



The kindergarten class has been learning about creation and the saints. They recently participated in the Sunday liturgy dressed as some of the saints.
- Rosada Harr

Photos by HALEY HENDRICK

Advent is meant to turn us to the Lord

By FR. JACOB STRAUB

As our culture grows increasingly forgetful of its Christian roots, we see the great season of the liturgical year lose their meaning or even lose a place in secular society. We see this in striking detail each year when we reach the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. As soon as we have feasted and given thanks to God (as is the original purpose of that day), the stores turn red and green, the radio blasts all the (secular) Christmas tunes, and the TV begins to play the classic or new Christmas specials. By the time Christmas Day actually comes, we may become almost as sick of it all as we're sick of the past election!

We need to rediscover the whole purpose for the various seasons of our liturgical year and



Fr. Jacob Straub

means "coming" or "arriving." It is meant to serve as a preparation for the Christmas celebrations in the Church, not be the first celebrations of that joyous feast. Advent is meant to turn us to the Lord who has already

incorporate them into our lives.

Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year, for it opens to us the first steps of the history of salvation in preparation for the birth of the Savior. The word "Advent" comes from Latin and

come into this world as a babe, who is coming each day in the Eucharist, and who will come in His glory and majesty on the last day.

The Advent season is rich with anticipation for the feast at its conclusion, yet it serves as a reminder to us of why the birth we celebrate on Christmas is necessary and joyful. During Advent, we recall the fall of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, which introduced sin into the world and the need for a Savior. We recall the promises that God sent to the ancient Israelites through all the prophets – that this babe, this Emmanuel, would be born of a virgin to save His people. But we cannot forget that this same babe comes to us in a more humble way: whenever the priest offers the Mass, this babe is born once more on the altar to

be not only adored but consumed for our benefit.

Let us prepare to celebrate Christmas by observing Advent, by observing this season of preparation and expectation. Let us save the Christmas music for the Christmas season, and eagerly sing such expectant hymns as "People, Look East" and "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." Let us wait to set up our Christmas decorations and seek to prepare our hearts and minds for this season. I especially encourage you to receive confession during this season, to be purified of your sins so as to become like the babe in the manger the child of God you were born to be. Let us look with eager expectation for the coming of our Lord, so that we may truly rejoice at his advent among us and all that it entails.



Over the past year, St. John high school CCD class has been focusing on the Works of Mercy and how we are called to live lives of service and action. Too many Christians today only pay lip service to acts of mercy and charity. In an effort to lead by example the high school students combined "feed the hungry" and "instruct the ignorant" by hosting a bake sale to raise funds to purchase Bibles for the first and second grade classrooms. The bake sale was held after each of the two Sunday Masses and raised \$760. This is enough to purchase Bibles and other educational materials for the CCD classes. Thank you to everyone who participated by providing baked items and to those who made donations. It was a success beyond our expectations!

- CCD teacher Terri Mounce

Transitioning to the Gospel According to Matthew

By DEACON MIKE KELLER

On Nov. 27, we celebrate the first Sunday of Advent. It marks the beginning of a new Liturgical year, year A of the three year Liturgical year. Each year we hear primarily from one Evangelist on Sunday. This year we will be reading from the Gospel of Matthew. So let's look at the who, what, when, where, why and the central themes of this Gospel so we have a better understanding of its messages we will hear each week.

Who: The author of this gospel was not the Apostle Matthew. The actual author is not known. It is possible the community had taken Matthew as its patron. Scholars feel that it was written around 85 C.E. Nearly all the material contained in the gospel according to Mark is included in Matthew. Mark was written around 70. So Matthew had to have been written sometime later to allow Mark's writing to have spread. Additionally Matthew includes information about the destruction of Jerusalem which happened in 70CE. Matthew also contains material from the source known as Q as well as material found nowhere else, presumably from the tradition of the community.



Deacon Mike Keller

What: The gospel is primarily a story of the life of Jesus. The form consists of narrative and discourse. Usually the narrative leads to discourse and a literary device known as a summary

transition connects them.

A unique aspect of this gospel is that the author uses numerical groups; five sections (pentateuch?) three dreams of Joseph, three temptations of Jesus, etc. The five sections are known as: the Sermon on the Mount, the missionary discourse, the parable discourse, the church order discourse, & the eschatological discourse.

The discourse material contained here is characterized by symmetry, order, & fullness.

Where: This gospel contains strong criticism of the contemporary Jewish leadership. Since it was written at the time when Christians broke with traditional Judaism it seems to reflect the tension that existed between

rabbinical Judaism and the Christians, between tradition and newness. The community sees Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel, the fulfillment of the Scriptures and traditional Judaism didn't. It was written at Antioch the capital of the Roman province of Syria. The community was made up of Greek speaking Jewish Christians with a majority of Gentile Christians.

The gospel shows God accepting Jews and Gentiles, and whoever does God's will into the Kingdom. Whoever follows Jesus is God's people.

Why: This gospel may have been written to provide clear and coherent guidance to the community. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to the Jews but they won't accept him. So the Christians advance in their belief in Jesus as God's redeeming son not only for the Jews but also for any who will follow Jesus. Jesus is the Messiah of the whole world. In this gospel Jesus brings the Jewish tradition to fulfillment and reinterprets the Law.

Central themes: Jesus as the Messiah that God promises Israel is a central theme. Jesus is the Messiah for the Jews and the Gentiles, for all who will

follow him.

The Jewish leadership rejects him and his followers. In this gospel the resulting conflict is central. The author is focused on showing that Jesus is the Messiah by constantly using passages and themes from the Old Testament. Examples are numerous but include the trip to Egypt and the returning of the holy family. And the gospel begins with the genealogy of Jesus showing him to be a direct descendant of David.

Another theme is that we are called to discipleship and what that means. It requires that we accept the will of the Father, just as Jesus does, that we proclaim the Kingdom. It means that we are forgiving and that we are transformed.

The story leads to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus' death is in obedience to the will of the Father. His resurrection is the advent of the new age, the age of salvation promised to Israel by God, the Kingdom of God established for us.

I suggest you keep this information handy and review it a couple of times throughout 2017. Hopefully it will help you get more out of the Gospel readings this year.



2nd Grade

The second grade CCD class is preparing for first Reconciliation to be held Dec. 3. We are learning about God's mercy and forgiveness. We have talked about sins versus accidents and that you have to knowingly do something wrong to be a sin. We discussed how when we sin we are like the lost sheep and we drift away from God's loving presence and when we confess and do penance we are reconciled with God and are brought back into his flock. - Donna Burns

We want your opinion!

Our parish council needs your help to understand how effectively we are serving you and your family, so please answer this short survey. Your responses will help us identify opportunities for improvement. After completing the survey, please place it in the collection basket or drop it off at the parish office. Your prayerful responses are essential to the spiritual growth of our parish. Thank you very much for your participation.

My age group is: ☐ Under 25 ☐ 25-39 ☐ 40-65 ☐ Over 65

How many are in your family? ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 5 or more

What do you believe our parish is doing well?

What do you believe our parish can do better?

How often do you attend Mass at St. John or Transfiguration Mission?

☐ Weekly, or more ☐ Twice per month ☐ Once per month ☐ Whenever we can

If not weekly, what prevents you from doing so?

What type(s) of parish activity would you participate in outside of Mass?

Please provide any other comments. You are welcome to add pages as desired.

¡Queremos su opinión!

Nuestro consejo parroquial necesita su ayuda para entender cuán efectivamente le estamos sirviendo a usted ya su familia, así que responda a esta breve encuesta. Sus respuestas nos ayudarán a identificar oportunidades de mejora. Después de completar la encuesta, colóquela en la canasta de la colección o déjela en la oficina parroquial. Sus respuestas son esenciales para el crecimiento espiritual de nuestra parroquia.

Muchas gracias por su participación.

Mi grupo de edad es: ☐ Menos de 25 ☐ 25-39 ☐ 40-65 ☐ más de 65

¿Cuántos miembros hay en su familia? ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 5 o más

¿Qué crees que nuestra parroquia está haciendo bien?

¿Qué crees que nuestra parroquia puede hacer mejor?

¿Con qué frecuencia asistes a misa?

☐ Semanal o más ☐ dos veces al mes ☐ Una vez al mes ☐ Siempre que podamos

Si no es semanal, ¿qué le impide hacerlo?

¿Qué tipo(s) de actividad parroquial participaría usted fuera de la misa?

Por favor, proporcione cualquier otro comentario. Le invitamos a añadir páginas como desee.

Fr. Jacob wants to bring parishioners closer to God

By KRISTIN BECK

While he was raised Catholic as a child, Fr. Jacob Straub did not hear the call to become a priest until he was a college student.

Fr. Jacob grew up near Alexandria in Northern Kentucky. The son of Terri and Clifford Straub, he is the oldest of four children. He graduated from Campbell County High School in 2001, and then began attending Georgetown College. At that point, Fr. Jacob said he was not really practicing any faith, but he began to get drawn back in. It felt like something was missing, he said.

He returned home and enrolled at Northern Kentucky University, and it was at that point that he felt the call to the priesthood. He applied around Easter 2006 and joined the Diocese of Covington. He went to Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, to finish his bachelor's degree in 2009. Then he went to Saint Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, Pa., and graduated in 2013 from major seminary. He was ordained June 22, 2013.

While he was raised Catholic as a young child, his family stopped going regularly to Mass when he was in about third or fourth grade. He started attending regularly again while at Georgetown and describes himself as a "revert," someone who was rediscovering Catholicism and becoming passionate about it and "wanting to be a Catholic to the full extent."

When he arrived at the seminary, he had only been practicing regularly for about two years and worried that he might not fit in or be able to keep up and grasp everything. However, he was surprised to find that there were men in his class at vari-



Fr. Jacob Straub

ous stages of their faith—from "reverts" like himself to those who were very passionate about their faith, he said.

Fr. Jacob spent two years in graduate study at the Catholic University of America and assisted with Mass and the sacraments at St. Joseph Parish in Cold Spring when he was home.

In July 2015, he moved to St. Matthew Catholic Church in Morning View, Ky., and was also teaching at Covington Latin School. He moved to Carrollton in June and has been with St. John the Evangelist and Transfiguration Mission since June 13.

Being in Carrollton and Perry Park has been very different from his previous assignment because he was both the priest at St. Matthew as well as a teacher at Covington Latin.

"It was a lot more of a balancing act," he said. "Even though I only taught one course at school, I had three different sections, so there's a lot of prep work that goes into that. I was also chaplain, so I would be planning Mass or having confessions, just being present to the kids if they wanted to talk or have someone to be with. But at the same time, I was the pastor of a very small church. I had some volunteers

to help, but more often than not I was just doing things on my own."

St. Mathew had about 80 families and had two weekend Masses. Fr. Jacob said he mostly spent the week at Covington Latin and the weekends at St. Matthew. While St. John and Transfiguration is a larger parish with two churches, Fr. Jacob said it is nice only having one assignment. "It's still very much a learning experience," he said. "It's only my second real year of being a pastor, being in charge of a church. I'm still very new at it."

Fr. Jacob said what he enjoys most about being a priest is being there for people, especially in the sacraments. He also enjoys celebrating the Mass, especially the Mass of the seasons. "That is what drew me into the priesthood and that's really been my great joy is the sacraments, most especially. The Mass and the Eucharist," he said.

The biggest challenge for Fr. Jacob has been learning to speak Spanish, especially outside of the structure of the Mass. Before coming to St. John, Fr. Jacob said he had studied Spanish in college and had had exposure to Spanish Mass at the seminary once a week or every other week, but was not a fluent speaker. When the Bishop told him he was coming to St. John, he said he had about a month to a month and a half to start practicing.

"That's probably been the biggest challenge for me is still working on being able to—I can say some simple sentences—do a decent job at confessions," he said. "But wanting to really engage the Hispanic population a lot better is probably the biggest challenge facing me."

Fr. Jacob said he uses Google Translate for his homilies, and it works for about 95 percent of it. So far, he hasn't had many complaints. "They actually tell me I seem to sound pretty natural," he said. "I will take their word on it."

When asked about his goals for the parish, he said he did not have any concrete goals at this point.

"My goal is to get us to Heaven," he said. "That's the point of the pastor's duty is to get his people to Heaven, and not just merely prepare them for that moment, but starting here, the Sacraments especially the Mass, open us up towards eternal life, towards what we're going to be doing for all of eternity. But of course it's not just looking toward the future; it's also being mindful. That great 'Gladiator' quote, 'What happens on Earth echoes in eternity.'"

"Every choice we make gets us closer or further away. The pastor's duty is to try and help us understand, what are right choices? What are the wrong choices? How is it we can draw nearer to this God that is not just some impersonal force, not some object, not something there, but is a person, is in fact three persons that we can relate to.

"I wouldn't say that's my one-year goal, but the first year is certainly getting to know the place, getting to know where everyone is at, assessing the situation," he said.

Fr. Jacob said he has had a great reception from everyone. "Everyone has been very welcoming, very warm, very friendly. It's been a great transition so far."

Please see FR. JACOB, Page 7

Upcoming events

• The Discipleship Committee will offer information on Advent symbols during announcements before Mass during Advent.

• **Christmas Card and Cookie Party** - Do you know someone in the community who could use a little extra Christmas cheer this holiday season? What about someone who has made a positive impact on your life this year that you would like to thank?

The Discipleship Committee wants to mail Christmas cards to these individuals on your behalf! Please tell us the name and address of the person, as well as the reason why you want them to receive a card. Forms will be available in the pews and may be placed in the collection basket.

The committee will be host its second annual Christmas Card and Cookie Party at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 4, to fill out the cards. Volunteers are asked to bring blank Christmas cards and their favorite cookies to the party.

Fr. Jacob

(Continued from Page 6)

In his free time, Fr. Jacob said he enjoys spending time outdoors—backpacking and camping. He also skied quite a bit in high school and started getting back into the sport last year. He is a big reader, both nonfiction and fiction, and has always liked maps. “Whenever we traveled, I would be fixed in wonder at the atlas,” he said. “Now, I edit the map for apps.” Fr. Jacob said Google Maps and Waze are open edit programs, meaning users can edit the content for accuracy.

Fr. Jacob said he is also a University of Kentucky, Cincinnati Bengals and Cincinnati Reds fan.

While he said he may not have

as much energy as Fr. Davy, he is usually available and would love to have people stop by and see him or he will come out and visit with them.

“I’m here to help,” he said. “As I said earlier, a pastor is supposed to be here to help the people to be closer to God. To be honest, I don’t do it really as much in this office. There’s work to be done, and in some ways we all have that office work, family has that office work, but this is the last place where the real pastoral work happens. This is kind of the necessary work. The real work happens out there with the people. As I grow more comfortable here and get to know more people, [I want] to get out there and to get to know them better so I can serve them better and help to bring them closer to God.”

A visit from Fr. Davy



Fr. Davy was in Northern Kentucky for a few days and stopped by St. John's to celebrate Mass Nov. 14. He is pictured with Nancy Jo Grobmyer.

Photo
by JOAN
WRIGHT

The Carroll County Arts Board presents

Community Church Christmas Concert

Join us Friday, Dec. 9 at 7 p.m.
at Carroll County Middle School for
a Christmas concert featuring
Carroll County churches. Concert is
free, but donations will be accepted
for the CCAB scholarship fund.

CONCERT WILL FEATURE
THE FOLLOWING CHURCHES:

CARROLLTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH • ENGLISH CHRISTIAN CHURCH •
FAMILY WORSHIP CENTER • FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
• PENTECOSTALS OF CARROLLTON • RELEVANT CHURCH
• ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST • UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
• WORTHVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH



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Advent Masses

Thanksgiving, Thursday, Nov. 24:

Immaculate Conception, Wednesday, Dec. 7

Thursday, Dec. 8

Christmas Eve, Saturday, Dec. 24

Christmas, Sunday, Dec. 25

Mary, Mother of God, Sunday, Jan. 1

9 a.m. at St. John

**7 p.m. (Bilingual) at St. John
(No adoration at 6 p.m.)**

7 a.m. at St. John

6:30 p.m. at Transfiguration

4 p.m. at St. John (Children's Mass)

6 p.m. at Transfiguration

8 p.m. (Spanish) at St. John

Midnight at St. John

10 a.m. at St. John

Regular weekend schedule

