

# **Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church**

**December 19<sup>th</sup>/December 20<sup>th</sup> 2020: Fourth Sunday of Advent**



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Birmingham, Alabama 35211**

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## **Pastor**

Rev. Jim W. Booth

## **SACRAMENTS and LITURGY**

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

**English Sunday Mass: 9:00 a.m.**

**Traditional Latin Sunday Mass: 7:30 a.m. and 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: See Below**

**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.**

**COVID-19 RESPONSE, MASS & DEVOTIONS:** We have returned to an approximation of our normal weekend schedule with Mass inside the Church. We will have a 4:00 p.m. Saturday English Mass, a 9:00 a.m. Sunday English Mass, a 10:45 a.m. Sunday Latin Mass, and an additional Sunday Latin Mass at 7:30 a.m. The additional Latin Mass is intended to aid in the social distancing, **which is the responsibility of those attending Mass.** Please be considerate. This additional Mass will continue as long as social distancing is necessary.

**COVID-19 RESPONSE, CONFESSIONS:** Until further notice, confessions will be done in the Church parking lot with Fr Booth in his car. Those wishing to confess can walk up individually maintaining a six-foot distance. Confessions will be offered at 3:30-3:55 p.m. on Saturday and on Sunday at 7:00-7:25 a.m., 8:30-8:55 a.m., and 10:15-10:40 a.m.

**UPDATED DISPENSATION FOR SUNDAY MASS OBLIGATION:** Per Bishop Raica, all Roman Catholics who reside in the diocese are dispensed from the Sunday Mass obligation through January 10<sup>th</sup>. No one, especially the vulnerable, should feel obliged to attend Mass.

**A REMINDER FROM BISHOP RAICA:** Those individuals who have a fever, feel sick, are in a high-risk group, are of a more advanced age, or who live with someone in one of these categories, are urged to avail themselves of the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass for all Roman Catholics living in the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama.

**CHANGES TO THE MASS:** We will forgo the distribution of the Precious Blood, reception of which is ordinarily optional, and the sign of peace, the omission of which is also optional.

**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 Catherine and Joseph Kelly, the sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of their souls from December 19<sup>th</sup> to December 26<sup>th</sup>. The sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of Peter and Jeanne Morin from December 27<sup>th</sup> until January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**ADVENT ANGEL TREE:** We have an Advent Angel Tree this year that will benefit a number of truly needy families in our local communality. Please bring the wrapped gift items back with the angel tag attached by this Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>.

**THIRD SUNDAY:** This Sunday is the Third Sunday of the month. We will have vocations prayers following the 10:45 a.m. Mass.

**PRAY FOR OUR SEMINARIANS:** Please pray for our seminarians: Daniel Sessions, Charles Deering, Matthew Gubenski, Patrick DePew, Max Gallegos, John Gardiner, Andrew Vickery, John Paul Stepnowski, Collins Hess, and Dominic Rumore. Please pray for more good men to answer God's call to the priesthood.

**CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE:** To facilitate social distancing, we will have an expanded Mass schedule for Christmas. On Christmas Eve, there will be 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. English Masses and an 8:00 p.m. Latin Low Mass. On Christmas Day, there will be a 7:30 a.m. Latin Low Mass, a 9:00 a.m. English Mass, and a 10:45 High Latin Mass.

**PARISH SUPPORT:** The collection for last weekend was \$3975 and \$100 was donated to the Preservation Fund.

**CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES** for 2021, arranged alphabetically, are in the vestibule at the back of the Church.

**2020 HIGH MASS SCHEDULE:** Dec 13<sup>th</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent, Gaudete Sunday); Christmas Day (10:45 a.m.).

**MASS SCHEDULE AND INTENTIONS:** (\*Masses in the Rectory Chapel)

Sat, Dec 19: 9:15 a.m. † Ronnie Mason (Mary & Betty Mason)  
4:00 p.m. † Eugene Mason (by Mary & Betty Mason)

Sun, Dec 20: 7:30 a.m. Special Intention for Tresa Harrington (by Todd Harrington)  
9:00 a.m. Pro Populo  
10:45 a.m. † George Boohaker (the Rumore Family)

Mon, Dec 21: \*8:30 a.m. † Jose Nevy (by the Hahn Family)

Tues, Dec 22: \*8:30 a.m. † Julia Bryant (by Carolyn Mickel)

Wed, Dec 23: \*7:00 a.m. Special Intention for Rose Scheffler (by Amanda Lang)  
\*8:30 a.m. Special Intention for Charlie Mathews (by the Juneau Family)

Thur, Dec 24: 3:00 p.m. Special Intention for Danny & Judy Rohling (by Bob & Mary Wiseman)  
5:00 p.m. Special Intention for Juanita Parnell (by Bob & Mary Wiseman)  
8:00 p.m. Special Intention for Andrew Duryea (by the Duvall Family)

Fri, Dec 25: 7:30 a.m. Special Intention for Helena Ducote (by the Duvall Family)  
9:00 a.m. Pro Populo  
10:45 a.m. Special Intention for Grace Gagnon (by Mary Claire Mathews)

Sat, Dec 26: 4:00 p.m. Special Intention for Sandra & Rick Phillips (by Mary & Betty Mason)

Sun, Dec 27: 7:30 a.m. Special Intention for Bob & Mary Wiseman  
9:00 a.m. Pro Populo  
10:45 a.m. Special Intention for Dominic Rumore (by the Hahn Family)

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND** especially Jamie Barnes, Aaron Minjares, Hamp Schauer, Bill Dinan, Carol Brandley, Eddie Hunter, Mark Corley, Lee Gaissert, Lawrence Brandley, Don Williams, Roseanne Timpa, Pete Ransom, Jerry Joiner, Beryl Curtis, Nicole Copeland, Laura Minjares, Linda Cooper, Lee Dinan, Mina Keasler, Levi Ray, John Minjares, Sr., Danny Rohling, Kay Dorion, Krissy Chism, William Scroggins, Lamar Smith, Paul Herrmann, Debbie Zeller, Wayne Little, Maria Morin, Andrea Little, Joseph Edwards, George Dunham, Fran Costanza, Christine Cover, Thatcher Kerzie, Malcolm Perry, Koslyn Chism, Kathleen Strawmeyer, and Stephanie Perry.

**NEXT WEEK'S MASS READINGS**

4:00 p.m. Holy Family	Sir 3:2-6,12-14, Col 3:12-21, Lk 2:22-40
7:30 a.m. Sunday within the Octave of Christmas	Gal 4:1-7, Lk 2:33-40
9:00 a.m. Holy Family	Sir 3:2-6,12-14, Col 3:12-21, Lk 2:22-40
10:45 a.m. Sunday within the Octave of Christmas	Gal 4:1-7, Lk 2:33-40

## *Darkness is of Old*

Perhaps it is just time to admit that I'm getting old. On both of my recent trips back to Colorado I found myself going for miles down the highway with my turn signal on, something for which I ridiculed others in my long-past youth. Back then the stereotypical turn signal offender would have been a senior citizen driving an early 1970s Dodge Dart or Ford Galaxy 500, usually green in color. Perhaps the modern equivalent would be a blue 2019 Honda CR-V...

In any case, this type of experience – the stereotypical elderly driver – only goes back a generation or two. My grandparents would not have thought about this phenomenon since they were among the first generation to fulfill this stereotype and this concept would have been totally foreign to my great grandparents. My great great grandparents would have understood a driver to be someone at the reins of a horse or a mule, or perhaps someone piloting a trolley or a train. To them the idea of rocketing down the road at 70 mph would have been preposterous.

In other words, things have really changed over the last few generations, so much so that our parents and grandparents were born into a world significantly different than what they would know as adults. This would hardly have been the case further back in history. The further back we go, the less change would occur over the course of someone's life. Two thousand years ago in the time of Jesus, this would have been much more the case than we might imagine. Life in the times of Jesus would have been little different than in the times of King David a thousand years before and not hugely different than the life known by Abraham a thousand or so years before that. Yes, Abraham lived in the Bronze Age and David in the Iron Age, but a bronze sword killed just as efficiently as one made of iron.

For the average man, precious little would have differed from generation to generation. He farmed or shepherded much the same way as his fathers did and much the same way that his sons would. The same could be said of the typical woman, the mothers before her, and her daughters after her. The life of both man and woman would have been filled with things largely unknown to us. For example, we live under the protection of law enforcement. Yes, laws existed back then and there were those who would enforce those laws, but more for the benefit of the rich and powerful than the average citizen. The family relied on the paterfamilias' ability to protect their lives and property against ne'er-do-wells. They would have paid high taxes, often over 50%, while getting precious little in return. The only social 'safety net' would have been one's extended family and perhaps friends and neighbors.

We can see how unstable and uncertain life could be in the episode of the massacre of the innocents (Mt 2:16-18) where every boy in the vicinity of Bethlehem was slaughtered by Herod's troops. No warning. No recompense. No apology. The aggrieved parents might have yearned for some sort of justice, but to whom could they go? To Herod? No chance. To the Romans? At best they would have said tough luck. The Romans, the Greeks, the Persians, the Babylonians, and the Assyrians – those pagans who ruled over the Holy Land for over seven hundred of years – would have all had the same basic response of tough luck to the victims of such an atrocity. Even many of the ancient Jewish kings of Judah or Israel would have been unmoved by the slaughter of a bunch of baby boys.

In other words, darkness is not new. Of course it goes back to Adam and Eve's sin, but there had been hardly a time when one might expect a ray of light let alone a realized cause for hope. Life was short, brutish, and seemingly pointless for generations past, present, and future. Things would only differ in the specifics. It did not matter if Romans or Greeks or Assyrians were overlords: taxes were paid, innocents were killed, and one could only pass on on a similar life to one's children. The birth of Jesus changes all of that. The ancient darkness of sin and death cease to define human existence when God becomes man.

Yes, darkness still exists. Just look around. But the coming of Jesus, God in the flesh, truly transforms things such that the darkness of sin and death no longer have the final word in man's existence, unless we spurn the Light by embracing the darkness.

- Fr Booth.