

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church Newsletter

December 20, 2020

My Dear Parishioners,

So many of my friends are on a treasure hunt, and the treasure that they are after are long lost relatives. They are into genealogies. They spend serious amounts of time not only researching their family trees through services such as ancestry.com, but they actually go out and visit the long lost relatives that they locate, and then on top of that they also visit the places where those in the family tree had lived, were baptized and married, and were buried. It is all quite fascinating.

When I ask them why they spend all of this time and money on researching the family tree, they tell me that it makes history *personal* and that they feel part of something much bigger and much more enduring. They say it also helps them understand where they came from and why some things are the way they are now. Plus, they say it allows them the opportunity to fill in the details of their family history and to maybe even correct some of those details—details that had been embellished or white-washed over time.

Genealogies of course are nothing new. In fact, we see two historically significant genealogies in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke. These genealogies were written to establish that the birth of Jesus Christ was a historical fact. They also stress that His birth was and is the fulfillment of a promise that was made to us through our fathers Adam and Abraham.

Like our own personal family trees, when we research the family tree of Our Blessed Savior, we find many, many great people. Like our own family trees, we also find some people who we wish we could forget. In the family tree of Our Blessed Savior, we see the Divine Plan reaching its fulfillment through both the good and the bad. Yes, God writes with crooked lines, and those lines all lead to Our Blessed Savior.

Most importantly, the genealogy of Our Lord Jesus Christ proves that God really did become man in the person of Jesus Christ. This is of key importance. As a saint and martyr from the Fourth Century wrote: *the new world order is this—that God lets Himself be so influenced by His love for us that He becomes a little baby. He lets Himself be both shepherd and pasture for His people. He, who is eternity without ageing, subjects Himself to the human law of becoming older. Although He is God, He takes all suffering onto Himself like a weak human being. He does this to put an end to the law of death and to enable us to share in immortality. God's power is this: that He can be what He is not and yet still remain what He is. He is our God—the eternal Son of the eternal Father. He is God and He is human, because He stands in the middle, between the Father and us.*

So as we reminisce this Holiday Season on Christmases past, let us not forget that by virtue of our Baptism that we are now part of the family of Jesus Christ. Thus, when we hear the genealogies of Our Blessed Savior proclaimed, we rejoice in the fact that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Joseph, and Mary are now our ancestors as well as His. We are also reminded that the Divine Plan continues to unfold, through us.

In this e-newsletter, I have included a further reflection on the genealogy of Our Lord Jesus Christ by St. Leo the Great along with Pope Francis's prayer for the Year of St. Joseph and the readings of the Fourth Sunday of Advent.

Let us continue to pray our Rosaries and Chaplets for all of those effected by the coronavirus, for our first responders, for the successful rollout of the vaccine, and for all of the living and deceased, and for those who I will not see personally, have a blessed conclusion to Advent and a very Merry Christmas.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us!

Fr. Michael J Pawelko

From A Letter of Pope St. Leo the Great



THE MYSTERY OF OUR RECONCILIATION WITH GOD

To speak of our Lord, the son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as true and perfect man is of no value to us if we do not believe that he is descended from the line of ancestors set out in the Gospel.

Matthew's gospel begins by setting out *the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham*, and then traces his human descent by bringing his ancestral line down to his mother's husband, Joseph. On the other hand, Luke traces his parentage backward step by step to the actual father of mankind, to show that both the first and the last Adam share the same nature.

No doubt the Son of God in his omnipotence could have taught and sanctified men by appearing to them in a semblance of human form as he did to the patriarchs and prophets, when for instance he engaged in a wrestling contest or entered into conversation with them, or when he accepted their hospitality and even ate the food they set before him. But these appearances were only types, signs that mysteriously foretold the coming of one who would take a true human nature from the stock of the patriarchs who had gone before him.

No mere figure, then, fulfilled the mystery of our reconciliation with God, ordained from all eternity. The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon the Virgin nor had the power of the Most High overshadowed her, so that within her spotless womb Wisdom might build itself a house and the Word become flesh. The divine nature and the nature of a servant were to be united in one person so that the Creator of time might be born in time, and he through whom all things were made might be brought forth in their midst.

For unless the new man, by being made *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, had taken on himself the nature of our first parents, unless he had stooped to be one in substance with his mother while sharing the Father's substance and, being alone free from sin, united our nature to his, the whole human race would still be held captive under the dominion of Satan. The Conqueror's victory would have profited us nothing if the battle had been fought outside our human condition. But through this wonderful blending the mystery of new birth shone upon us, so that through the same Spirit by whom Christ was conceived and brought forth we too might be born again in a spiritual birth; and in consequence the evangelist declares the faithful to have been *born not of blood, nor of the desire of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*.

Prayer for the Year of St Joseph by Pope Francis



*Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.
Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil.
Amen.*



Sunday Mass Readings

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Reading 1: [2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16](#)

When King David was settled in his palace, and the LORD had given him rest from his enemies on every side, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!" Nathan answered the king, "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you." But that night the LORD spoke to Nathan and said: "Go, tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Should you build me a house to dwell in?'" "It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth. I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever."

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29](#)

R. (2a) **For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

► The promises of the LORD I will sing forever; through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness. For you have said, "My kindness is established forever"; in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

R.

► "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant: Forever will I confirm your posterity and establish your throne for all generations." R.

► "He shall say of me, 'You are my father, my God, the Rock, my savior.' Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him, and my covenant with him stands firm." R.

Reading 2: [Romans 16:25-27](#)

Brothers and sisters: To him who can strengthen you, according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Alleluia

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

► Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.

May it be done to me according to your word.

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

Gospel: [Luke 1:26-38](#)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Advent Reflections

We come together as a community to deepen our awareness and to prepare for the coming of Jesus in our lives.

Tuesday
December 22nd

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church



On December 22nd from 7:00 - 8:00 PM, Deacon Vince will lead us in:

Scripture and Reflection

Quiet period of personal reflection

Divine Chaplet

Benediction

Join us as we embrace the season of Advent
and to fully greet Christmas with true readiness.