



December 22, 2013 • Fourth Sunday of Advent

Today's Advent scriptures invite us to recall the core meaning of Christmas before we plunge into the final frantic days of preparation. They focus on the birth of Jesus/Emmanuel, who is with us to save us here and now.

Many titles and names of Jesus converge in these readings. Together they give us a well-rounded picture of who this child is for us. Through the faithfulness of Joseph, the son of David who took Mary and Jesus into his home, Jesus can be called "son of David." Thus the birth of Jesus fulfilled the desire of Israel for an heir to the throne of David to reign as a just king. Through the power of the Holy Spirit this human son of David and king is also the divine "Son of God." Thus he is called "Emmanuel," because he is truly the presence of God with us. Finally, he was given the name "Jesus," because he came to save all people.

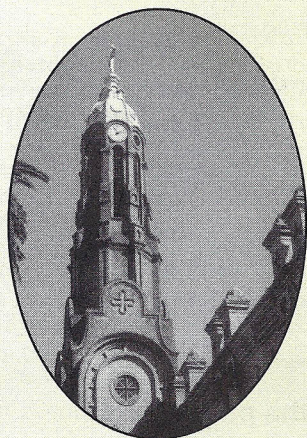
COME, EMMANUEL

These scriptures invite us to set aside our plans and lists and open our hearts to the presence of Emmanuel—as Joseph did in the Gospel. They invite us to recognize that God doesn't depend on us to make Christmas happen. God is with us to save us with or without presents and wrapping, with or without Christmas cards or cookies. Whether this Christmas finds us feeling self-sufficient, like Ahaz, or vulnerable and afraid, like Joseph and Mary, our God is with us ("Emmanuel") to save us ("Jesus"). All we really need to do before Christmas is to open our hearts for his presence to save and set us free.

Let us pray: O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God (Evening Prayer, December 23).

Today's readings: Is 7:10–14; Ps 24:1–6; Rom 1:1–7; Mt 1:18–24

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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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Parochial Vicar

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Robert Zanca

rgzuno@aol.com
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 5:00 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 was the weekend before Christmas and all through the house..." No, that's not quite how the tale goes, but it sums up this weekend quite well.

Yes, the weekend before Christmas is here. Some parish members may never read this letter because they have already left for other places to be with family and friends for Christmas Day. For others, this might be the last relatively quiet day before the Christmas festivities begin. Christmas is almost here.

We know that Christmas stirs up different things for different people. For many of us, Christmas may not be the Hallmark card type of experience but it does conjure up warm memories of the past as well as the present when family and friends gather together to celebrate Christmas in food, drink, and gifts. And Christ is born again!

For others Christmas conjures up memories that aren't so ideal. It may bring up family estrangement, arguments that constantly drag up the past or seeming inconsistencies on how one person was treated (gifted) versus another. And Christ is born again!

For still others this particular Christmas will be unique. Since the last celebration of Christmas, a loved one might have passed, an illness or loss of employment now casts a pall, or feelings of isolation may come over one without any relief in sight. And Christ is born again!

The age old Christmas Story we reflect on once again on December 25th continues to be re-enacted in life. The great parts of it... a young couple staying together despite difficult odds, a young couple celebrating the birth of a baby, a young couple having people from many places come to congratulate them...these are all part of the warm and pleasing part of the story. At the same time Christ's birth brings out some of the more challenging aspects of life...a young couple having to deal with a pregnancy that neither one of them can fully explain, a young couple having to pick up and journey to an unfamiliar area, a young couple having no place to stay when their child is about to be born.

This scenario did not happen by accident. What it means is that in the wonderful moments of life Christ continues to be born anew. For that we give thanks and celebrate his birth. What it means is that in those difficult moments of life when God seems hard to find, Christ continues to be born again.

On December 25th, as well as every other day, Christ will be born anew. The time might be different, the circumstances might be different, the principal players might be different, but one thing is never different. He is born anew. And as the old saying still reminds us, "Wise men...wise people...still seek him anew."

Thought for the week: Wishing you and your family all the blessings of a wonderful Christmas!

Fr. Richard and all the Redemptorists and parish staff

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.

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."

The New Orleans Opera's MetroPelican production of
"HANSEL AND GRETEL"

For children of all ages

Sunday, December 22, 2013

At 2:30 P.M.

**St. John the Baptist Church
1139 Oretha C. Haley Blvd.**

This delightful 45 minute version of the classic favorite introduces children to opera and continues to enchant new audiences. The fully staged and costumed reenactment of the Grimm Brothers' fairy tale is perfect for the holidays!

Sponsored by: St. Alphonsus Parish, Trinity Episcopal Church, Felicity Redevelopment, Inc. & Mount Zion Baptist Church.

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



To the parishioners of St. Alphonsus Parish: Thank you so much for your kind gift of \$5,058.00. Your heartfelt generosity means so much in the face of this terrible disaster in the Philippines right now. Please continue to pray in solidarity with the Filipino people who not only need immediate relief assistance but help for rehabilitation purposes.

May the love and protection of our Most Holy Redeemer, through the intercession of Our Mother of Perpetual Help and exemplified by your gift, continue to sustain the Philippines and all its faithful.

Fr. Harry A. Grile, C.Ss.R.
Provincial Superior
The Redemptorists

Lord Teach Me To Pray: This three part prayer series based on Ignatian Spirituality begins the week of January 19 and continues for 12 weeks. Participants pray daily with passages from scripture pertaining to a Christian virtue and then meet once a week in small groups with two trained facilitators. To find out more about days and times of offerings, and to register, go to www.lordteachmetoprayer.com or call Mrs. Carol Weiler at 504-439-5933 or Fr. Martin Gleeson at 504-717-8770.

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 Romsky, 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 Sternberg, 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.

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

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**.

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 23

7:00 am Gerard & Pam Krummel +
8:00 am The Delatte Family

Tuesday - December 24

Christmas Eve
7:00 am Lourdes C. Kelley +
8:00 am James Wagner +
4:00 pm For St. Mary's Bell Tower Donors

Wednesday - December 25

Christmas Day
10:30 am All St. Alphonsus Parishioners
Justine & Joseph Williamson +

Thursday - December 26

7:00 am Sandra Borgman
8:00 am Marian Elizabeth Bolton. +

Friday - December 27

7:00 am Mr. & Mrs. Fred Krummel +
8:00 am Flavin C. Cullerton +

Saturday - December 28

8:00 am Nicholas Pastor +
4:00 pm Joseph L. DeFelice +

Sunday - December 29

9:00 am Maude Edna Reilly Culleron +
10:30 am All St. Alphonsus Parishioners
Corinne "Lindy" Boggs +

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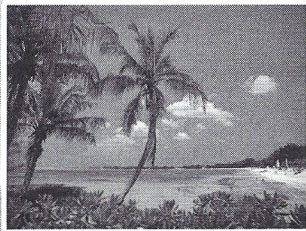
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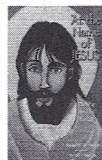


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 Prayers by Father Richard N. Fragomeni
 Hardcover book \$39.95



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