



Catholic Community

Member of the English-Speaking Mission

Youth Mass: 1st Friday at TBD in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Sundays at 10 a.m. in the main Sanctuary

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Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 10:00-12:00

December 20th, 2020, Fourth Sunday of Advent

Welcome to our 10 am Mass at All Saints. Our Celebrant today is Fr. Dionisius Watun

- Music: Johannes Wrembek, Benilda de la Cruz, Anna Dziechciarz, Johannes Ploog, Ryan Quiming
- Lector: Eddie McGreal • Greeter: Heide Doblhofer • Altar Servers: Michael Oshin •
- Designated collection: All Saints •

First Reading (2 Sm 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16)

When King David was settled in his palace, and the LORD had given him rest from his enemies on every side, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!" Nathan answered the king, "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you." But that night the LORD spoke to Nathan and said: "Go, tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Should you build me a house to dwell in?'"

"It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth. I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever."

Second Reading (Rm 16:25-27)

Brothers and sisters: To him who can strengthen you, according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel (Lk 1:26-38)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Highest, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Designated collections are for special purposes in the Archdiocese of Berlin and are transferred in full. **However, in agreement with the Archdiocese, All Saints receives no financial support, so we are completely dependent upon your donations.** Please continue to donate to All Saints by using the **WHITE ENVELOPES** stamped "**ALL SAINTS FUND**" and/or transferring your donation to the Pax-Bank account written below. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!** • *Friends of All Saints e.V.*, IBAN: DE15 3706 0193 6001 6690 18, BIC: GENODED1PAX

In All Saints on Hüttenweg there will be three Holy Masses at Christmas:

1. Christmas Eve, Thursday, **Dec 24, at 8:30 p.m.**
2. Christmas Eve, Thursday, **Dec 24, at 10 p.m.** (filling up fast)
3. Christmas Day, Friday, **Dec 25, at 10 a.m. (May be canceled due to meeting restrictions)**

The mass on Christmas Day will especially address children, since we cannot offer a Christmas pageant this year.

Please register until Sunday, Dec.20, for Christmas with name, address and phone number and the number of people coming with you for the desired day and time by replying to allsaintsberlin@t-online.de, unless you have already registered in church.

Do not extinguish God's Spirit. Test everything. Hold on to the good (1 Thess 5,16-19)

In our two readings from the prophet **Isaiah** and from the gospel according to John, we hear of individuals being called by God. We can be sure that these parts of those two books were the last to have been written. It is only in *hindsight* that it was clear for Isaiah and for John the Baptist that they had been called by God. Prophets do not know the details of their ministry from the beginning.

Let us take the text from **Isaiah** (Is 61,1-2.10-11). Isaiah eventually discovers who benefited from the words he proclaimed. These were the lowly, the brokenhearted, captives and prisoners. I doubt he began his ministry with that specific audience in mind. But the prophet was convinced that "*the Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me*" – this is the first line of our reading. In the beginning of his ministry, Isaiah had no idea how this service to his people would evolve, but he knew that he received a mission from his God. Is there a master plan when God calls a person to be a prophet? No, "God's calling someone to be his prophet" is not accompanied by a hidden master plan! That is rarely the biblical case!

John the Baptist provides an example. Let us look at the prologue to John's gospel from which today's passage is taken (John 1,6-8.19-28) the gospel according to *John the Evangelist*... – not the *Baptist*, by the way). We see that John the Baptist was quite certain about the details and direction of his ministry. John the evangelist tells us about John the Baptist:

There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

John understands his place in salvation history so well that he can confidently proclaim: "*I am not the Messiah! I am not Elijah! I am not the prophet!*" When pressed, he replies,

I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' just as Isaiah the prophet said. Among you stands one you do not know. He is the one coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.

From the beginning, Christians have regarded John as the precursor of Jesus: as the person who spent and gave his life to prepare the way for Jesus. No one today denies John the Baptist did this – he did prepare the way for Jesus. But today, already for a long time, one thing has been clear– and this is due to research in the Bible and its context: the *historical* John the Baptist probably didn't recognize his role in God's plan. And he did not understand the meaning of his own death. He did not understand why he was beheaded by Herod. It probably never crossed the mind of John the Baptist that he actually was preparing the ground for the seed Jesus would later plant.

In the light of this, our passage from the **letter of St Paul to the community in Thessaloniki** (1 Thess 5,16-24) becomes significant. This section is one of the earliest Christian writings we possess. What Paul does is not so much to point out the meaning of the **past**. But what he does is to try to help his community experience the **present**, understand the present. I am convinced that Paul wrote this passage for the community in Thessaloniki – and for *this* community only. Do you really think that Paul wrote this passage with the idea in his mind that it would be read and reflected today, two thousand years later? Paul composed these lines to help his followers imitate Jesus even when they were not 100% certain where the imitation was leading them. Paul commands his people:

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks. Do not extinguish God's Spirit. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Keep away from every kind of evil.

I think this is not a bad way to live – especially when we're not exactly certain where our living is taking us in this time of the pandemic, in this time when we are not certain about so many things that change our lives.