Sts. JOACHIM & ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Diocese of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands
42 Barren Spot - P.O. Box 1160 Kings Hill U.S. Virgin Islands 00851
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Fourth Sunday of Advent — A
December 17—December 18, 2016

Fr. Louis Kemayou, Pastor
Most Rev. Herbert A. Bevard

ALTAR FLOWERS
Would you like the Altar flowers to be offered in memory of someone or in celebration of a special occasion, please call the office and schedule a date. A free-will donation is welcome.

SANCTUARY DEVOTIONAL LIGHT
Would you like to donate the sanctuary candle in memory of someone or in celebration of a special occasion, please call the office and schedule a date. A free-will donation is welcome.

ST. ANN’S BOOKSTORE & GIFTS SHOP
Tuesdays to Fridays: 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Sundays: Open after Masses

CCN / EWTN Channel 7
9:30 a.m. Sundays Mass (Live) Channel 7
Internet: www.livestream.com/caribbeancatholicnetwork7
Tel: (340) 779-3000

“TOGETHER BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”
MASS SCHEDULE AND INTENTION

December 17, 2016
5:00 p.m.
In Honor of St. Peregrine rb Ellen Howard

December 18, 2016
7:00 a.m.
St. Ann Parish Family
9:30 a.m.
B’day J’ymah Henry rb Grandparents

December 20, Tuesday
12:15 p.m.
Special Intention for Theodosia Christopher

December 21, Wednesday
6:30 a.m.
Special Intention for Kelvin Howard rb His wife

December 22, Thursday
12:15 p.m.
The Sick of the Parish rb The Priest of the Parish

December 23, Friday
6:30 a.m.
+Frances Allen rb Lucy & Family

December 24, Saturday
5:00 p.m.
Souls In Purgatory rb Elbe
11:00 p.m.
Christmas Carols
11:30 p.m.
Priest Intentions

19–Monday
Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a; Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17; Lk 1:5-25

20–Tuesday
Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-4ab, 5-6; Lk 1:26-38

21–Wednesday
Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk 1:39-45

22–Thursday
1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8abcd; Lk 1:46-56

23–Friday
Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14; Lk 1:57-66

24–Saturday
2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79

25–Sunday (White)
Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27-29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]
Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14
Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20
Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]

Directory

PRIESTS
Rev. Fr. Louis K. Kemayou, Pastor
Rev. Fr. Simon Peter Opira, Parochial Vicar
Rev. Msgr. Michael F. Kosak, (Retired) In Residence

SECRETARY
Ms. Mary St. Aime

BOOKSTORE
Office Staff

Assistant Sacristans: Mrs. Patricia Browne, Ms. Theodosia Christopher, Mrs. Patricia Griffith.

MAINTENANCE: Mr. Aldon Rogers & Mr. Michael Matthews

MASSES & DEVOTIONS
Weekend
Saturdays: 8:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.
Sundays: 7:00 a.m. & 9:30 a.m.

Weekday
Tuesdays & Thursdays: 12:15 p.m.
Wednesdays & Fridays: 6:30 a.m.
Fridays: 5:30 p.m.—Holy Hour

SACRAMENTS
BAPTISM: Call for Appointment
CONFESSION: Saturdays: 4:30 p.m. or by Appointment
MARRIAGE: Call 4 months in advance
ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Call anytime
FUNERAL: Tuesdays through Fridays
Please call prior to final arrangements

This week’s sanctuary candle
St. Ann Chapel: B’day Sylvana Tang
St. Joachim Church: Birthday Blessing Marcus Moreau
Shrine of Our Lady: For the Sick of the Parish

This week’s Altar Flowers
For the Sick of the Parish

Adorémus in ætérnum
Sanctíssimum Sacraméntum
ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
EVERY FRIDAY AT 5:30 P.M
THIRD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH 7:00 P.M
FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Today's readings on this last Sunday of Advent describe how God very dramatically provides signs of His loving intervention in human history when there seemed no way out. In the first reading, God directly invites King Ahaz to ask for a sign that God would protect the southern kingdom of Judah from enemies that threatened to destroy it.

Now, a wise leader would eagerly grasp at the opportunity. Not Ahaz, who in his pride had already decided on his own political solution! Isaiah decides to give him God's sign anyway, saying "the virgin shall conceive a child and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel." Ahaz was not interested in God's help. He foolishly trusted his own wisdom. As a result, the whole nation was defeated and sent into exile in Babylon in 582 BC.

The Gospel tells us of another man faced with a grave dilemma. Joseph, already bound by a solemn betrothal ceremony to take Mary as his wife, discovers to his dismay that she is with child. He can only suppose that she has been unfaithful to him, and is now subject to very severe laws that could result in her death if he exposes her. He takes the compassionate way out. He will divorce her quietly, exposing himself, not her, to shame.

God intervenes through a dream in which an angel tells him the whole story. The angel tells Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, for her child has God Himself as the Father! With incredible trust and humility, Joseph obediently agrees to the plan. What a contrast between this just man and crafty Ahaz.

How God rewards those who abandon their own plans and accept His plans for their lives! It's even more incredible that Jesus the God-man, in turn, entrusted His life to Joseph and Mary! No wonder a world holds its breath for His birth at Christmas.

Again, God entrusts the success of His plans this year to those who can love enough and sacrifice their plans for His own. What will we make of this Christmas? For that's what Christmas is meant to destroy our fears and make us God-bearers.

It's a question of that mysterious presence in our hearts that we call faith and hope. If we can only say a simple, unqualified "yes" as Mary and Joseph did, some amazing things could happen in our lives. May our seniors and aged Men and Women in need help us to channel our “YES”. O Come, O Come Emmanuel!

NOVENA To Mary, Queen of All Hearts

O Mary, Queen of All Hearts, Advocate of the most hopeless cases; Mother most pure, most compassionate; Mother of Divine Love, full of divine light, we confide to your care the favors which we ask of you today.

Consider our misery, our tears, our interior trials and sufferings! We know that you can help us through the merits of your Divine Son, Jesus. We promise, if our prayers are heard, to spread your glory, by making you known under the title of MARY, QUEEN OF ALL HEARTS, Queen of the Universe.

Grant, we beseech you, hear our prayers, for every day you give us so many proofs of your love and your power of intercession to heal both body and soul.

We hope against all hope: Ask Jesus to cure us, pardon us, and grant us final perseverance.

O Mary, Queen of All Hearts, help us, we have confidence in you. (3 times)

(Go to confession, receive Holy Communion and recite this prayer for nine consecutive days).

PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Mother of our Redeemer, in this era dedicated to you, with great joy we call you blessed. You believed in the Word of God the Father and declared yourself His handmaid, and so through you the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. We salute you as Mother of the Church. With what great love you must have watched over the infant Church and what motherly solicitude encouraged the Apostles as they committed themselves to carry on the work of Your Divine Son on earth. Make the Church ever to be the sign and instrument of intimate union with God.

To you, our mother, we entrust in a special way the priests of our diocese. To them has been given a sharing in the priesthood of your Divine Son. He has chosen them to be ministers of His Word and sacrament. Ask Him to fill them with zeal, to keep them faithful and joyful in His service, bringing glory to the Father and honor to the Church.
MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

God of all goodness, look on those who wait for the safe return of their loved ones who serve in the Armed Forces of their country. In faith and hope we turn to you for comfort. Grant that we may trust in your mercy and send an angel to sustain us as we await their safe return. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERVING OUR COUNTRY


Please call the Office, to add or remove names from this list.

HALO

Abundant blessings and thanks to our Altar Society Group “C” that cleaned and prepared the various areas for church services this past Saturday. Group “D” is scheduled for cleaning Saturday, December 24, 2016 starting about 6:00 A.M. Please think and pray about giving just one hour each month to prepare the Lord’s house for worship.

THE "O ANTIPHONS" OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 18
O Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love: come to teach us the path of knowledge!

DECEMBER 19
O Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai: come to rescue us with your mighty power!

DECEMBER 20
O Root of Jesse’s stem, sign of God’s love for all his people: come to save us without delay!

DECEMBER 21
O Key of David, opening the gates of God’s eternal Kingdom: come and free the prisoners of darkness!

DECEMBER 22

DECEMBER 23
O King of all nations and keystone of the Church: come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!

DECEMBER 24
O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law: come to save us, Lord our God!

From: Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers

STEWARDSHIP: “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” 1 Peter 4:10

Your giving is key to the success of the church plans and programs. To help us meet our obligations, please pray about TITHING, and become good STEWARDS. By giving to the church, you put your resources in God’s hands.

The 8th ANNUAL KEYS and SWORD AWARD banquet will be held at the Frenchman’s Reef on Saturday, February 11, 2017. The awardees for this year’s benefit are the Knights and Dames of Malta from the Diocese of St. Thomas. Honorees are: John & Claire Foster, Jerry & Christine Woodhouse, Rita de Chabert Schuster, Dr. Rizalina Batenga and Carol Rourke. You can purchase your tickets, and make Ad and Patron contributions by calling (340) 778-0484 or visiting Sts. Joachim and Ann Church office. All tickets are $150.00, ($90 is TAX-Deductible.).
THE HOLY FATHER’S CATECHESIS

 dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning! We are approaching Christmas, and the prophet Isaiah helps us once again to open ourselves to hope, receiving the Good News of the coming of salvation. Chapter 52 of Isaiah begins with the invitation addressed to Jerusalem to awake, to shake herself from the dust and lose the bonds, and to put on her beautiful garments, because the Lord has come to liberate His people (vv. 1-3). And he adds: “My people shall know my name, that it is I who speak; here am I!” (v. 6).

To this “Here am I!” said by God, which summarizing His whole will of salvation and of closeness to us, the song of joy of Jerusalem responds, in keeping with the prophet’s invitation. It is a very important historical moment. It is the end of the exile of Babylon; it is the possibility for Israel to find God again and, in faith, to find itself again. The Lord makes Himself close, and the “little remnant,” namely the few people that remained after the exile and that in exile endured in faith, that went through the crisis and continued to believe and to hope even in the midst of darkness, that “little remnant” will be able to see the wonders of God.

At this point the prophet inserts a song of exultation:

How beautiful upon the mountains:
are the feet of the one bringing good news,
Announcing peace, bearing good news,
announcing salvation, saying to Zion,
“Your God is King!”

...Break out together in song,
O ruins of Jerusalem!
For the LORD has comforted his people,
has redeemed Jerusalem.
The LORD has bared his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations;
All the ends of the earth can see
the salvation of our God. (Isaiah 52:7-9-10).

These words of Isaiah, on which we wish to pause a little, make reference to the miracle of peace, and they do so in a very particular way, fixing the eyes not on the messenger but on his feet, which run swiftly: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger…”

It is like the Bride of the Canticle of Canticles, who runs to her Beloved: “Look! Here he comes, leaping across the mountains, bounding over the hills” (Canticle 2:8). Thus runs also the messenger of peace, bringing the happy announcement of liberation, of salvation, and proclaiming that God reigns.

God has not abandoned His people and did not let Himself be defeated by evil, because He is faithful, and his grace is greater than sin. We must learn this, because we are obstinate and do not learn it. But I will ask a question: what is greater, God or sin? God! And who wins at the end, God or sin? God. He is able to overcome the greatest sin, the most shameful, the most terrible, the worst of sins. With what weapon does God overcome sin? With love! This means that “God reigns”; these are the words of faith in a Lord whose power bends over humanity, abases Himself, to offer mercy and liberate man from what disfigures in him the beautiful image of God, because when we are in sin, God’s image is disfigured. And the fulfillment of so much love will be in fact the Kingdom established by Jesus, that Kingdom of forgiveness and peace that we celebrate at Christmas and that is realized definitively at Easter. And the most beautiful joy of Christmas is this interior joy of peace: the Lord has cancelled my sins, the Lord has forgiven me, the Lord has had mercy on me, He came to save me. This is the joy of Christmas!

These are, brothers and sisters, the reasons for our hope. When everything seems ended, when, in face of so many negative realities, faith becomes difficult and the temptation comes to say that nothing has meaning anymore, see instead the Good News brought by those swift feet: God is coming to realize something new, to establish a kingdom of peace. God has “bared His arm” and is coming to bring freedom and consolation. Evil will not triumph for ever, there is an end to pain. Despair is defeated because God is among us.

And we are also asked to awake somewhat, like Jerusalem, in keeping with the invitation addressed to her by the prophet. We are called to become men and women of hope, collaborating with the coming of this Kingdom made of light and destined to all, men and women of hope. How awful it is when we meet a Christian that has lost hope! “But I don’t hope for anything, everything has ended for me”: so says a Christian who is unable to look at horizons of hope and, before his eyes there is only a wall. But God destroys these walls with forgiveness! And we must pray for this, that God may give us hope every day, and that He may give it to all; that hope that is born when we see God in the crib in Bethlehem. The message of the Good News that has been entrusted to us is urgent. We must also run like the messenger on the mountains, because the world cannot wait; humanity has hunger and thirst for justice, for truth <and> for peace.

And seeing the little Babe of Bethlehem, the little ones of the world will know that the promise has been fulfilled, the message has been realized. Enclosed in a newly born child, needy of everything, wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger, is the whole power of the God that saves. Christmas is a day to open the heart: it is necessary to open one’s heart to so much littleness, which is there in that Baby, and to so much wonder. It is the wonder of Christmas, for which we are preparing, with hope, in this Season of Advent. It is the surprise of a Child God, of a poor God, of a weak God, of a God who abandons His greatness to make himself close to each one of us.
OUR SICK:  Please keep in the charity of your prayers the sick amongst us.


Please call the Office, to add or remove names from this list.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God our Father, all the elements of nature obey your command. We praise and thank you for your protection during the hurricane season. We ask again to guide us through a new year, free of any earthquakes, floods, natural disasters and all acts of terrorism. Bless our families, and bring peace to all nations. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

SECOND COLLECTION:  The second collection this weekend is for the support of the Religious Education Program and Bus Transportation Services. The second collection next weekend is a special Christmas Offering. Everyone is encouraged to use the “Christmas Offering” envelope inserted in your box. Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

MEETING(S):

Tues., 7:00 p.m.—Prayer meeting/Christmas Carols/Fellowship
Wed., 10:30 a.m. – Mass at Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged.
Wed., & Fri., 8:30a.m.-11:30a.m.—Deacon Hyacinthe George is available for Prayer and Counseling via telephone-(340) 773-8910.

The Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites will meet on Sunday, December 18, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. in the St. Joseph Hospitality Lounge.

Parish Announcements:  Effectively immediately, all announcements must be in the Church office on Thursdays by 12:00 noon. Thank you for your cooperation.

BOOKSTORE:


NEW SUNDAY MISSALS like the one used in the Chapel now available for $8.00 each.  Come see! Come browse!

TREE OF LOVE AND COMPASSION: Please pick up a gift card from the “Tree of Love and Compassion” and purchase a gift. Please attach the card to your gift selection. Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

ADVENT PENANCE/CONFESSION SERVICE SCHEDULE

Holy Cross—Sunday, December 18 - 1:00—5:00 p.m.
St. Patrick’s—Wednesday, December 21 - 6:00 p.m.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM will close for the holiday season beginning Saturday, December 17. Classes will resume on Saturday, January 14, 2017.

UPCOMING EVENT

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. FUN DAY/BBQ

2017 Offertory Envelopes and Calendars are available December 17. Envelopes and calendars will be displayed in the Marian Hall. A box of envelope is reserved for those families who used them faithfully during 2016. Anyone wishing to register for a box of envelope may do so by visiting the Church office. Calendars are limited to one (1) per family.

Funeral service for Mary Ann Harris is scheduled for Tuesday, December 20, 2016 with viewing at 9:00 a.m. and service at 10:00 a.m. May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace and those who mourn them find comfort and peace.
“Let Our Personal Touch
Ease the Burden of Your Loss”

Gerard Luz A. James II
Licensed Funeral Director

James Memorial
Funeral Home, Inc.

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The V.I. Dept of Labor will be pre-screening all customers to see if they qualify for assistance.

CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR’S MASS SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2016
5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass
11:00 p.m. Christmas Carols
11:30 p.m. Midnight Mass

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2016
7:00 a.m. Christmas Day Mass
9:30 a.m. Christmas Day Mass

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2016
5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass
10:30 p.m. Holy Hour
11:30 p.m. Midnight Mass

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2017
(HAPPY NEW YEAR)
7:00 a.m. New Year Mass
9:30 a.m. New Year Mass
Please patronize these sponsors. It is through their generous support that this Church Bulletin is provided to our Parish Family. Let us express our gratitude by making them our first choice.

Sts. Joachim & Ann
1st Annual Fund-Raising Raffle

1st Prize—2017 Jeep Compass
2nd Prize—50" High Definition TV
3rd Prize—Virgin Islands Watch
4th Prize—Laptop Computer
5th Prize—iPhone 6

Ticket: $10.00; Book of 11: $100
Tickets can be purchased from any member of the following groups:

- Carmelites
- Sacred Heart Society
- St. Ann’s Catholic Mothers
- Secular Franciscans
- St. Ann’s Stewards of Christ
- Parish Office
- Prayer Groups

Drawing: July 23, 2017