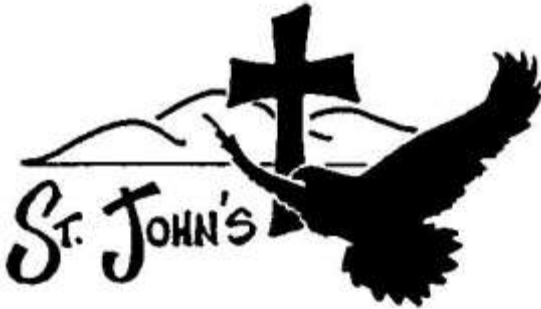


ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC
STUDENT CENTER
@ ISU



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Director: Jennifer Seaich

Sunday, December 11th, 2011

3rd Sunday of Advent

Guest Presider:

Fr. Kenneth Hein, OSB

Monastery of the Ascension, Jerome

Why should the religious authorities in Jerusalem show concern for a marginal figure attracting crowds to the wilderness and baptizing repentant sinners in the Jordan? In cultures concerned with honor, like ancient Israel, persons are expected to behave according to their inherited status. The Baptizer's status or acquired honor derived from the fact that his father, Zechariah, was a devout rural priest. But the Baptizer is not behaving like a priest. Instead, he looks very much like a member of the numerous groups of alienated priests and faithful that emerged as early as the sixth century B.C.E. These groups found themselves increasingly separated from the aristocratic priests in Jerusalem.

The historian Josephus indicates that the gulf between the aristocratic priests in Jerusalem and the large number of lower clergy was very great in the first century. A major cause of alienation was the widely known and very evident luxury in which the Jerusalem priestly aristocracy lived. Jerusalem was where the temple was located, the center of Jewish religious life until it was destroyed in 71 CE by Roman armies in retaliation for a Jewish rebellion, the kind of rebellion that authorities feared John and later Jesus himself would lead. The priests there, the Jewish religious authorities, were allowed power by Rome, and they were very invested in remaining friendly with their Roman rulers. They were viewed as corrupt by many other Jews. By his extreme dress and diet, John the Baptist distances himself from this luxury and his rural priestly heritage and presents himself more like a prophet, a spokesperson who declares the will of God for the here and now.

The Jerusalem priests wonder whether John is an "action prophet" (a spokesperson who also leads a popular movement hoping that God will intervene in liberating action) or an "oracular prophet" (one who only pronounces words of redemption or judgment). After interrogating John, the delegation from the Jerusalem authorities conclude that he is only an oracular prophet- not a threat to political stability, at least for a time. He explicitly says he is not the light but only the witness to the light. He is but the voice crying in the wilderness exhorting his listeners to prepare the way of the Lord. Jesus was the true revolutionary, not seeking earthly power or trying to overthrow Roman rule, but in setting all people free.

John's mission was to "testify to the light"—Christ's presence among the people. The gospel of John is filled with themes of light and darkness. Testimony to the light implies two things. First, it means to do good works ("bring glad tidings to the poor," "heal the brokenhearted," "proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners," our first reading from Isaiah). And second, it means to grow in relationship to Christ and with others. As Paul proclaims in our second reading, "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks". This deep relationship with God doesn't mean shutting your brain off, as our atheist friends might say of faith. It means thinking more. C.S. Lewis wrote in "Mere Christianity" that faith is what is reasonable. Doubt is emotional turmoil. We can use our reason and believe. Look around, and you will see evidence of God. It's fear, anger, sadness that pull us away from certainty. Our second reading also says "test everything, retain what is good". That isn't blind, unthinking, naïve faith. It's using god-given reason as it was intended.

Testify to the light: such testimony is the work of Advent; even more, it is the work of our whole Christian lives.

Peace be with you, *Jennifer*

Finals Week at St. John's

Open for:

prayer



study



snacks



coffee



No Weekly events (Applied Catholicism, Grilled Cheese, Bible Study) this week.



Remember goodshop.com as you do your holiday shopping and goodsearch.com as you study.

Every time you make a purchase or use the search engine, St. John's receives a donation!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 17– Jan 7: Winter Break!

St. John's will be closed.

Jan 8: First Mass of the semester, 7pm

Have a safe, relaxing Winter Break!

Merry
Christmas

HAPPY
NEW
YEAR

St John's Student Center is NOT part of Holy Spirit or any other parish. It is entirely independent to best serve the students of ISU. Please make donations to "St John's", and thank you for your support of this vital ministry.

Contributions for December 4, 2011 = \$249.73 *Thank you!*



Our Lady of Guadalupe



Our Lady of Guadalupe, also called the Virgin of Guadalupe (Spanish: Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe or Virgen de Guadalupe) is a 16th century Mexican icon representing an apparition of the Virgin Mary. It is perhaps Mexico's most popular religious and cultural image. Guadalupe's feast day is celebrated on December 12, commemorating the traditional account of her appearances to Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin on the hill of Tepeyac near Mexico City from December 9, 1531 through December 12, 1531.

According to official Catholic accounts of the Guadalupan apparitions, during a walk from his home village to Mexico City early on the morning of December 9, 1531, Juan Diego saw a vision of a young woman, surrounded by light. This event occurred on the slopes of the Hill of Tepeyac. Speaking in the local language of Nahuatl, the Lady asked for a church to be built at that site in her honor. From her words, Juan Diego recognized her as the Virgin Mary. When he told his story to the Spanish bishop, Fray Juan de Zumárraga, the bishop asked him to return and ask the lady for a miraculous sign to prove her claim. The Virgin then asked Juan Diego to gather some flowers from the top of Tepeyac Hill, even though it was winter when no flowers bloomed. There, he found Castilian roses (which were of the Bishop's native home, but not indigenous to Tepeyac). He gathered them, and the Virgin herself re-arranged them in his tilma, or peasant cloak. When Juan Diego presented the roses to Zumárraga, the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe miraculously appeared imprinted on the cloth of Diego's tilma.

When she appeared in America, a continent newly discovered and dominated by Europeans, she did not choose to appear to the Bishop. She chose a poor peasant, without status or social worth. She appeared to Juan Diego and spoke to him in his language. He was powerless, in any way that we measure. Yet she appeared to him, telling him, and all those who have the "wrong" skin color or who speak the "wrong" language, who have no social or economic value, "I, Mary, Mother of God, I value you. I love you".

The Virgin of Guadalupe is a symbol of significant importance to Catholics, especially Mexican Catholics. Catholics recognize her as "Empress of the Americas." The Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City is the second most visited Roman Catholic shrine in the world. Yearly, between 18 - 20 million pilgrims visit the Basilica. Altogether 25 popes have officially honored Our Lady of Guadalupe. John Paul II visited her Sanctuary four times: on his first apostolic trip outside Rome as Pope in 1979, and again in 1990, 1999 and 2002.

Her message of love and compassion, and her universal promise of help and protection to all mankind, as well as the story of the apparitions are described in the "*Nican Mopohua*", a 16th century document written in the native Nahuatl language. The Virgin of Guadalupe has also symbolized the Mexican nation since Mexico's War of Independence. Both Miguel Hidalgo and Emiliano Zapata's armies traveled underneath Guadalupan flags, and Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe is generally recognized as a symbol of all Mexicans.

Nobel laureate Octavio Paz wrote in 1974 that "the Mexican people, after more than two centuries of experiments, have faith only in the Virgin of Guadalupe and the National Lottery".