

December 8, 2013 • Second Sunday of Advent

On this Second Sunday of Advent we hear Isaiah predicting the coming of the Messiah and the messianic age. He foretells that “a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse” and blossom into “a signal for the nations” of the justice and peace that the Messiah brings (Isaiah 11:1, 10). This scripture is the source of the O Antiphon that invokes the Flower of Jesse’s stem, raised up as a sign for all peoples.

Jesus is that shoot from the stump of Jesse and sign of God’s love. Paul’s letter to the Romans echoes Isaiah’s words, reminding us that Jesus Christ came for *all* people—as a sign of God’s faithfulness to the promises to the Jewish people, as well as God’s mercy to the Gentiles. John the Baptist announced that the time of waiting was over when he said, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matthew 3:1).

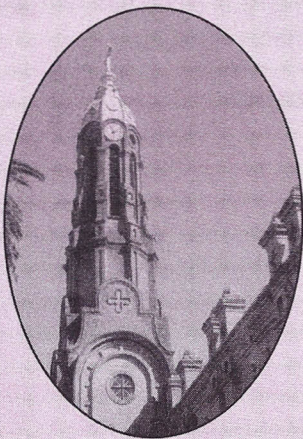
“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND!”

How are we to respond when we hear that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand”? John’s words, together with today’s other readings, can be a source of real hope in our lives. They invite us to relinquish any lingering fears about our unworthiness and accept the reality of God’s limitless love for us. They challenge us to repent of our pride and prejudice, and open our hearts to those who are different from us. They encourage us not to despair over the suffering in our world, but to take action to foster God’s justice and peace. The period of waiting for a Messiah is over. Jesus is among us here and now, sharing with us his spirit of hope, courage, and love. Now is the time for us to blossom and produce the good fruits of the messianic age.

Let us pray: O Flower of Jesse’s stem, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples . . . Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid (Evening Prayer, December 19).

Today’s Readings: Is 11:1–10; Ps 72:1–2, 7–8, 12–13, 17; Rom 15:4–9; Mt 3:1–12

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St. Alphonsus Parish

St. Mary’s Assumption Church
National Shrine of Blessed Francis Seelos
2030 Constance Street † New Orleans, LA 70130
(504) 522-6748 † Fax: (504) 523-3734

Sunday Masses

Vigil: 4:00 PM (Church)

Sunday: 9:00 AM (Chapel): 10:30 AM (Church)

Weekday Masses

Monday—Friday: 7:00 AM (Chapel)

Monday—Saturday: 8:00 AM (Rectory)

St. Mary’s Chapel/1516 Jackson Avenue

Our Faith Community welcomes all members and visitors alike

St. Alphonsus Parish Mission Statement

In the tradition of our immigrant founders, St. Alphonsus Parish continues to be a welcoming and caring Roman Catholic community of faith. We are inspired by the Holy Spirit, formed by the Gospel under the mantle of Mary, Our Mother of Perpetual Help, and since 1843 served by the Redemptorists, men of faith such as Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos. We are committed to carry forward a living history that shapes us into a Eucharistic community which strives for a more just society through service to each other and to the community.

Parish Office Hours

Monday—Friday: 8:30 AM—2:30 PM
Email: stalphonsusoffice@parishmail.com
Website: www.stalphonsusneworleans.com



Pastoral Staff

Under the pastoral care of the Redemptorists since 1843

Father Richard Thibodeau, C.Ss.R.

rthibs@aol.com
Pastor

Father Eugene Harrison, C.Ss.R.

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Father Thomas Pham, C.Ss.R.

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Office Manager/Bulletin Editor

Robert Zanca

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Music Director

Sheila McDermott

smcder@dcc.edu
Vocalist

IN RESIDENCE

Father Byron Miller, C.Ss.R.

Director, Blessed Seelos Welcome Center

Father Gerard LaPorte, C.Ss.R.

Confessions

Saturday: 3:30—3:55 PM (Church)
or by arrangement

Baptisms

Call the parish office by the 25th of the month to make appointment for class. Class is the 1st Saturday of the month at 10:00AM.

Marriages

Please make arrangements at least six months in advance.

Home Visits

Please call the parish office when someone is ill and would like to receive the Sacrament of the Sick or receive Holy Communion.

Eucharistic Adoration

The 1st Friday of each month at 6:00 P.M. in the rectory chapel.

Rosary

The Rosary is prayed every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. in the Seelos Shrine.

Phone Numbers

Daily Spiritual Message	586-1803
Friends of St. Alphonsus	524-8116
Hope House	525-2561
Mercy Endeavors	568-0607
St. Alphonsus School	523-6594
Seelos Welcome Center	525-2495

If you would like to become a parish member of St. Alphonsus please call the parish office.

Pastor's Corner

Dear Parish Family,

It's that time of year when family and friends begin to ask us what we want for Christmas. Often our response is, "you really don't have to get me anything." It's probably true, most of us have what we need and if we don't have it, we ordinarily get it without waiting for someone to gift us with it for Christmas. Most gifts are temporary at best...even in the best of circumstances we eventually grow out of the shirt, we finish eating the perennial fruitcake (yes, it has been known to happen!), we use up the stationary.

But what about a gift that will last many years, probably over a hundred years? Now that might be worth considering! This Christmas you have that opportunity to suggest such a gift for you or you can gift another with this gift. What might this be? A donation in the name of another to the restoration of our St. Mary's Bell Tower!

What is the status of the tower restoration? At this writing we are close to having \$750,000 towards a \$950,000 project. With the promise of state tax credits AFTER the project is finished and paid for, we have the potential of receiving up to almost \$200,000 more. Therefore we are closing the gap. But we're not quite there yet. But 2014 is the year this project will get done!

At the end of this calendar year the Finance Committee will look at the potential gap between what we have and what we need and determine how to finance the gap. A loan? We haven't crossed that bridge yet but obviously the more we have at the end of this year the less we have to bridge.

There were two church related expenses that recently occurred which had to be taken care of and made a dent in our restoration fund. We had to replace the sacristy floor because of the deterioration of the joists underneath and we were able to finally re-plaster and paint the back wall which had been problematic for over the last two years. These projects cost a total \$45,000. So if they hadn't occurred, we would be even \$45,000 closer to our goal. But these things happen.

If you would like to give or receive a Christmas gift which indicates a contribution toward the tower has been made, we are ready for you. Just send the name(s) to be honored, addresses, and a contribution toward the tower project and we'll take care of the rest.

Not only will we acknowledge the gift in time for Christmas but the individuals so honored will be perpetually remembered in the appropriate donor gift category on our memory board to be unveiled when the project is complete.

Maybe, as the song goes, "all (I) you want for Christmas is (my) your two front teeth." But for others this Christmas you may want to give or receive something that connects with the eternal. Think about it. You won't even need to worry about gift wrapping!

Thought for the Week: "Don't tell God how big your problems are...tell your problems how big your God is."

Have a great week ahead!

Fr. Richard

Our prayers and condolences go out to Darlene Gaiennie and her family on the death of their father Henry F. Soroe, Jr.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

December 24th Christmas Eve Family Mass
4:00 P.M. St. Mary's Assumption Church

December 25th Christmas Day
10:30 A.M. St. Mary's Assumption Church

Please invite your family, friends, and neighbors
To join us!

**POPE FRANCIS PRAYER INTENTIONS
FOR DECEMBER**

Pope Francis' general prayer intention for December is Victimized Children: "That children who are victims of abandonment or violence may find the love and protection they need."

His mission intention is Prepare the Savior's Coming: "That Christians, enlightened by the Word incarnate, may prepare humanity for the Savior's coming."

**ARCHDIOCESAN SPIRITUALITY PROGRAM
THE POWER OF MARY'S YES**

Advent Morning of Reflection:
The Advent Season is the perfect time to reflect on the long-lasting effects of the critical choices we make in our lives. Mary's YES to God through her words to the Angel Gabriel changed the course of history. This morning of reflection will afford participants the opportunity to ponder and reflect, to be quiet and to listen so that the power of Mary's choice may enrich the choices of our own lives and draw us closer to her Son, the Christ. Friday, December 13, 2013, 9 am - noon. Presenter, Jan Tate, Associate Director, Archdiocesan Spirituality Center, 2501 Maine Avenue Metairie.

To register call (504) 861-3254 or register on the web: <http://asc.arch-no.org>. Cost \$25.00 (adjustments can be made)

OUR BELL TOWER RESTORATION

Have you responded to our campaign
to restore St. Mary's Bell Tower?

Please do so today?

We all need your help to "finish the job!"

Loving God, we remember the following:

Robert Beyer, Jr. & Sr.
Dennis Cross

William & Thelma Crotty & Family

Walter Palmer Diaz, M. D.

Elsie Dufresne Duffel & V. L. Duffel

Mr. & Mrs. Walter Preston

Irene Gelderman

Nancy Stafford Hartson

Katherine Walet Hartson

Deacon Maurice John Hartson, III

Gerard D. Krummel

Margaret Simmons McBride

William. G. Russell & Sam Moran Families

Mr. Joe Pastora

Mr. Kenny Pratt

Mr. & Mrs. Felix Rousset, Jr., Sr. & Rosemary

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Schafer

Wandah "Cookie" Scheuermann

Mr. Travis Taegue

Mr. Ken Teague

Lucille Bayer Vella

Mercedes & Pete Waldron



CHRISTMAS GIFT TREE FOR THE CHILDREN of ST. ALPHONSUS SCHOOL

All gifts must be returned by Next Sunday Dec. 15. The gifts can be returned to the church or to the parish office during the week.



Please return the gifts wrapped and with the name tag (ornament) attached.

You are welcome to take as many names as you would like. The value of the each gift should be between \$20 and \$25.

We would like for each child attending St. Alphonsus School to receive one gift.

Touro Hospital Needs Volunteers...

for the surgery waiting room desk, book rack for patients, assist administrative staff, gift shop, escort patients to their rooms after they have gone for tests.

For more information please email Denise Chetta at denise.chetta@touro.com or call **504-897-8107**.

Sunday Collection

Year to Date:	(11/1/13 –11/30/13)
November, 2013:	\$18,876.70
Actual Year to Date:	\$101,580.03
Budget:	\$102,083.38
Amount below Budget:	-\$503.35
Actual YTD Prior Year:	\$95,389.50

Deep gratitude to all!

Please Pray for...

Lydia R. Steele, Larry Konikoff, Jr., Paul & Claude Dupuis, Donald Henry, Meagan Sauviac, Betty Rome, Imelda Ward, Terry Baker, Terence Ibert, Jr., Emma Romsy, John W. Parham, Helen Lee Adams, Lisa Tracey, Norman Mopsik, Nick Baroni, Eric Dusang, Seth & Ian Hubbard, Brandon Isbell, Cynthia Bergeron, Barbara Bossier, Elizabeth Doell, Janice Douglas, Beth Bertucci, Ted & Susie Sternberg, Trudy Saia, Toni Tanner, Yen Nguyen, Victoria Dominique, Lisa Huber, Michael Schafer, Luke Spottswood, Adele Faucheux, Linda Faucheux, Byron Montz, Joyce Bourgeois, Margaret Dyer, Barrie Byrnes, Jack Russo, Miller Family, Lois Beyer, Francis O'Rourke, plus all sick and infirmed.

To place or keep a name on our sick list, please call the rectory every 3 weeks to let us know that you, a loved one or friend are still in need of prayers.

Electronic Giving



One new way of donating money to St. Alphonsus is electronically. This saves you having to worry about bringing money with you to church and assures that your contribution is made whether you are here on Sunday or not.

For more details please call Brother Tom Wright at 504-256-6114 or email: twrightcssr@gmail.com.

Have you included St. Alphonsus Parish and/or the Redemptorists in your will?

2014 Weekly Offering Envelopes

If you're thinking of becoming a registered parishioner of St. Alphonsus Parish now would be a good time to sign-up either by coming to the office, emailing or calling the office with your information. The parish office number is 504-522-6748.

It's very important that our information about you is correct so that your end-of year contribution letter will go to the right address.

Monday - December 9

7:00 am Brian Bensen & Family
8:00 am Our Bell Tower Donors

Tuesday - December 10

7:00 am Gay Fulton
8:00 am Joseph L. DeFelice +

Wednesday - December 11

7:00 am Eric Dusang
8:00 am Frank Chapman +

Thursday - December 12

7:00 am Redemptorists
8:00 am William G. Russell, Jr. & Sr. +

Friday - December 13

7:00 am Eloise & Charles Russell & Family
8:00 am Ed Cleneary +

Saturday - December 14

8:00 am Cecil J. Murphy, Jr. +
4:00 pm Marian Elizabeth Bolton +

Sunday - December 15

9:00 am Michele Bilognia +
10:30 am All St. Alphonsus Parishioners
June Lambert +

St. Alphonsus Parish/St. Mary's Assumption Church
Human Concerns Committee
2013 End-of-Year Report

Dear fellow parishioners,

We are pleased to provide you with an overview of your Human Concerns Committee's (HCC) activities in 2013.

1. Thanks to your generous support we conducted a monthly food drive. The service project provided non-perishable food to the needy of our parish and the clients of Hope House. In one representative period, July-October, you contributed 2,094 items and \$90.00 in cash.
2. As most of you are aware, New Orleans Catholic Workers provide an outreach dinner to those in need at Hope House every Tuesday and Thursday. This October the committee endorsed and started a second monthly service project. In this effort, committee members and other parishioners supplement Catholic Workers at their dinner for those in need on the third Thursday night of each month. We have helped serve nutritious meals to more than 30 individuals at each event.
3. Responding to an opportunity to support the Archdiocesan ACCESS Pregnancy and Referral Center ministry, the committee received \$966.00 in donations from caring parishioners during this Spring's "Baby Bottle Drive".
4. The committee was the forum through which several quality of life issues impacting our parishioners and neighbors in the River Garden area were conveyed to the highest levels of HRI Properties.
5. This Fall the HCC responded to a second call for service from the Archdiocese. Two committee members served as conveners for the Racial Harmony Workshops hosted at our parish throughout October.
6. Also this Fall the committee met a requirement from St. Alphonsus School, helping to identify prospective tutors to support after school enrichment and study programs for students.

There are two ways you can support this parish committee in 2014. First, is through your continued, thoughtful support of HCC activities and projects. Second, as always, we are looking for new members! Interested? Contact Marty Kauchak, the committee chairperson, at 504.265.8968.

Thanks to your continued support, in whatever capacity, we will be able to continue to make a positive impact in our parish, our neighborhood and city in 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

The Human Concerns Committee

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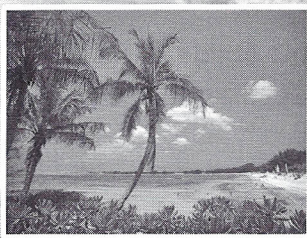
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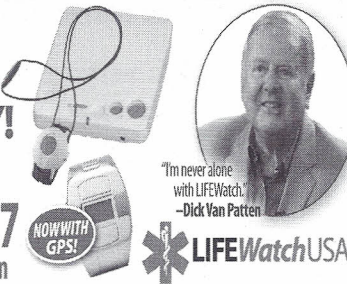


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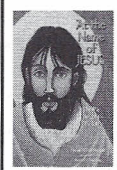
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