



# Society of African Missions

## “The Mission”

23 Bliss Avenue  
 Tenafly, NJ 07670  
 Phone: 201-567-0450  
 Visit our website  
[www.smafathers.org](http://www.smafathers.org)

### Mass Schedule

#### Sundays

10:00 am; 12 noon

#### Weekdays & Holy Days

9:30 am & 11:45 am

#### Christmas & New Year’s Day

10:00 am; 12 noon

#### Confessions Saturdays:

After 11:45am Mass.

Or by appointment.

Contact Fr. James McConnell

201-567-0450 Ext. 242

#### Bereavement & Visit to the Sick

Contact Fr. James McConnell

201-567-0450 Ext. 242

#### Perpetual Mass Association

Office open Monday-Friday  
 from 9:30am to 3:00pm

#### S.M.A. Vocation Office

Fr Dermot Roache, SMA

Director

201-256-0450 Ext. 253

#### S.M.A. Museum

Open Monday-Sunday from  
 9:00am –5:00pm

#### Sunday Collection: \$1059

Thank you for your support.  
 Please remember to support  
 your local parishes.



#### **Administration:**

**Fr Ranees A. Rayappan,**  
 Provincial Superior

**Fr James McConnell,**  
 House Superior

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### Masses for the week of DECEMBER 10, 2023 – DECEMBER 16, 2023

Date	Time	Intention	Requested by:
<b>Sun.-Sat.</b>	<b>8:00</b>	<b>Liv. &amp; Dec. Benefactors of the SMA</b>	
Sun. Dec. 10	10:00	Annie Murphy+	Michael Murphy
	12:00	Salvatore Di Paolo+	Martha Di Paolo
Mon. Dec. 11	9:30	Burt Kuhlmeier Jr.+	Paul La Greca
	11:45	Frank Traina+ & Mary Ellen Ortiz	Susan Doonan-Murphy
Tue. Dec. 12	9:30	Nam Yae Cho Mariana+	Anna Lee
	11:45	Maribel Rubio+ & Marissa Tomboc+	
Wed. Dec. 13	9:30	Peter & Denise Hickey+	Angela Hickey
	11:45	Janina Mojak+	Richard & Lydia
Thurs. Dec. 14	9:30	John & Darcy Neville+	Neville Family
	11:45	Jefrey Job Parrenas+ Fatima Nap Co+	
Fri. Dec. 15	9:30	Anna Soto+	Paul La Greca
	11:45	Maureen Portmann+ Tom Peltier+	Michelle Supper
Sat. Dec. 16	9:30	Gabriel Garcia+ & David Garcia+	
	11:45	Benedict+ & Anthony Walsh+	Breda Walsh

### Today’s Readings:

**First Reading** Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

*We hear a call to “prepare a way for the Lord”.*

**Second Reading** 2 Peter 3:8-14

*Peter suggests there will be a new creation “where righteousness will be at home”.*

**Gospel** Mark 1:1-8

*John the Baptist baptises in water, anticipating the coming of the Messiah, who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.*



# ***“He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.”***

## ***Illustration***

*Many of us have a family member or a good friend whom we love dearly, but who is also annoying. Marie’s sister, Joanna, was like that. Joanna was active in the environmental movement and often made bold pronouncements and judgements about people or about lifestyle choices.*

*She would call round to visit Marie and warn that her life was out of balance. She told Marie that she was so focused on her job in finances that she was neglecting ageing relatives, forgetting the names of nieces and nephews because she saw them so little, and not keeping in close contact with old friends. She challenged Marie to reduce the time she spent on her computer and engage more with people around her. Joanna also encouraged her sister to take more interest in issues of justice, peace and ecology that might contribute towards the common good.*

*There came a point when Marie found herself acknowledging a hard truth: that her life was indeed out of balance. She had been stung by Joanna’s criticism and started to admit that she should review her priorities in life: the way she spent her time, her failure to nurture relationships with her family and local community, and the ways in which life seemed to be flying by without identifiable achievements. Her sister’s annoying persistence caused Marie to take stock and reflect.*

## ***Gospel Teaching***

*We are now in Advent, in the time of the Church’s year when we meet another person who may really irritate us: John the Baptist. When it comes to people’s lists of favourite saints, he probably would not top anyone’s. He’s an unsettling Old Testament type of prophet who comes on the scene proclaiming, according to the Gospel, a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*

*Yet – the Church says that we need to hear John’s message. The season of Advent is not the season of Christmas. Before we rush to the joy of Christmas, before we receive the great mystery of God with us, we must prepare. We should set aside time to examine our spiritual lives, look with honesty at ways in which our lives are out of balance, reassess self-destructive behaviours, and try to bring about more harmony in ourselves, in the community and in the world.*

*Don’t dismiss John because he lives in the wilderness, clothed with camel’s skin and living on locusts and wild honey. Despite his weirdness, large numbers were drawn to him and were transformed by his message. They understood that he spoke truth, although his message was uncompromising and undiluted. He calls us to try to do better in life – to move on from sinfulness and selfishness to a life of care, compassion, love and joy, and to make steps to forgive others.*

*Jesus is stronger than John, and he also brings a more powerful baptism. Jesus will baptise his followers with the Holy Spirit, so that they will be equipped to bring about the peace and justice for which humanity has waited so long. This is a momentous message.*

## ***Application***

*What kinds of changes should we seek in Advent? Advent is a time to prepare not only materially but also spiritually for the coming of the Lord. It is a time to step outside our busy lives, our tasks and appointments, and recognise God’s loving presence in all humanity and in the natural world.*

*Take time today to look up into the sky and be aware of breathing, taking in the fresh God-given air that keeps us alive. Be more sensitive to the people around us and how they enrich our life. And can we be of service to people who are sick or in trouble or worried about facing Christmas on a low income? Can we give time to people – perhaps someone in our family - who might be depressed or who may not have many friends?*

*In Advent, we hear John’s message as an invitation to spiritual reflection. Just as we might clean our house in preparation for a special guest, so the Church asks us to take stock of ourselves and to be at our best when the special day arrives. Perhaps other people have already pointed out deficiencies in our lives. The promise and the hope, however, are that we can do something about it. We can change, and we can find a rhythm of life that makes time for wholeness and harmony.*

*John tells us that Jesus baptises with the Holy Spirit. What does this mean for us?*