



# St. Joseph Catholic Church

Harlowton, Montana

Missions:

Blessed Sacrament, Shawmut

Immaculate Conception, Judith Gap

Father Cody Williams, Pastor

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## Second Sunday of Advent

December 7, 2025

*John's preaching of repentance is not just a fire-and-brimstone ultimatum frightening us into obedience. He preaches to prepare us to recognize the One who heals and perfects our own humanity. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And "the Kingdom of God means Christ himself" (CCC 2816). Thus, John preaches that "we might have hope" in the One who will come "with the Holy Spirit and fire," who will tame what is savage in wild beasts, who will put a halt to harm and ruin, who will decide aright for the land's afflicted. With the sure hope of all this, there is nothing more reasonable than repentance—that is, changing in us whatever keeps us from saying yes to the love of God*

*He shall judge the poor with justice.*

**First Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10** *1There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots 2And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 3And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; 4but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. 5Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins. 6The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. 7The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. 9They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. 10In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious.*

**Psalms 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17** **R/ Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.**

*1Give the king thy justice, O God, and thy righteousness to the royal son! 2May he judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with justice! 7In his days may righteousness flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more! 8May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth! 12For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. 13He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. 17May his name endure for ever, his fame continue as long as the sun! May men bless themselves by him, all nations call him blessed!*

*Christ saves everyone.*

**Second Reading: Romans 15:4-9** *4For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. 5May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, 6that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. 8For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, 9and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise thee among the Gentiles, and sing to thy name"*

**Alleluia**, Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all flesh shall see the salvation of God. **Alleluia**  
*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!*

**Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12** 1In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” 3For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” 4Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair, and a leather girdle around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5They went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan, 6and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 7But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sad’ducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8Bear fruit that befits repentance, 9and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 10Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 11‘I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 12His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

**12:00 noon Sunday Mass at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Harlowton, MT.**

**Daily Mass on Thursdays at noon at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Harlowton, MT.**

**\*\*\*Confessions before Sunday Mass beginning at 11:30 am or by appointment. Please join us to pray the rosary for our nation and community 1/2 hour before Sunday Mass.**

**Sunday Mass at 9 am at St. Bartholomew, White Sulphur Springs & 4:30pm at Holy Cross, Townsend.**

**\*\*\*Eucharistic Adoration on Thursdays – join us anytime between 12:30–3:30 pm.**

**Youth Group meets each Thursday from 7 to 8:30 pm.**

**Please join us for our monthly parish potlucks on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Mass - 12/28/25; 1/25/26; 2/22/26**

**Please pray for our seminarians:**

Riley Helgoe  
Bret Rotz  
Carter Anderson  
James Semling  
Ryan Frampton

Jake Smith  
Anthony Olmes  
Shae Bills  
Carson Gorton  
Mason Yochum

Dcn. Kaleb Mitchell  
Jamie Severson  
Matt Keck  
Liam Aippersbach,

Congratulations to Fr. Dillon Armstrong on his ordination to the priesthood! Please keep him in your prayers.

**Mark Your Calendars:**

**Monday, Dec. 8th, is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. We will celebrate Mass at 12:00 pm. This is a Holy Day of Obligation.**

**If interested in helping/participating in the Christmas season’s music for Mass, please contact Julie Wojtowick.**

**The notes for the Church Fathers series are available on the info table at the front of the church as well as on our website. No Church Fathers series on Thursday, Dec. 11th.**

**Christmas Mass will be on Christmas Eve at 8:30 pm.**

**The next Chosen Movie night is this Thursday, Dec. 11th, at 7 pm at the Harlowton Theater. We are hosting this month so please invite people to come.**

**Calendars are available on the info table at the entrance to the church.**

**Thank you to everyone for helping sell tickets for the raffle.**

**As the winter season approaches, just a quick reminder. If you would like to receive texts or emails about Mass cancellations due to weather, please send your phone number or email address to [stjosephmt@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephmt@gmail.com).**

**Father Cody’s Corner: Basics of Catholicism Part 113: All Male Priesthood**

Often when we ponder the ruling that only men can be priests, we focus only on Jesus and assume that we know what he wants and what he is doing. In order for us to appreciate the larger context of this desire of Jesus, we need to expand our thinking into the larger context of Christianity, the Old Testament.

As almost everyone knows, the priests of the Old Testament were only male. The Books of Law do not allow women to become priests. The most common argument for this restriction is the patriarchal nature of that time. Yet, if we take a moment to wander through the Old Testament, the role of men and women get blurred. Women could be judges and prophets. We have several

examples throughout the Book of Judges and into the historical books of women taking on a prominent roles in Israel. The Judge Deborah counseled the leaders of Israel and brought them back to the right worship of God. The prophetess Judith, from the Book of Judith, commanded the leaders of the army to come to her for counsel. Some of the queens of Israel had greater power than their husbands. The traditions of Judaism were passed down from the mothers not the fathers. No role for women was greater than the Queen Mother. The mother of the king held a role unparalleled in Israelite society. She could influence the decisions of the king and it was understood that he would obey her requests. Women played an incredibly important role in the functioning of Jewish society and were allowed to hold places of honor and importance in society.

With all these roles and places of prominence for women, Jewish law still forbade women from entering the priesthood and we have no evidence of women priests on any level. This short purview into Jewish society is valuable for us. God established the laws for Israel and he established them as perpetual laws. Jesus, who is God, if he overturned or changed these laws, then everyone would understand him to be false. God's laws do not change. Therefore, we should understand and expect that the laws governing priesthood of the Old Testament would carry forward into the New Testament.

To further emphasize my point, Jesus' "rite" for ordaining his priests – the washing of the feet and the Last Supper – mirrors the ordination rite of the Old Testament. They would start by washing their feet (and their entire bodies but mainly the feet), they would then be clothed in new garments (the blood of Jesus) and then be fed a meal of the sacrificed animal (the eating of the Last Supper and the Body and Blood of Jesus). Clearly Jesus is showing a continuation between the priesthood of the Old Covenant and the priesthood of the New Covenant. We simply have so many examples of Jesus' desire to continue the laws of the Old Testament and continue the all-male priesthood that we simply cannot change this ruling. Yet, now we have a more exciting task before us: why did Jesus choose an all-male priesthood? ~ Fr. Cody

### **Kingdom Come: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Second Sunday in Advent**

[Listen Here: Kingdom Come: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Second Sunday in Advent - St. Paul Center](#)

Readings: Isaiah 11:1–10; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 12–13, 17; Romans 15:4–9; Matthew 3:1–12

"The kingdom of heaven is at hand," John proclaims. And the Liturgy today paints us a vivid portrait of our new king and the shape of the kingdom He has come to bring.

The Lord whom John prepares the way for in today's Gospel is the righteous king prophesied in today's First Reading and Psalm. He is the king's son, the son of David—a shoot from the root of Jesse, David's father (see Ruth 4:17).

He will be the Messiah, anointed with the Holy Spirit (see 2 Samuel 23:1; 1 Kings 1:39; Psalm 2:2), endowed with the seven gifts of the Spirit—wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

He will rule with justice, saving the poor from the ruthless and wicked. His rule will be not only over Israel—but will extend from sea to sea, to the ends of the earth. He will be a light, a signal to all nations. And they will seek Him and pay Him homage.

In Him, all the tribes of the earth will find blessing. The covenant promise to Abraham (see Genesis 12:3), renewed in God's oath to David (see Psalm 89:4,28), will be fulfilled in His dynasty. And His name will be blessed forever.

In Christ, God confirms His oath to Israel's patriarchs, Paul tells us in today's Epistle. But no longer are God's promises reserved solely for the children of Abraham. The Gentiles, too, will glorify God for His mercy. Once strangers, in Christ they will be included in "the covenants of promise" (see Ephesians 2:12).

John delivers this same message in the Gospel. Once God's chosen people were hewn from the rock of Abraham (see Isaiah 51:1–2). Now, God will raise up living stones (see 1 Peter 2:5)—children of Abraham born not of flesh and blood but of the Spirit.

This is the meaning of the fiery baptism He brings—making us royal heirs of the kingdom of heaven, the Church.

~ Dr. Scott Hahn

### **Suggested Prayer of the Faithful page 94 December Magnificat**

*(Each local community should compose its own Universal Prayer but may find inspiration in the texts proposed here.)*

**Let us offer our petitions to the Eternal Father, who sent Saint John the Baptist to announce the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We turn to him with our needs:**

*For the renewal of the Church: that the Lord may sanctify her during this holy season of Advent.*

*For our nation: that the Lord may guide the minds of those who govern, in order to promote the common good and assure justice for all.*

*For our parish community: that the Lord may draw us together in and through the sacramental life of the Church.*

*For the mass media, especially Christian channels of communication: that the faithful may work to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ in charity and truth.*

*For the poor, the sick, the homeless, the unemployed, the addicted, the lonely, and those who are ensnared in sin: that they may receive the grace of endurance and encouragement to remain firm in hope.*

*For the grace of repentance and for freedom from all that impedes our readiness for the kingdom of heaven.*

**Heavenly Father, Saint John the Baptist preached repentance and the coming of Jesus Christ, your Son. Grant that, having welcomed his message of salvation, we may be found worthy to enter your kingdom. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **Intercessions** page 97 December Magnificat

***Our promised Savior is the tree of life, and we the branches. To him we pray:  
R/ Care for your people, Lord!***

***For the Church:***

***– that we may bear the fruit of life for all the world. R/***

***For those who pastor the Church:***

***– that they may water and prune in fidelity to the Gospel. R/***

***For those who have died:***

***– that they may flourish in your everlasting garden. R/***

***Personal intentions***

***Our Father....***

***God of mercy, you send the herald's voice to make us ready for your coming. May we always hear and heed this voice.***

***Through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.***

## **MEDITATION OF THE DAY** The Advent Witness of John the Baptist page 103-104 December Magnificat

*Mother Church places John the Baptist before her children precisely as we are preparing for Christmas for a good reason.... His life and message remind us that Advent is not yet Christmas—that this penitential time leads to joy only if we heed its message. John the Baptist—who leaped for joy in his mother's womb—is joy's perfect messenger because he shows us its necessary elements: repentance, humility, and sacrifice.*

*First, repentance. We confuse joy with pleasure. [But] Christian joy is something deeper and more lasting.... It is spiritual, not physical, something that does not depend on things outside of us but in fact works from the inside out. It can coincide with physical and even deep emotional suffering. Most of all, it comes about not because we get our own way but because God's will is accomplished in us. In short, it comes from union with him.... Thus John's message of repentance...prompts us to leave sin behind and conform our wills to God's, to reestablish union with him, our exceeding joy (Ps 43:4) Indeed, the mere knowledge of the possibility of being forgiven already causes rejoicing. The only sorrow greater than sin is not having a way out of it.... John's call to repentance announces the One Who alone can free us....*

*Second, humility.... Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan went out to see him, and yet John directed all the attention, honor, and reverence to our Lord.... His parting words say it all: He must increase, but I must decrease (Jn 3:30).... Humility means to surrender our own space, not to be concerned about our ego, our own little world. Pride refuses the Lord entry out of fear of not having its own way. Humility rejoices in God—and therefore in all circumstances....*

*Finally, sacrifice. John's asceticism is the first thing we notice about him. He did not live for this world. He was not out to make a name for himself, to become wealthy or popular or even comfortable. His life was constantly being surrendered as a witness to Christ.... John the Baptist shows that we attain joy only by the giving of ourselves, by renouncing ourselves and our own desires in the gift of self to another. This renunciation witnesses to the truth of higher, even eternal, goods.... John the Baptist extends to us the truest joy—that of being in union with our Lord, experiencing his increase in our hearts, and serving him generously. ~ Father Paul Scalia Father Scalia is a priest in the diocese of Arlington, Virginia, where he serves as Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and the pastor of Saint James in Falls Church.*

## **Intercessions** page 107 December Magnificat

***In preparation for the Lord's coming, let us pray:***

***R/ Let your glory fill the earth!***

***Strengthen the weak, save the lives of the poor, rescue the oppressed: R/***

***Find those who seek you, reward those who await you, bless those who serve you: R/***

***Gather those who are scattered, comfort those who are lonely, come to those who are dying: R/***

***Personal intentions***

***Our Father....***

***When our Redeemer comes again in glory, may he bring us everlasting life! Amen.***

***Marian Antiphon***

