

TODAY'S READINGS

Comfort, give comfort to my people. (Isaiah 40:1)
The people of Israel were in crisis. Their Temple in Jerusalem had been burned to the ground. Their king had been taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. And most of the population had been forced out of their homes and sent into exile. Everything they treasured about their role as God's holy people was taken away from them, and it left them traumatized, distressed, and despairing.

Into this sad situation, God told his prophet to speak words of comfort and tenderness to his people. Don't be afraid! The Lord is coming! He's going to gather you all together, as a shepherd gathers his sheep, and bring you back home. So get ready to welcome him and his deliverance.

Like the Israelites, we all need comfort from God. None of us is free from the sadness that can come from life in this world. It could be the pain of an illness, the wound from a broken relationship, or the challenge of unemployment or financial stress.

No matter what we are facing, God wants to comfort us. He wants to speak tenderly to our hearts and tell us that he is with us. And more than anything else, he wants to tell us that Jesus, who is "God with us," has opened heaven for us. We don't have to endure our challenges on our own. We don't have to go through this life doing nothing but trying our best and hoping for better days. We have access to the grace and comfort, the power and wisdom of God himself!

So no matter how difficult or demanding life may seem, let these truths bring you comfort. Remember that nothing prevented Jesus from coming two thousand years ago and that nothing will prevent him from coming again to bring heaven down to earth. And finally, remember that even as we wait for that time, nothing can prevent Jesus from coming into our hearts right now and comforting us with his love.

"Lord, I need you comfort. Fill me with your joy and peace. Teach me how to open my heart to you. Jesus, I love you!"

Taken from *The Word Among Us*, Advent 2011, Vol. 31, Number 1: Used with permission.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Sunday 4th Is 40:1-5,9-11 / 2 Pt 3:8-14/ Mk 1:1-8
Second Sunday of Advent

Monday 5th Is 35:1-10 / Lk 5:17-26

Tuesday 6th Is 40:1-11 / Mt 18:12-14
St. Nicholas

Wednesday 7th Is 40:25-31 / Mt 11:28-30
St. Ambrose

Thursday 8th Gn 3:9-15,20 / Eph 1:3-6,11-12 / Lk 1:26-38
The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Friday 9th Is 48:17-19 / Mt 11:16-19
St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin

Saturday 10th Sir 48:1-4,9-11 / Mt 17:9,10-13

Sunday 11th Is 61:1-2,10-11 / 1 Thes 5:16-24 / Jn 1:6-8,19-28
Third Sunday of Advent

LAS LECTURAS DE HOY

Cuarenta años estuvieron peregrinando por el desierto los hijos de Abraham hasta que aprendieron a confiar en Dios. Jesús también fue al desierto a orar y ayunar en preparación para su ministerio público (Marcos 1,12-13).

Pero ¿qué es el desierto? Es, en realidad, aquella condición estéril, seca e inhóspita de nuestra antigua vida de pecado y separación de Dios; es esa parte de uno que quiere permanecer rebelde e indomable, sin entregarse a Dios.

La buena noticia es que no hay que esperar a haber vencido o dominado el desierto de la naturaleza humana antes de acercarnos a Cristo. De hecho, es al revés. Tenemos que dejar primero que Jesús entre en el desierto personal del corazón humano

y Él lo irá transformando gradualmente.

El Señor nos invita al desierto de nuestra propia vida y así, al adentrarnos en aquellos lugares oscuros e inhóspitos, seguramente nos sorprenderemos de encontrarlo allí mismo, esperándonos. Jesús está en aquellos sitios en los que nos sentimos más abandonados e improductivos, y nos ofrece su curación y restauración. Cristo está allí, listo para quitar las malezas y convertir el suelo reseco del desierto en un jardín verde y frondoso y llenarlo con hermosas flores y todo tipo de frutos de dulce sabor.

El Señor ya nos perdonó, ya pagó el precio por nuestros pecados; todo lo que necesitamos hacer ahora es correr a su lado para pedirle perdón y sanación. Él enderezará el camino y quitará los obstáculos. Aprovechemos el Sacramento de la Reconciliación para experimentar el perdón de una manera positiva y concreta. Has de saber que cuando confieses tus pecados y recibas la seguridad del perdón de Dios, experimentarás el abrazo reconfortante de Jesús y podrás empezar una vida nueva de paz y pureza.

"Gracias, Jesús mío, por estar dispuesto a entrar en mi desierto, regarlo y limpiarlo. Ayúdame a estar más consciente de mis faltas, para que te las presente y reciba tu perdón. Amén."

Escogida con el permiso de *La Palabra Entre Nosotros*, Vol. 31, Número 6: Adviento 2011.

HOSPITALITY MINISTERS NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS!

To current and prospective ministers of hospitality, will you please help us this Christmas? If you can volunteer for a Mass on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, please sign up in one of the books at the Cathedral entrance, or contact us at 202-587-5143 or Reply@stmatthewscathedral.org.

Many thanks!

HIGHLIGHTS THIS WEEK

FIND THE PERFECT GIFT

Be a part of the New Evangelization: *Find the Perfect Gift* is an Advent initiative of the Archdiocese of Washington that invites Catholics to share with neighbors and friends an invitation to consider the great gift of God in sending his Son to earth. When someone asks you about the campaign share with them the link to the website findthepperfectgift.org and regaloperfecto.org and share with them the difference a relationship with Our Lord makes in your life. Be a star—lead others to Him.



SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Thursday, **December 8** is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Holy Day of Obligation. Masses will be at 5:30pm (Vigil) on Wednesday, **December 7**, and at 7am, 8am, 11am, 12:10pm, 5:30pm and 7pm (Spanish) on **December 8**. All are welcome to join us for this feast that is so fittingly celebrated during Advent. “The feast of the pure and sinless Conception of the Virgin Mary, which is a fundamental preparation for the Lord’s coming into the world, harmonizes perfectly with many of the salient themes of Advent. This feast also makes references to the long messianic waiting for the Saviour’s birth and recalls events and prophecies from the Old Testament, which also are used in the Liturgy of Advent.” (*Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, 102)

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

All are welcome to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe here at the Cathedral on Sunday, **December 11** at the 1pm Spanish Mass, followed by refreshments and music in the West Conference Room.

Bishop Francisco González will celebrate a Mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Saturday, **December 10** at 2:30pm at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (400 Michigan Ave., NE). The procession from the Shrine of the Sacred Heart (3211 Pine St., NW) to the Basilica will begin at 12 Noon. For more information, contact Manuel Aliaga at the archdiocesan Office of Hispanic Pastoral Affairs at 301-853-4567.

CHRISTMAS MAILING

We invite you to help with our annual Christmas mailing to the Cathedral Friends on Tuesday, **December 6** in the North Conference Room at 6pm, immediately after the 5:30pm Mass. Call 202-587-5143 or email us at Reply@stmatthewscathedral.org to sign up. Thank you!

CATHEDRAL CALENDAR

December 4 – December 11

SUNDAY—Second Sunday of Advent

A second collection for Cathedral maintenance is taken at all Masses.

Hospitality receptions are held in the North Conference Room following all Masses except the 7am Mass.

Las clases de Catecumenado y Catequesis Familiar continúan a las 11:00 de la mañana.

MONDAY—The Parish Council meets at 6:45pm in the East Conference Room.

TUESDAY—Las Reflexiones de Adviento continúan hoy a las 7 de la tarde en el salón de conferencias del Oeste.

The Friends of the Cathedral Christmas envelope stuffing is held at 6pm in the North Conference Room.

WEDNESDAY—Breaking Open the Word meets at 7pm in the West Conference Room.

The Vigil Mass for the **Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary** is celebrated at 5:30pm.

THURSDAY—**Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, a Holy Day of Obligation.

Masses are celebrated at 7am, 8am, 11am, 12:10, 5:30pm and 7pm (in Spanish).

SUNDAY—Third Sunday of Advent - Gaudete Sunday

A second collection to benefit the retirement for Religious is taken at all Masses.

Las clases de Catecumenado y Catequesis Familiar continúan a las 11:00 de la mañana.

Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe durante la misa de español y después en el salón de conferencias del Oeste.

Lessons and Carols is held in the Cathedral at 7:30pm, followed by a sing-along in the Great Hall.

YOUNG ADULTS

PIZZA SUNDAY - Sunday, December 4 – After

5:30pm Mass - North Conference Room – Please join the Cathedral Young Adults (C+YA) for free food and fellowship after the 5:30pm Sunday Mass. Contact Carolyn at cawait.10@gmail.com or Jillian at jillian.mcmahon@gmail.com with any questions.

C+YA MINISTRY MEETING - Sunday, December 11 –

4 to 5pm – Cathedral (Room TBA) - All are welcome to meet and discuss the Cathedral Young Adult ministry, share ideas, and plan upcoming activities. Contact Carolyn or Jillian (above) for more information.

CATHEDRAL YOUNG ADULTS GOOGLE GROUP &

EMAILS – Want to stay up-to-date on all of the C+YA events and activities? Check out our Google group:<http://groups.google.com/group/StMatts-YAM>. Join and you'll automatically get the email updates.

NEWS & NOTES

SCREENING OF *CATHOLICISM* SERIES

The Catholic Information Center (1501 K Street, NW) announces screenings of the 10-part *Catholicism* series by acclaimed author, speaker and theologian Fr. Robert Barron on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm through February 1. Fr. Barron recently lectured at the Cathedral on evangelizing today's society.

CATHEDRAL CLUB NEWS

The Cathedral Club will hold its Christmas Brunch at Front Page (1333 New Hampshire Ave. NW) on Sunday, **December 11** from 1 until 3pm. There will be no regular December meeting. For information, contact Mary Latka at 202-232-3261.

THANK YOU FOR GIVING!

Thank you to the many parishioners who gave so generously to the Adopt-A-Family grocery gift card Thanksgiving project!! Your donations made it possible to provide the 35 low-income families in our program the support needed to create or sustain their families' special Thanksgiving meal traditions. Thank you for giving from the heart and helping to fill the pots and plates of so many neighbors in need. Your response reflects the true spirit of the holiday!

GIVING TREE REMINDER

Thanks to all who are participating in our Giving Tree this year. If you have taken a Giving Tree tag from the tree, please be sure to bring your new, unwrapped gift back to St. Matthew's not later than **December 12**. Many thanks for your generosity.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

During Advent, a season of waiting, conversion and hope, we have the opportunity to reflect upon the many blessings of the Lord, particularly those graces experienced at St. Matthew's. We rely upon your gracious generosity, which enable us to help build up the Kingdom of God in our parish and our community. Please use the envelope in your offertory packet or in the pews marked "Christmas Offering." We sincerely appreciate your generosity and pray that this Christmas brings many blessings to you and your loved ones.

CHRISTMAS FLOWER OFFERINGS

Each year every effort is made to decorate the Cathedral for Christmas in a way that truly reflects the noble simplicity of that holy season. In order to do so again, your generous support is requested. Please use the envelopes marked "Flower Offering" located in the pews. We know that many requests are made this season, and so truly appreciate any assistance you can give.

FAITH FORMATION

BOOK CLUB: *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*

All are invited to join the St. Matthew's Book Club for its next meeting Monday, **December 12**. The club will discuss Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, perhaps the most famous Christmas related novel ever produced. They will explore the religious dimensions of the work as well as many other aspects of this famous tale. The club meets in the West Conference Room at 6:45pm. Please contact Paul Zummo at pzummo@gmail.com if you have any questions.

BECOMING CATHOLIC

Throughout the year, adults come forward seeking to learn about the Catholic faith. For those who are interested in learning about the Catholic faith or thinking about becoming Catholic, St. Matthew's offers Inquiry, a casual, ongoing conversation about the Catholic faith, once a month. Inquiry is the first step in the process of discerning one's commitment to full initiation in the Catholic Church. Inquiry meets on the second Wednesday of the month from 6:30 to 7:30pm in the East Conference Room. A brief overview of the adult initiation process (RCIA), which begins formally in June, can be presented after Inquiry for those who are interested. The next Inquiry will be held Wednesday, **December 14**. For more information, contact Heather Kinney at hkinney@stmatthewscathedral.org.

ADULT CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

St. Matthew's offers adult Confirmation preparation for *active Catholics who have received both the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist* in the weeks between Easter and Pentecost. The celebration of adult Confirmation occurs at a special Mass on Pentecost Sunday, which will be May 27 in 2012 (Memorial Day weekend). The preparation includes five weekly sessions on consecutive Thursday evenings -- tentatively set for April 19, 26 and May 3, 10, and 17 -- and a Saturday retreat tentatively set for May 19. Registration begins in January, so please follow announcements in the bulletin and the website for information on how to register.

RESPECT LIFE

ADULT & FAMILY RALLY & MASS FOR LIFE

The Archdiocese of Washington and the Association of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities will sponsor the annual *Adult and Family Rally and Mass for Life* at the Cathedral on the morning of the March for Life, Monday, **January 23**. The Rally will kick off at 9am with prayer, music and inspirational speakers including Loretta Fleming from National Committee for a Human Life Amendment, and the St. Margaret of Scotland Gospel Choir. Mass begins at 10am. Registration is required. Register at <http://adultrally4life.eventbrite.com>.

NOTICIAS DE LA PARROQUIA

ENCUENTRE EL REGALO PERFECTO

Sea parte de la nueva evangelización: encontrar el regalo perfecto es una iniciativa de Adviento de la Arquidiócesis de Washington, que invita a los católicos a compartir con los vecinos y amigos, a considerar el gran don de Dios al enviarnos a su Hijo a la tierra. Cuando alguien le pregunte acerca de la campaña, comparta con ellos el enlace a la página digital: findthepperfectgift.org o regaloperfecto.org y comparta con ellos la diferencia que puede hacer una relación con el Señor en su vida.

REFLEXIONES DE ADVIENTO

Las reflexiones son a las 7:30 de la noche en el salón de conferencias del Oeste tendremos las reflexiones de Adviento, tomando como referencia las promesas mesiánicas del profeta Isaías. Esperamos nos ayuden a prepararnos para celebrar la Navidad con un corazón renovado y bien dispuesto.

Semana 2. Martes **6 de diciembre**

Consuelen a mi pueblo

Semana 3. Martes **13 de diciembre**

¡Alégrate! El Señor esta contigo

Obispo Francisco González, S.F.

Semana 4. Martes **20 de diciembre**

¡Levántate y brilla! que ha llegado tu Luz

Empecemos esta época del año con una buena preparación ¡Les esperamos!

SOLEMNIDAD DE LA INMACULADA CONCEPCION

Este jueves **8 de diciembre** es la Solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción, día de precepto. Las Misas se celebrarán a las 7am, 8am, 11am, 12:10 del mediodía, 5:30pm y 7pm en español. La comunidad Paraguaya se une a nuestra comunidad para honrar a su patrona la Virgen de Caacupé Su Excelencia Pastor Cuquejo Arzobispo de Asunción, Paraguay será el celebrante.

FIESTA DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE

Venga y únase a nosotros a la celebración de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe aquí en la Catedral en la misa de español de 1 de la tarde el domingo **11 de diciembre**. Después de la misa habrá refrescos y música en el salón de conferencias del Oeste. ¡Todos están invitados!

El Obispo Francisco González nos invita a la celebración anual de la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, el sábado **10 de diciembre** a las 2:30 de la tarde en la Basílica del Santuario Nacional de la Inmaculada Concepción (400 Michigan Ave, NE). La procesión anual saldrá del Santuario del Sagrado Corazón (3211 Pine St., NW) a las 12 del mediodía hacia la Basílica. Para más información llamar a Manuel Aliaga a la Oficina de Asuntos Pastorales Hispanos a 301-853-4567.

ADOPTE-UNA-FAMILIA

Todas las Navidades, la Catedral patrocina el programa "Adopte una Familia." Este programa ayuda con regalos a familias necesitadas de la parroquia por medio del "Árbol Navideño (Giving Tree)" y la participación de empresas y grupos que auspician a las familias.

Participación en el "Árbol Navideño". No se olvide de recoger su tarjeta del "árbol navideño" al comienzo del Adviento. Todos los regalos van a ayudar a las familias necesitadas de nuestra área para Navidad o al programa de los Desamparados de San Mateo. Todas las tarjetas están marcadas claramente para ambos programas. Regalos nuevos, sin envolver, tienen que estar de vuelta en San Mateo para el lunes **12 de diciembre**. Si no tiene tiempo para comprar el regalo, considere contribuir con una donación monetaria. Contamos con su generosidad para continuar sirviendo a nuestros vecinos a través de estos programas. ¡Gracias!

¿HA ESTADO USTED EN FÁTIMA?

Mons. Jameson les invita a que se unan a él y a otros feligreses y amigos de San Mateo a un viaje fabuloso de peregrinación a Madrid, Fátima y Lisboa en Abril de 2012! El itinerario está designado a mostrar lo mejor de Madrid dejando tiempo libre para explorar a su propio paso. Pase tiempo en el lugar famoso de Fátima donde Nuestra Señora se apareció seis veces a Lucia, Jacinta y Francisco, con tiempo para reflexión, y oración. Finalmente, descubrir partes interesantes de Lisboa y ciudades de los alrededores. El grupo saldrá de Washington, el miércoles **11 de abril de 2012**, y regresará el domingo **22 de abril de 2012**. La fecha final para inscribirse será el **1 de febrero de 2012**. Para más información, recoja un folleto en la rectoría, también pueden llamar a Mons. Jameson al 202-347-3215.

LECTURAS DE LA SEMANA

Domingo 4 Is 40:1-5,9-11 / 2 Pe 3:8-14 / Mc 1:1-8
Segundo domingo de Adviento

Lunes 5 Is 35:1-10 / Lc 5:17-26

Martes 6 Is 40:1-11 / Mt 18:12-14
San Nicolás

Miércoles 7 Is 40:25-31 / Mt 11:28-30
San Ambrosio

Jueves 8 Gén 3:9-15,20 / Ef 1:3-6,11-12 / Lc 1:26-38
Inmaculada Concepción de la Santísima Virgen María

Viernes 9 Is 48:17-19 / Mt 11:16-19
San Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin

Sábado 10 Ecl 48:1-4,9-11 / Mt 17:9,10-13

Domingo 11 Is 61:1-2,10-11 / 1 Tes 5:16-24 /
Tercer domingo de Adviento Jn 1:6-8,19-28

MASS INTENTIONS**Sunday, December 4**

5:30pm (vigil) – Jeannie Redmond
 7am – All Parishioners
 8:30am – Britt Courtney
 10am – Walter & Mary Orzechowski
 11:30am – Msgr. Orville Griese
 1pm – Francisco De León
 5:30pm – David, Bridget & Gloria Mora (living)

Monday, December 5

7am – Frantiska Lyskova (living)
 8am – Irinea Vicerál
 12:10pm – Julie Bennett
 5:30pm – Margaret Curwen

Tuesday, December 6

7am – Frantiska Lyskova (living)
 8am – Ming Fa Yu
 12:10pm – Rev. Guy E. Guyan,
 O. Praem
 5:30pm – Ann Garcia

Wednesday, December 7

7am – Josephine Klug Kuhn
 8am – Frantiska Lyskova (living)
 12:10pm – Tess Lodge
 5:30pm – Julio Cesar Villatoro

Thursday, December 8

7am – Bessie, Myrtle, Brooksie Banks
 8am – Frantiska Lyskova (living)
 11am – Jennifer Jones
 12:10pm – Clara Van Issenhover
 5:30pm – Frances A. Pouzar
 7pm – Julio Cesar Villatoro

Friday, December 9

7am – James Joseph Dunklau
 8am – David Colantonio
 12:10pm – James T. Molloy
 5:30am – Leticia Recio Gonzalez

Saturday, December 10

8am – Mass of Thanksgiving
 12:10pm – Floyd Smith
 5:30pm – Dolores Smalley

Sunday, December 11

7am – Stabat Mater Prayer Apostolate
 8:30am – All Parishioners
 10am – George Beischer
 11:30am – Msgr. William H. Kierman
 1pm – Aura y Lola Benavides
 5:30pm – Martha La Vera

To arrange a Mass intention, speak to our receptionist in the Rectory. There is no fee but an offering is customary. Intentions are reserved in advance so particular dates may be unavailable.

MARRIAGES

Couples who are interested in celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage at the Cathedral are encouraged to visit the parish website to review our guidelines for weddings. The next step is to call the Rectory at 202-347-3215 and ask for the priest of your choice or the priest on duty, who can speak to you about marriage preparation and the possibility of scheduling your wedding ceremony at the Cathedral. Couples are expected to contact us **at least nine (9) months in advance** of the date on which they hope to celebrate their wedding.

BAPTISMS

Parents who wish to have their child baptized at the Cathedral should contact the Baptismal Coordinator at the Rectory at 202-347-3215 x555. Parents are encouraged to make contact with us **at least six (6) months in advance** of a desired baptismal date, at which time they may ask for the priest of their choice to perform the Baptism. This early contact enables parents to be scheduled for the necessary sacramental formation session before the child's baptism and allows time for sponsors to obtain letters from their parish pastor.

CATHEDRAL TOURS

Visitors are invited to schedule a guided tour of the Cathedral or to do a self-guided tour using the color brochures available at the inside entrance to the Cathedral. Guided tours are given free of charge. Donations to the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle are always appreciated and may be given to your tour guide or to our receptionist at the Rectory. To schedule a guided tour, contact us at 202-347-3215 x512 or 202-587-5143 or mhurley@stmatthewscathedral.org.

Please check our parish website regularly for updates on liturgies and events at St. Matthew's!

www.stmatthewscathedral.org

**** PARISH PILGRIMAGE **
TO SPAIN AND PORTUGAL**

Join Msgr. Jameson and fellow parishioners and friends on a pilgrimage to Madrid, Fatima and Lisbon in April 2012! The itinerary showcases the best of Madrid while affording you time to explore the city. Spend time at the famous site in Fatima where Our Lady appeared six times to Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco and take time to reflect and pray. Discover interesting, artsy and unique parts of Lisbon and hip surrounding towns. The group will leave Washington on Wednesday, April 11, 2012, and return on Sunday, April 22, 2012. Enroll by **February 1, 2012**. For more information, see the brochure on our website, pick one up at the rectory or call Msgr. Jameson.

**CHRISTMAS CARDS &
OTHER GIFT ITEMS**

St. Matthew's is pleased to offer a 48-page souvenir book on our beautiful Cathedral church written by Richard Schmidt and Claudia Rousseau, with Joseph Carey, Nancy McKinley and Elizabeth Sullivan. It features the Cathedral's history, art and architecture vividly portrayed through photographs by local photographer, Neil Greentree.

Also available are sets of six note cards picturing the art of the Cathedral, boxed sets of ten **Christmas cards** featuring St. Matthew's Crèche, Christmas ornaments and several CD recordings of the Cathedral's *Schola Cantorum*. CD titles are listed on our website.



**St. Matthew's
Crèche -
Christmas cards
available in
boxed sets of 10
cards &
envelopes**

Items are available for purchase in the Rectory during office hours. Unless otherwise indicated in this bulletin, the Rectory is open Monday through Thursday from 9am until 8pm and Friday through Sunday from 9am until 4pm. You also may order items by contacting us at 202-347-3215 x 517 or at gharrington@stmatthewscathedral.org. MasterCard and Visa are accepted.



St Matthew's Cathedral

presents

December 11, 2011 at 7:30pm

A Festival of Lessons and Carols

featuring

The Great O Antiphons in Latin Chant

and the music of

Franz Biebl

Andrew Carter

Michael Praetorius

Renaissance Carols

*Followed by a Christmas Carol Sing-along in the Great Hall.
with Christmas Cookies, Eggnog and Wassail*

Join us for our annual, much-anticipated evening of splendid choral music, hymns and songs and inspiring readings presented by the *Schola Cantorum*, Saint Matthew's Festival Singers and the Cathedral Lectors.

1725 Rhode Island Ave, NW Washington DC

Free and open to the public. Donations will be gladly accepted.





Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2011

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Make your way

Deserts and wildernesses can be beautiful, but they have an element of danger as well. They're good places to get lost for one thing, and in them you're vulnerable to forces of nature that are vastly more powerful than you. Sometimes, though, you have to travel through the trackless wastes to get where you want to go, and that's true spiritually as well. To reach the Promised Land, the Israelites had to walk through the desert; to return from Exile in Babylon they had to journey back to Jerusalem. John the Baptist called people out to the desert to repent. As you continue your Advent journey, remember that sometimes you have to walk through life's deserted stretches to arrive at the place where God is found.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8 (5)*

"Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!"

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5 ADVENT WEEKDAY

In praise of caretakers

When a person is seriously ill or injured, it is easy for the caretakers to get overlooked as we focus our sympathies and attention on the stricken person. But even when it is a labor of love, caretaking is hard work, unending and exhausting in many cases. Next time you visit an ill person, make it a point to offer the caretaker some concrete help: bring along a home-cooked meal, do the laundry, or spell them for an afternoon so they can run some errands or simply take some personal time. Let's take care of the caretakers in our midst—we will need them ourselves some day!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 5:17-26 (181)*

"Some men brought on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed."

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6 FEAST OF NICHOLAS, BISHOP

The people's bishop

Even if church leadership makes you tear your hair out sometimes, you've got to love this bishop. Nicholas was a fourth-century superhero: saving poor girls from prostitution by providing them with dowries, restoring murdered boys to life, advising sailors how to navigate through storms, rescuing men consigned to execution, feeding a city on the brink of famine—and in his spare time arguing against heresies at the Council of Nicaea. What a diocese this Turkish prelate must have run! Pray that your local leader might have the patronage and guidance of this great saint.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 40:1-11; Matthew 18:12-14 (182)*

"Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God."

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7

FEAST OF AMBROSE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

It's time for some fresh thinking

Like all great leaders, Saint Ambrose was an original thinker. He was an ardent advocate for the poor: "He who sent forth his apostles without gold had not need of gold to form his church. The church possesses gold, not to hoard, but to scatter abroad and come to the aid of the unfortunate." He also avoided rigidity when it was not helpful: "When I am in Milan, I fast; when I am in Rome, I do not." The answers to our current struggles with poverty and diversity are, like the kingdom of heaven, very near. We only need some original thinking to perceive them. In what

ways do "the ways things are" cloud our vision? How can we practice seeing with new eyes?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 40:25-31; Matthew 11:28-30 (183)*

"They will soar as with eagles' wings; they will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint."

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8 SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE

CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Conceive of this

The angel Gabriel addressed Mary as "full" of grace, with no place in her for sin, and while we are painfully aware that we are *not* full of love—that envy, pride, bitterness, and jealousy are within us as well—as Christians we believe that despite the sin-caused rift between humanity and God, God still chooses in our favor and gives us hope that all may yet be well. God's marvels not only enable virgins or elderly women to have babies but also let you and me respond to grace and ourselves become fertile with compassion and bearers of good news for the world.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38 (689)*

"I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9 ADVENT WEEKDAY

Get to know God's feminine side

Because we use the term "Father" so often to refer to God, we may forget that God is neither male nor female but rather ultimately beyond anything our human concepts and categories can express. Because we use words and images to communicate, however, it is good to remember that we have feminine as well as masculine ones we can use to talk about the divine. Feminine images primarily come from what's known as the Wisdom tradition, found in the latter half of Hebrew scripture in such books as Proverbs, Job, Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon. In fact, *wisdom*, often portrayed as a woman, is mentioned 222 times in scripture, including by Jesus, so be sure to remember her in your own prayers!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 48:17-19; Matthew 11:16-19 (185)*

"Wisdom is vindicated by her works."

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10 ADVENT WEEKDAY

Save a seat at the table

"The peculiar grace of a Shaker chair," Thomas Merton observed, "is due to the fact that it was made by someone capable of believing that an angel might come and sit on it." Merton was mystic enough not only to believe that but to describe to you the angel seated there. For centuries before Jesus, the people of Israel likewise waited for the return of a prophet who seemed more angelic than human: Elijah the wonderworker, who rode to heaven in a fiery chariot. At every Passover the Jewish community keeps a chair for Elijah at the table. How do you make room for the holy?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13 (186)*

"In those days . . . there appeared the prophet Elijah whose words were as a flaming furnace."

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Scripture quotes come from the New American Bible.

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Looking for a convenient way to support our parish offertory?

Faith Direct is the innovative solution that allows you to support our parish using electronic funds transfer from either a credit card or bank account. It is a hassle-free, simple solution for today's busy families.

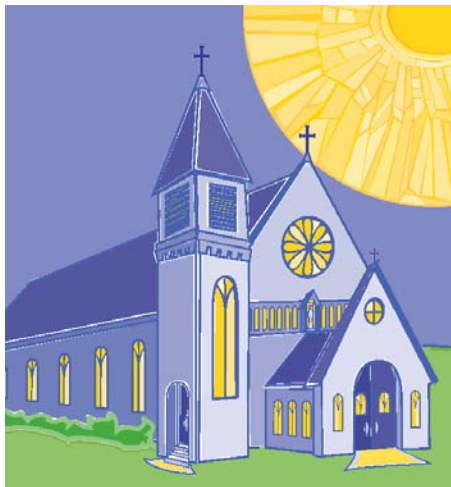
Sign up using the enrollment form on the other side or go online to www.faithdirect.net and use our parish code **DC284** to enroll today!

ENROLL TODAY!

How does Faith Direct work?

Faith Direct is a secure system that works directly with your bank or credit card—much the same as other direct payments you may have set up for utility bills or mortgage payments.

When do transactions take place?



Transactions take place once per month on the 4th or the next business day. The total amount of your gifts for that current month (both offertory & second/special collections) will be debited in one monthly total. The Cathedral will receive the funds 4 business days later.

Can I stop, increase, or decrease my payment at any time?

Yes, by calling *Faith Direct* at 1-866-507-8757 (toll free) by emailing info@faithdirect.net, or by logging in to your account through www.faithdirect.net.

How does the Cathedral benefit from my participation with Faith Direct?

The Cathedral will see a substantial increase in net revenue, a decrease in administrative costs, and a clearer picture of cash flow for their needs.

If you have any questions about the *Faith Direct* program, please call 1-866-507-8757 {toll free} or send an email to info@faithdirect.net, or contact Pam Erwin at the Rectory at 202-347-3215 x537 or perwin@stmatthewscathedral.org.

E-GIVING ENROLLMENT FORM



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“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.” (Peter 4:10)

Weekly Offertory contribution: \$ _____

(Note: Total contribution amount will be debited on the 4th of the month or the next business day. The total amount will be determined by the number of Sundays in the month. Some months have 5 Sundays.)

You may also choose to give to the following second and special collections.
The amount indicated will be debited in the month listed as part of the regular monthly transaction.

COLLECTION	AMOUNT	MONTH	COLLECTION	AMOUNT	MONTH
<input type="checkbox"/> Cathedral Maintenance	\$ _____	Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Holy Father	\$ _____	June
<input type="checkbox"/> Music Ministry	\$ _____	Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Catholic Communications & Human Development	\$ _____	August
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor Box/Outreach	\$ _____	Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Assumption	\$ _____	August
<input type="checkbox"/> Solemnity of Mary	\$ _____	January	<input type="checkbox"/> Catholic University	\$ _____	September
<input type="checkbox"/> Church Missions within the US	\$ _____	January	<input type="checkbox"/> Propagation of the Faith/ World Missions	\$ _____	October
<input type="checkbox"/> Churches in the Developing World	\$ _____	February	<input type="checkbox"/> All Saints Day	\$ _____	November
<input type="checkbox"/> Ash Wednesday	\$ _____	March	<input type="checkbox"/> All Souls Day *	\$ _____	November
<input type="checkbox"/> Holy Thursday	\$ _____	March/April	<input type="checkbox"/> Archdiocesan Priests' Retirement	\$ _____	November
<input type="checkbox"/> Holy Land	\$ _____	March/April	<input type="checkbox"/> Retirement Fund for Religious	\$ _____	December
<input type="checkbox"/> Easter Flowers	\$ _____	March/April	<input type="checkbox"/> Immaculate Conception	\$ _____	December
<input type="checkbox"/> Easter Sunday (In addition to regular Sunday gift)	\$ _____	March/April	<input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Flowers	\$ _____	December
<input type="checkbox"/> Catholic Relief Services	\$ _____	May	<input type="checkbox"/> Christmas	\$ _____	December

* Please call the church at 202-347-3215 with the names of your intentions for this collection.

I would like to enroll in the Faith Direct program for the benefit of the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle. I understand that my total monthly contribution amount will be transferred directly from my checking account or credit card as stated above, a record of my gifts will appear on my bank or credit card statement, and my transfers will begin on the 4th or next business day of the month following my enrollment. I understand that I can increase, decrease, or suspend my giving by contacting Faith Direct toll free at 1-866-507-8757.

{All gifts provided to your Church originating as Automated Clearing House transactions comply with US law.}

Signature: X _____ Date: _____

Name(s): (please print) _____

Street Address: _____ Church Envelope #: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Name as I/we would like it to appear on Offertory Cards: _____

I do not wish to receive Offertory Cards to place in the collection basket as a sign of my electronic giving.

If you choose to enroll by mail, you can contact Faith Direct at 1-866-507-8757 {toll-free} to set up online access to your account.

For Checking Account Debit: Please return this completed form and a voided check to Faith Direct Enrollment.

For Credit Card Debit: Please complete the following... VISA MasterCard American Express Discover

Credit Card #: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Print Name as Appears on Card: _____

Signature: _____

If you have any questions about the Faith Direct program, please contact us at 1-866-507-8757 {toll free} or info@faithdirect.net.