention
Fri, Jan 4: *8:30 a.m. Private Intention
6:30 p.m. Special Intention for Our Next Bishop
Sat, Jan 5: 8:30 a.m. Private Intention
4:00 p.m. † Matteo D'Argo (by Teneda Latham)
Sun, Jan 6: 9:00 a.m. Pro Populo
10:45 a.m. Private Intention

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND especially Theresa Renna, Daniel Renna, John Minjares, Sr., Christopher Chism, Anthony Timpa, Virginia Files, Danny Rohling, Vinita Kelley, Penny Vaughn, Kay Dorion, Krissy Chism, Sylvia McCarrick, William Scroggins, Lamar Smith, Fr Kevin McGrath, OSB, Johnny Young, Paul Herrmann, Debbie Zeller, Wayne Little, Maria Morin, Andrea Little, Joseph Edwards, George Dunham, Rebecca Rice, Kay Junk, Liz Pate, Fran Costanza, Christine Cover, Liz Bailey, Thatcher Kerzie, Malcolm Perry, Koslyn Chism, Anna Marie Madison, Kathleen Strawmeyer, Cindy Little, Stan Trawick, David Henning, Bill Bankson, Loretta Mara, Don Broseman, Lillie Rumore, Jennie Sciro, Stephanie Perry, Marcus Perry, Cynthia Daniel, and Jackie Modica.

NEXT WEEK'S MASS READINGS

4:00 p.m. Epiphany Isa 60:1-6, Eph 3:2-3,5-6, Mt 2:1-12
9:00 a.m. Epiphany Isa 60:1-6, Eph 3:2-3,5-6, Mt 2:1-12
10:45 a.m. Epiphany Isa 60:1-6, Mt 2:1-12

Four Important Things (Continued)

Prior to Jesus, heaven was closed to mankind. Adam and Eve lost the grace of heaven for us. This forfeiture was permanent since no one could possibly undo or reverse the effects of either Adam's sin or their own sins by their own effort. As stated previously, only Enoch, Elijah, and probably Moses obtained heaven prior to Jesus. But we have to understand that none of these three had a right to heaven or earned their way into eternal paradise. We can't say that heaven was sort of closed prior to Jesus, or that only a very few would merit heaven on the basis of their earthly life. No, heaven was closed. Enoch, Elijah, and perhaps Moses were taken into heaven as extraordinary exceptions. The best way to understand their entry into heaven is to see it as a grace, an exceptional grace.

Now that Jesus has opened the way to heaven, we must say much the same thing about all of the saints that reside there. Obtaining heaven happened by God's grace. This was true for Elijah as much as it was for Sts Peter and Paul. What make Peter and Paul – and the rest of us as well – different from Enoch, Elijah, and Moses is that the path to heaven has been clearly prescribed for us by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. We have the advantage of the Gospel, we have the advantage of the sacraments, and we have the advantage of living a life animated and guided by faith, hope, and love.

Of this we must be certain, however: apart from Jesus, heaven is impossible. Jesus' own words testify to this truth when He says "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (Jn 14:6). This is why Jesus descended unto the dead, to the so-called limbo of the fathers, to preach the Gospel to the righteous who died before He came into the world. They were given the grace of hearing the Gospel and, if they accepted Jesus with faith, hope, and love while also repenting of their sins, they obtained the grace of escaping the abode of the dead and entrance into everlasting life in heaven. Despite having entered into heaven long before the Son of God donned flesh and entered into human history, we must say that Enoch, Elijah, and Moses had to have come to the Father through Jesus. Part of the extraordinary grace these three enjoyed was partaking of the benefits that would come from and through Jesus even before Jesus was conceived in the immaculate womb of Mary. God, being outside of time, can certainly apply the graces that Jesus earned for us so that Enoch, Elijah, and Moses would obtain heaven before the other righteous who died before Jesus was born.

That no one comes to the Father, and thus to heaven, except through Jesus, brings us to the fate of the non-Christian. We live in a very permissive time where fairness seems to be the primary hallmark of justice. To the modern mind, it would seem unfair that heaven is available only through Christ. Sadly, there are many priests erroneously teaching that there are many ways to obtain heaven as if all religions equally lead to heaven. We also live in a time where people feel particularly entitled. Many act as if they have a right to heaven. These two attitudes, justice based on fairness and a sense of entitlement, have led to a great decline in missionary activity. In fact, in many circles it is considered unjust and disrespectful to bring the Gospel to those who do not believe. But can we say that withholding the Gospel is fair, just, or respectful if no one comes to the Father except through Jesus?

Only one Gospel and one Messiah have been given to mankind. It is God's will that we be saved through Jesus Christ and the Gospel He revealed. To ignore this truth is not doing anyone any favors. Thus, the Church teaches that Jesus "himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it... [However,] those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience - those too may achieve eternal salvation" (CCC 846 & 847). Thus, the non-Christian can be saved, but it is still through Christ and through grace. But given that only three people obtained heaven before Jesus along with an unknown number of people who were in the limbo of the fathers, it hardly seems wise to try to obtain heaven or to consign others to do so apart from Jesus Christ and His Church.

- Fr Booth