

# St. Joseph Catholic Church

Harlowton, Montana

Missions:

Blessed Sacrament, Shawmut

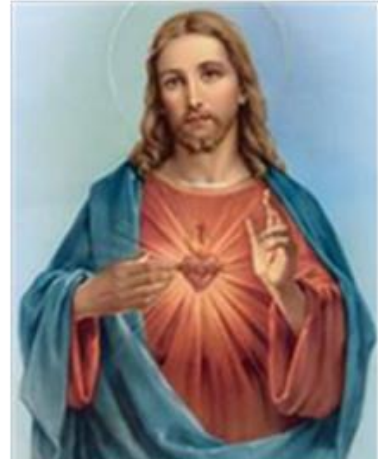
Immaculate Conception, Judith Gap

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## Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time June 16, 2024

*The heart of God aches to “tear off a tender shoot” from a mighty cedar and “plant it on a high and lofty mountain” so that “birds of every kind shall dwell beneath it.” That is, the Lord wants to reveal his glory by taking up our insignificance and turning it into something “majestic” by the power of his love. “God’s Kingdom,” Pope Francis said, “is above all the initiative and gift of the Lord. Our weak effort, seemingly small before the complexity of the problems of the world, when integrated with God’s effort, fears no difficulty. The victory of the Lord is certain.... This opens us up to trust and hope, despite the tragedies, the injustices, the sufferings that we encounter.” When we “walk by faith, not by sight,” the hidden depths of things become apparent, and we remain vigorous and sturdy, “bearing fruit even in old age.”*

*I have lifted high the lowly tree.*

**First Reading: Ezekiel 17:22-24** *22Thus says the Lord GOD: “I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar, and will set it out; I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I myself will plant it upon a high and lofty mountain; 23on the mountain height of Israel will I plant it, that it may bring forth boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar; and under it will dwell all kinds of beasts; in the shade of its branches birds of every sort will nest. 24And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD bring low the high tree, and make high the low tree, dry up the green tree, and make the dry tree flourish. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.”*

**Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 92:2-3, 13-16**

**R: Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.**

*1It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to thy name, O Most High; 2to declare thy steadfast love in the morning, and thy faithfulness by night, 12The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13They are planted in the house of the LORD, they flourish in the courts of our God. 14They still bring forth fruit in old age, they are ever full of sap and green, 15to show that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*

*Whether we are at home or away, we aspire to please the Lord.*

**Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10:6** *So we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.*

**Alleluia, Alleluia:** *The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower.  
All who come to him will live for ever. Alleluia, Alleluia.*

*It is the smallest of all seeds, and becomes the largest of plants.*

**Gospel: Mark 4:26-34** **26**And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, **27**and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. **28**The earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. **29**But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." **30**And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? **31**It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; **32**yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." **33**With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; **34**he did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

**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.**

**Mass on Thursday, July 4<sup>th</sup> & July 11<sup>th</sup> is cancelled.**

**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.**

**After Mass socials on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of every month 6/23/24: 7/28/24; 8/25/24**

**RE is on Thursdays. High school group is the same time & material as the Catholicism 101 series.**

### **Please pray for our seminarians:**

Riley Helgoe

Kaleb Mitchell

Jamie Severson

Matt Keck

Mark Bruschwein

Dillon Armstrong

Bret Rotz

Carter Anderson

James Semling

John Cooney

Anthony Olmes

Shae Bills

Lane Buus

### **Mark Your Calendars:**

**If you are interested in going on a pilgrimage, we will have an informational meeting on Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm.**

The evangelization grant application through the Diocese is open. I wish for us to apply for this grant again this year. If you have any ideas of how to spread the message of Jesus to our community through our church, please let Fr. Cody know.

#### **Help needed:**

I would like some help taking some stuff to the dump. If anyone has a truck they are willing to bring to the church on a Thursday, we can load it and unload it at the dump. We need to get these things to the dump.

**Anointing of the Sick Mass is scheduled for Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>. If you would like to receive the Anointing of the Sick, you must contact Fr. Cody in advance. The Anointing of the Sick is limited to those with serious medical conditions including: new diagnoses, surgery, serious effects of old age, chronic conditions getting worse, and other medical conditions. Those who wish to receive the Anointing of the Sick are highly encouraged to go to Confession before receiving the Sacrament. If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Cody.**

**Harlowton Ministerial Community BBQ, Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup> from 5-7 pm at Chief Joseph Park.**

## Father Cody's Corner: Basics of Catholicism Part 44: Christmas

The Season of Christmas is the second shortest liturgical season of the year. Depending on the calendar it can be anywhere between 2 weeks and 3 weeks long. The season of Christmas begins on Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup> and concludes with the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. The basic structure of the Season is complicated. Christmas is always on December 25<sup>th</sup> and the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God is always on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The Sunday between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> is the Feast of the Holy Family, unless January 1<sup>st</sup> is on a Sunday. Then the Feast of the Holy Family is on the previous Friday. The Sunday after January 1<sup>st</sup> is The Feast of Epiphany. Some Dioceses choose to celebrate the Feast of Epiphany on the traditional date of January 6<sup>th</sup>. Thus, there are 12 days between Christmas and Epiphany. If Epiphany is later than January 7<sup>th</sup>, then the Baptism of our Lord is on the Monday after Epiphany. Otherwise, the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord is on the Sunday after Epiphany.

With all those confusing dates and changes out of the way, let's focus on the core characteristics of this season and its principal feasts. The color for the Christmas season is white. The focal point of the season is obvious: the birth of Jesus. Everything in this season focuses on and explains the central event in salvation history of Jesus becoming human. A subtle point that many people do not realize is that the season of Christmas directs our attention to Easter. Themes throughout the prayers, some hymns, and many of the feasts draw our attention to the impending crucifixion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus as the reason for this birth.

### The Octave of Christmas

The Octave of Christmas, or the eight days between Christmas and Mary, Mother of God, is the strangest octave of the year. Whereas the Octave of Easter is quite simple with each day being a day of Easter and no other celebrations allowed, Christmas is the opposite. The day after Christmas we celebrate the martyrdom of St. Stephen, the first martyr in the Church. Hence, Jesus' birth led to the first person to witness to his coming by his blood. The second day of the Octave is the feast of John the Apostle. The only Apostle not to be martyred. The third day of the Octave is the Feast of the Holy Innocents commemorating the death of those 2 years old and younger caused by Herod's desire to kill the Messiah. Two minor saints are celebrated within this octave. The Octave of Christmas is filled with the effects of Jesus' birth and a reflection on the influence his birth had on the world.

The most striking part of the Octave of Christmas is the readings at daily Mass. For the entirety of the Christmas Season we read through the letters of St. John. These letters beautifully reflect on the mystery of Jesus' birth and the practical reality that we could touch, see, and hear God. ~ Fr. Cody

### A Prayer For Fathers

Heavenly Father, you entrusted your Son Jesus, the child of Mary, to the care of Joseph, an earthly father. Bless all fathers as they care for their families. Give them strength and wisdom, tenderness and patience; support them in the work they have to do, protecting those who look to them, as we look to you for love and salvation, through Jesus Christ our rock and defender. Amen.

### Tree of Righteousness: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: [Ezekiel 17:22-24](#); [Psalm 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16](#); [2 Corinthians 5:6-10](#); [Mark 4:26-34](#)

In the cryptic message of the prophet Ezekiel, long centuries before the Lord's coming, God gave His people reason to hope. Ezekiel glimpsed a day when the Lord God would place a tree on a mountain in Israel, a tree that would "put forth branches and bear fruit." Who could have predicted that the tree would be a cross on the hill of Calvary, and that the fruit would be salvation?

Ezekiel foresees salvation coming to "birds of every kind"—thus, not just to the people of Israel, but also to the Gentiles, who will "take wing" through their new life in Christ. God indeed will "lift high the lowly tree," as He solemnly promises.

Such salvation surpasses humanity's most ambitious dreams. And so we express our gratitude in the Psalm: "Lord, it is good to give thanks to you." It is indeed good, and better still to give thanks with praise. The Psalmist speaks of those who are just upon the earth, but looks to God as the source and measure of justice, of righteousness. Like Ezekiel, he evokes the image of a flourishing tree to describe the lives of the just. The image, again, suggests the Cross as the measure of righteousness.

The Cross is a sign of contradiction to those who would rather "flourish" in worldly terms. As St. Paul emphasizes to the Corinthians, we need courage. Our faith makes us strong, and it is proved in our deeds. He reminds us that we will be judged by the ways our faith manifests itself in works: "so that each may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil."

God Himself will empower the works He expects from us, though we freely choose to correspond to His grace. In the prophetic oracles, He scattered the seed that sprang up and became the mustard tree, large enough to accommodate all the birds of the sky, just as Ezekiel had seen. He gave this doctrine to His disciples in terms they were able to understand, and He provided a full explanation. In the sacraments He provides still more: the grace of faith and the courage we need to live in the world as children of God.

~ Dr. Scott Hahn

**Suggested Prayer of the Faithful** (Each local community should compose its own Universal Prayer but may find inspiration in the texts proposed here.) **page 248 June Magnificat**

**With all our difficulties and needs, we come before the Father, full of confidence:**

*That the Church will stand before the world without stain or blemish, holy and obedient to God's Word.*

*That those who hold public office will imitate the goodness of God, who secures justice and the rights of the oppressed. That divisions and hatred will be healed, violence will cease, and the peace and justice of God's kingdom will reign in every nation on earth.*

*For the sick and those who care for them: that God in his mercy will draw them close to him and raise them up.*

*For all fathers on this Father's Day: may they be strengthened to love their wives and children with the love of Christ for his Church.*

*For the grace this week to live fruitful lives, attentive to the Gospel and receptive to God's grace.*

**Most merciful Father, it is good to proclaim your kindness and faithfulness. Keep us always faithful; may we always aspire to please you. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Intercessions** pages 251 June Magnificat

**The Lord is our one sure defense. We implore him:**

**R/ Defend us in battle!**

*When we are about to lose courage,*

*– make us know your power. R/*

*When we see injustice,*

*– give us the wisdom and strength to protect the weak. R/*

*When popular opinion contradicts God's law,*

*– make us unafraid to stand up for the truth. R/*

**Personal intentions Our Father....**

**Almighty Father, you are our strength in the fight against evil. Guard us against all the deceits of the enemy, that we may serve you in this world and in the next. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**



## Montana Catholics For Life

For Babies For Mothers For Families

“Every child that arrives is God's gift. Every baby, in every case, and in whatever situation is to be welcomed,” *Pope Francis via video, Love Brightens the World's Darkness, 2021.*

Families are sacred. They are the domestic church and the most significant factor in helping determine the lifelong flourishing of each member, children and parents alike. Part of the reason for this is that they know how to lovingly meet challenges together, including the challenge of an unplanned pregnancy. They understand that rallying to support a new mother is a true expression of love and that her life as a mother will be deeply fulfilling and enriching.

Motherhood, even if unplanned, is a gift to women, their children, families, and all of society. It is not a prescription for certain failure or poverty, and it is certainly not a “problem” that needs to be solved by taking the life of a child through abortion. Families know this and throughout history have supported mothers with unplanned pregnancies.

CI-128 would enshrine abortion in the State Constitution of Montana eliminating regulations by rendering them unconstitutional. This includes the current requirement for parental notification when a minor obtains an abortion. This change is unacceptable as it eliminates a young mother's very best chance of flourishing in life by creating a barrier of secrecy between her and her family. Mothers deserve better in Montana. Please continue to pray and spread the word - decline to sign the petition to place Constitutional Initiative 128 (CI-128) on the November ballot.

### Life-affirming Resources

- Expectant Mother/Parent Counseling
- Adoption
- Pregnancy Resources
- Post Abortion Help
- Help for Mothers and Babies in Need
- Prayers for Life

### From Montana's Bishops

Joint Letter and Video:

Stand for Life in  
Montana

