

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

December 16th/December 17th 2023: Third Sunday of Advent



**1460 Pearson Avenue SW
Birmingham, Alabama 35211
Phone: (205) 785-9840**

**E-mail: church@myblessedsacrament.org
Website: www.myblessedsacrament.org**

Pastor

Rev. Jim W. Booth

SACRAMENTS and LITURGY

English Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m.

English Sunday Mass: 9:00 a.m.

Traditional Latin Sunday Mass: 7:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

English Weekday Masses: 8:30 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

Latin Weekday Masses: 8:30 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday, 6:30 p.m. on First Friday

First Saturday Latin Mass: 8:30 a.m. with confessions beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Holy Day Mass: As Announced

Confessions: Saturday 3:30-3:55 p.m., Sunday 7:00-7:25, 8:30-8:55, and 10:15-10:40 a.m.

Baptisms: By Appointment

Marriage Arrangements must be made with the Pastor **at least 6 months before the date of the wedding. Talk to the Pastor before making any firm wedding plans. No destination weddings.**

COVID-19 RESPONSE, MASS & DEVOTIONS: We have an additional Sunday Latin Mass at 7:30 a.m., to aid in social distancing, and continues on a provisional basis.

NOTE ON CONFESSIONS: If there is a significant line for confession, Fr Booth might say part of the formula of absolution while the penitent recites the act of contrition. The full formula of absolution is always said, but the first part might be said softly during the act of contrition. Thus, you might only hear “and I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

WELCOME to all of our visitors: We are glad you have attended Mass with us. If you wish to join Blessed Sacrament, please pick up a parish census form at the Religious Goods Counter located in the vestibule of the front entrance.

IN MEMORIAM: For Mary & Bill Dinan, the sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of their souls from December 17th to December 23rd. The sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of Jeremy Noblitt from December 24th until December 30th.

THIRD SUNDAY: This Sunday is the Third Sunday of the month. We will have vocations prayers and a potluck lunch following the 10:45 a.m. Mass.

A NOTE ABOUT CHRISTMAS: The year, Christmas lands on a Monday, which means that our Christmas Eve Mass will be on Sunday. Since every Sunday and Christmas are holy days of obligation, everyone must attend a Mass that counts for Sunday and one that counts for Christmas. One cannot merely attend the Christmas Eve Mass and have it count for both Sunday and Christmas, however.

ADVENT ANGEL TREE: We have an Advent Angel Tree this year that will benefit a number of truly needy families in our local community. Please bring the wrapped gift items back with the angel tag attached by this Sunday, December 17th.

BLANKET DRIVE: We will be collecting new blankets and comforters for the Catholic Center of Concern all through Advent until Epiphany.

CONTRIBUTION EVELOPES FOR 2024: It is likely that the contribution envelopes for next year will be delayed. This is due to FedEx Ground refusing to deliver the envelopes to Blessed Sacrament. They have refused to deliver them twice now, shipping them back to the sender without attempting to deliver them.

MEMORIAL SANCTUARY LAMP SIGN-UP SHEETS for 2024, 2025, and 2026 are at the religious goods counter in the vestibule at the back of the Church.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES: We continue with the Bishop’s Annual Appeal for Catholic Charities 2024 campaign. You also can enter your annual pledge or recurring gift any time at catholiccharitiesbhm.org. Our pledge goal for this year is \$20,000.

PRAY FOR OUR SEMINARIANS: Please pray for our seminarians: Patrick DePew, Max Gallegos, John Gardiner, Collins Hess, John Paul Stepnowski, Andrew Vickery, Hunter Limbaugh, Adam Sellers, Francisco Rodriguez, Justin Brouillette, Cameron Huhlein, Patrick Letterle, Wilson Moin, Joshua Callahan, Michael Masny, Ross Gilliland, Franz Mercado, Thomas Rogers, Nick Smith, and Dominic Rumore. May more good men to answer God’s call to the priesthood.

PARISH SUPPORT: The collection last week was \$11,635 and \$230 was given for the Preservation Fund. As always, many thanks for your generosity.

NOTE ON MASS INTENTIONS: There is about a 7-month backlog on Mass Intentions. Thus, requested Mass dates cannot always be honored.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Sun, Dec 24:	3:30 p.m.	Carols
	4:00 p.m.	Christmas Vigil Mass in English
Mon, Dec 25:	7:00 a.m.	Christmas Dawn Low Mass in Latin
	9:00 a.m.	Christmas Day Mass in English
	10:45 a.m.	Christmas Day High Mass in Latin

MASS SCHEDULE AND INTENTIONS: (*Masses in the Rectory Chapel)

Sat, Dec 16:	6:30 a.m.	Special Intention for Paris Duvall (by the Duvall Family)
	4:00 p.m.	† Julia V. Bryant (by the Bryant Family)
Sun, Dec 17:	7:30 a.m.	Special Intention for Joseph Ducote (by the Duvall Family)
	9:00 a.m.	Pro Populo
	10:45 a.m.	Special Intention for John Luke Bruegan (by the Duvall Family)
Mon, Dec 18:	*8:30 a.m.	Special Intention for Phil McReynolds (by the Duvalls)
Tues, Dec 19:	*8:30 a.m.	† Clement Muck, Jr. (by the Duvall Family)
Wed, Dec 20:	*8:30 a.m.	† Kevin Walsh (by the Lang Family)
Thur, Dec 21:	*8:30 a.m.	† Kenneth Clough (by the Lang Family)
Fri, Dec 22:	*8:30 a.m.	Special Intention for Abby McGinn (by the Lang Family)
Sat, Dec 23:	4:00 p.m.	Special Intention for Mike & Gina McGinn (by the Langs)
Sun, Dec 24:	7:30 a.m.	† Don Newton (by Phil McCarrick)
	9:00 a.m.	Pro Populo
	10:45 a.m.	Special Intention for Deacon Terry Rumore (by the Hahns)
	4:00 p.m.	Special Intention for Dr. Del Hahn (by the Hahns)

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND especially Laura Minjares, Pedro Antonio Triana, John Davis, Alexandra Taylor, Chorbishop Richard Saad, Mary Jerabek, Sr Maria Lucis, Debbie Booth, Deacon Walter Henderson, Paul Trussel, Paul Caruso, Jeff Brown, Mary Simmons, Linda Henry, ShaKendria Hooks, Lisa DeKam Nicholls, Don Williams, Ronnie Buchanan, Barbara Williams, Gail McMahan, Gracimo Ribeiro Bento, Bob Wiseman, Eve Moore, Bill Dinan, Carol Brandley, Eddie Hunter, Lawrence Brandley, Pete Ransom, Jerry Joiner, Beryl Curtis, Linda Cooper, Danny Rohling, Kay Dorion, Krissy Chism, Beverly Scroggins, William Scroggins, Lamar Smith, Wayne Little, Maria Morin, Andrea Little, Joseph Edwards, Fran Costanza, Christine Cover, Thatcher Kerzie, Malcolm Perry, Koslyn Chism, Kathleen Strawmeyer, and Stephanie Perry.

NEXT WEEK'S MASS READINGS

4:00 p.m.	Fourth Sunday of Advent	2Sam 7:1-5,8-12,14,16, Rom 16:25-27, Lk 1:26-38
7:30 a.m.	Vigil of Christmas	Rom 1:1-6, Mt 1:18-21
9:00 a.m.	Fourth Sunday of Advent	2Sam 7:1-5,8-12,14,16, Rom 16:25-27, Lk 1:26-38
10:45 a.m.	Vigil of Christmas	Rom 1:1-6, Mt 1:18-21

Fifth Precept of the Church

The fifth precept of the Church is to help to provide for the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability. This is a longstanding concept in terms of the faith. Under the Law of Moses, a tithe – one tenth – of all income or wealth increase was to be delivered annually to God, represented by the tribe of Levi. One of the reasons for the Old Covenant tithe was to provide for the people of the tribe of Levi who received no part of the Promised Land. The other tribes, Judah, Benjamin, Reuben, and so forth, all got parts of the land of Israel, but since the Levites were to serve the Tabernacle – later the Temple – and all of the other tribes, they were not directly tied to the land. Instead of focusing on farming and shepherding, the Levites were to focus on serving God and their fellow Israelites.

A tithe was specified in the Law of Moses, and in a certain way, that amount made sense. If the other eleven tribes got more land because none was allotted to Levi, then other tribes would be one-eleventh more prosperous as a result. In fairness, one eleventh, or 9.09%, would be due to the tribe of Levi, which is not that much different than 10%. Then again, there was precedent for choosing a tithe of 10%. Prior to the Law of Moses, Abraham tithed to the priest-king Melchizedek 10% of the spoils obtained in rescuing his nephew Lot from the kings of Elam, of Goiim, of Shinar, and of Ellasar (Gen 14:20). There was no law compelling him to do so, but Abraham tithed nonetheless. Likewise, Abraham's grandson Jacob tithed to God 10% of all of his possessions (Gen 28:22). In the cases of Abraham and Jacob, the tithe was an expression of thanksgiving and a recognition that God had prospered them.

Under the Law of Moses, however, the tithe became obligatory, again, for the sake of supporting the tribe of Levi. A tithe was expected on all income whether from field or flock, and as a more cash-based economy developed, on all economic proceeds. Tithing with money made more and more sense since agricultural goods are perishable and it made the obligation that much easier to deliver. Why cart up and move 1,000 bushels of apples when it is easier to sell the apples locally and bring the value of the thousand bushels to Jerusalem?

Now, does the tithe strictly apply to Christians? Not precisely. The moral obligation is to provide for the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability. Some will be able to contribute more, some less. Nevertheless, one tenth of one's earnings is a good ground rule, a good starting point. As far as the Church is concerned, that caveat of each according to his own ability opens the door for smaller fractions to be given by those less able to contribute and for larger fractions for those who have been blessed with more substantial incomes. A bus driver, a realtor, and a farmer will have greatly different incomes, and given that the realtor and farmer will have boom and bust years, their ability to contribute might vary quite drastically over time. And income is not the sole factor in the ability to contribute to the Church. Three families might have the same income but have quite different financial responsibilities: one might have five young children, one family might have five older self-sufficient children, and the other family might be raising children and caring for elderly grandparents as well.

Thus, the Church has shied away from imposing a mandatory tithe, even though some protestants have to submit their tax forms to their pastors. However, through the ages there have been times and places where tithing has been obligatory. While this has never been a universal mandate on the faithful, we do see something along those lines in some European countries where the state tithes on behalf of churches and synagogues. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland collect tithes as part of the income tax and distribute the money to the various religious organizations. While this might be lucrative for the churches, it does provide incentive for people to leave the practice of the faith. Likewise, it hinders people from giving to God out of thanksgiving and in recognition that God has made our prosperity possible, tithing like Abraham and Jacob.

- Fr Booth