



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE EARTH SHALL BE FILLED WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD,
AS WATER COVERS THE SEA.

DECEMBER 9, 2007

— Isaiah 11:9

PREPARE THE WAY

Saint John the Baptist appears on the scene today as Advent enters its second week. The mysterious consumer of locusts and wild honey, John echoes the words of the prophet Isaiah as he calls for repentance in the face of the nearness of the kingdom of heaven. The rhythms of the Christian life are often confounding. Each year we meet the Baptist and hear his calls for repentance. Each year we see him pointing to the one who is coming after him, the Lord Jesus. Yet each year the words and actions of John the Baptist echo anew in our hearts, because we have fallen into old sinful traps again and again. Advent gives us the opportunity once again to turn away from our sinful ways and embrace the gospel way of life. John the Baptist invites us to prepare the way for the Lord, in whom we place our hope.

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PARISH Penance LITURGY MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 7:00P.M.

As we prepare for Christmas in so many ways, let us remember that the spiritual peace and healing that come from the Sacrament of Reconciliation are awaiting us. This service will include scripture readings, examination of conscience and individual confessions.

ATTENTION LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Please provide your non-availability dates for the months of January and February by December 17. You may email the information to csaiza@stmatthewlb.org or call 562.491.1217 and leave a message.

BREAD SALE NEXT WEEKEND

Our Peace and Justice Ministry will sponsor a bread sale next weekend after all the Masses. A simple and effective way for all of us to support the wonderful efforts this ministry provides throughout the year.

ELECTRONIC GIVING

A great way to start off the New Year!

Would you find it helpful to have your offerings debited directly from your bank account as you do other monthly drafts? St. Matthew Church now offers Electronic Giving for those of you who wish to have your contributions transferred electronically to the church's account. If you travel, this is particularly helpful in keeping up with your intended offerings. It allows you to avoid having to make up the difference later. If this program sounds like something that will simplify your life, you may contact the parish office to receive the necessary authorization forms.

COLLECTION SUNDAY FOR RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Did you know that 19,521 religious have less than 20% of the amount projected for retirement and health care? Please share in the care of those women and men religious whose ministry has nourished our own faith, served our church, and strengthened our nation. Their institutes face critical economic challenges as the costs of health care escalate and as the need for handicapped-accessible housing increases. Please give generously. Envelopes are located in the pews today.

HELP COMUNIDAD HELP KIDS FEEL HAPPY

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas and **today** you will hear Comunidad bell ringers asking for donations to help make Christmas special for parish families in need. Donations will be collected after all the Masses this weekend and next weekend. The money collected will be distributed to parish families through our Long Beach Catholic Charities organization. Families requesting assistance may receive referral information from the "bell ringers" or from our parish office.

Thank you for your past generosity in making Christmas a joyous occasion for *all* St. Matthew parishioners!

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

This Wednesday, December 12 we will celebrate the traditional and solemn Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The celebration will include Mañanitas at 4:30 a.m., Mass at 5:00 a.m., procession at 7:00 p.m. and Mass at 7:15p.m. followed by a reception in the parish hall. All liturgies will be in Spanish.

MANNA MEALS

A group of parishioners are planning to make and serve 100 bag lunches every other month for the *Manna Meals Program* which feeds the homeless and hungry at St. Luke's Church. The cost for this is approximately \$100 and we hope St. Matthew's community will support this endeavor with food and/or financial donations. Today we will be collecting food and monetary gifts to get ready for our first lunch program on Dec. 15. We need peanut butter, jam, small bags of chips, individual boxes or bag juices, Bear Creek soup starter, saltine crackers, or monetary donations for us to use to purchase bags etc. For more information or to volunteer your help, please call Claire at 597.4030.