





ST. BARNABAS CATHOLIC CHURCH

3955 Orange Avenue, Long Beach, California 90807 | (562) 424-8595
Website: www.stbarnabaslb.org |  | 



MISSION STATEMENT: *"We, the Catholic Community of St. Barnabas Parish, are a people formed by Christ, called in Baptism and united in the Eucharist; we continue the mission of the Church in the world through Prayer, Apostolic Works, Evangelization, and Christian Stewardship."*

Rev. Antony J. Gaspar Ed.D.
Pastor

Fr. Sebastian Venni
Priest-in-Residence

Dn. Carlito de los Reyes
Permanent Deacon

PARISH OFFICE

Office (562) 424-8595
Fax (562) 595-7875

Parish Office E-Mail:
church@stbarnabaslb.org
Melissa Ray | Olivia Baylen

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Saturday 9:00 am - 4:30 pm
Sunday 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

MASS TIMES

SATURDAY 8:00 AM
(VIGIL) 5:00 PM

SUNDAY 7:30 AM
9:00 AM
10:45 AM
12:30 PM
5:30 PM

MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:00 AM

WEDNESDAY 6:30 PM

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION/MASS

Adoration First 8:30 am - 7:00 pm
Friday of the month Mass 7:30 pm

MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP NOVENA/MASS

Wednesday Rosary 6:15 pm
(Novena after Mass) Mass 6:30 pm



**See how the farmer
awaits the precious
yield of the soil.**

-James 5:7

A SEASON OF HOPE

Today we can bask in the imagery that the Mass readings offer us. In particular, Isaiah's vision of a parched land that blooms with abundant flowers holds a message for each of us. Too often we are just like that parched land. We can allow ourselves to become absorbed in the waves of consumerism that grip so many. We look for fulfillment in the things that money can buy. Unfortunately, this leaves us like parched land, thirsting for something that money can't buy. This holy season has much to offer to quench our thirsts. In a word, this season offers hope. We are told that those who are ransomed by God will know joy and gladness. For them, sorrow and mourning will be no more. Let us place our hope in these promises.

SACRAMENTS

Confession

1st Friday of the month 7:15 am - 7:50 am
Saturday 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Infant Baptisms

4th Sunday of the month 2:30 pm
by prior registration

Weddings

Please contact Priest 6 months prior

Anointing of the Sick

Please call the Parish Office

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
& CONFIRMATION**
(562) 988-6855

1130 Marshall Place, Long Beach, CA 90807
(Office located upstairs of Parish Center)
Email: RE@stbarnabaslb.org

ST. BARNABAS SCHOOL

(562) 424-7476 Fax (562) 981-3351
3980 Marron Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90807
Email: stbarnabas_jkellam@yahoo.com
Principal: Jennifer Kellam
Website: www.school.stbarnabaslb.org

FINANCIAL REPORT

Last Sunday's Collection:

\$12,928.41

Thank you for your prayerful giving
Your generosity supports the operations
of our Parish Community.

MINISTRY DIRECTORY

ADORATION COORDINATORS	Charito Salas: (562) 490-9853 Myra Magbitang: (562) 749-0785
ALTAR SERVERS	Sylvia Gaytan: (562) 477-2143
BULLETIN TEAM/SOCIAL MEDIA/WEBSITE	Joyce Kaiser: (562) 988-6855
CENACLE MARIAN MOVEMENT	Annie Pallivathukal: (562) 492-9587
COUPLES FOR CHRIST	Roy/Faye Rivera: (562) 424-5366
CURSILLO	Matt Dobberpuhl: (562) 858-5394
DIVINE MERCY APOSTOLATE	Alvino/Carmen Jauregui: (562) 428-3760
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION	Samanth Christi: (562) 521-4040 Church Jim Supancheck: (562) 424-3599 The Sick
FILIPINO-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION	Dr. Gene Lowther: (562) 427-1386
FINANCE COUNCIL	Jun Magbitang: (562) 426-2910
HOLY NAME SOCIETY	Bob Frazier: (562) 843-5824
INFANT BAPTISM	Email: church@stbarnabaslb.org
I.T. RESOURCES TEAM	David Ameho (562) 253-3644
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS (Council #3449)	Jun Tadique (562) 331-6156
LANDSCAPE BEAUTIFICATION	Robert Kalowes: (562) 225-1946
LECTORS	Marina Cuico: (562) 254-8133
LEGION OF MARY	Rosamma Michael: (562) 426-9509
LITURGICAL MUSIC COORDINATOR	Ella Lagos: (562) 313-6891
OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP NOVENA	Dn. Carlito de los Reyes: (562) 423-4140
OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE MINISTRY	Tricia J: (303) 803-0287
PASTORAL COUNCIL	Darrell Stewart: (562) 424-8982
PEER MINISTRY	Religious Ed Office: (562) 988-6855
PLANNING & BUILDING TEAM	Sean Farragher: (562) 533-6444
PROJECT ACHIEVE MINISTRY	Michelle Gustilo-Smithson: (310) 344-7862
RCIA / ADULT SACRAMENTAL PREP	Parish Office: (562) 424-8595
RESPECT LIFE	Robert Kalowes: (562) 426-3781
SACRISTANS	Geraldine Johnston: (562) 498-8187
SAFEGUARD THE CHILDREN & YOUTH	Sandy Komine: (562) 833-7290
STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE	Robert Kalowes: (562) 225-1946
USHERS & GREETERS	Darrell Stewart: (562) 424-8982
WEDDING COORDINATOR	Deb Ryan: (562) 209-2458
WELCOME HOME MINISTRY Coffee & Donuts	Lisa Johnson: (562) 760-8138 Karen Miller: (562) 756-4144
WORSHIP ENVIRONMENT/EVENT DECOR	Michelle Feiner: (562) 208-7310

PARISH REGISTRAR

“Active” membership at a Parish enables a person to be eligible to sponsor a child for Baptism, to receive financial aid for Catholic Education, to be married in the Parish and to prepare one’s children for the Sacraments. To be an “active” member is to participate in the life of prayer and stewardship in the Parish. All adults over the age of 21, living with their parents or on their own, must register in the Parish to be considered members. The use of the offering envelopes may also help you to qualify for tax incentives. Participating in one or more of the ministries offered by the Parish is proof of the sharing of time and talent for the greater good of our Church Community. So please pick-up a free registration form at the Parish Office, or print one from our website at www.stbarnabaslb.org. Stop by the Parish Office and we will be happy to help you! Welcome to St. Barnabas!!!

ROSARY/DIVINE MERCY

Please join us in reciting
the Rosary every morning
(Monday through
Saturday) at 7:35 am



Divine Mercy

before daily Mass. It is a beautiful and spiritual way to start your day. Every day following weekday Mass, we invite you to join us for the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. It starts about five minutes after Mass (around 8:35 am). It can be the best fifteen minutes of the day. If you cannot join us, perhaps you can join the Divine Mercy on EWTN television channel at noon.

Take home some fun in God’s Word, grab a copy of “The Kids’ Bulletin” after each Mass!



COFFEE & DONUTS

available after the
7:30 AM, 9:00 AM
& 10:45 AM
Masses at the
PARISH CENTER.
Closed On: 12/25 & 1/1

Mark Your Calendar

- 12/12 Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration
- 12/13 SBS Christmas Program 6:30pm/Church
- 12/14 Communal Advent Penance Service 7:30pm
- 12/15 Senior Luncheon 11am/Hall
- 12/15 - 12/23 Simbang Gabi (see schedule on pg.6)
- 12/19 SBS Penance Service 9:30am
- 12/24 Christmas Eve
- 12/25 Christmas Day (Office closed & on 12/26)
- 1/1 New Year's Day

Weekly Mass Intentions

Monday, December 12th

8:00 am- Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe

5:30 pm- Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Tuesday, December 13th

8:00 am- +Jim Goodman

Wednesday, December 14th

8:00 am- +Andrew Periaswamy

6:30 pm- Holy Name Society Ministry

Thursday, December 15th

8:00 am- +Andrew Periaswamy

6:30 pm- +Lorenzo & +Maternidad Laluan;

+Lorena Jean Laurel

Friday, December 16th

8:00 am- Alejandro Bernardo; Ernesto Paraiso

6:30 pm- +Ralgy L. Ross; Juan Pascua;

+Asuncion Isurena Enriquez

Saturday, December 17th

8:00 am- Joseph Vu's Family

5:00 pm- +Carmen Sarmiento; +Reynaldo Ramos;

+Nora Brennan; +Felisa Parlan; Steve Morey

Sunday, December 18th

7:30 am- +Domingo & +Pacita Mendoza; +Leo Cormier

9:00 am- +Anunciacion Fabon; +Valdomero Magno;

+Inday Magno

10:45 am- Lincoln Bago; +Arthen Antes

12:30 pm- +Herminio Franco; +Vicente Larios Sr.

5:30 pm- Lal & Gigi Laluan; +Judith Fox

**Book your Mass Intentions in person, at the Parish Office. (+indicates deceased)*

Pray For The Sick

The following names have been recently added:

Debbie Miller, John Routh, Edith Daley

All are encouraged to pray for them and others already included in the **Prayer Intention Book**, which gets presented at each Mass. Call the Office to be added to the Bulletin list. You may also write your own prayer intentions in the Prayer Intention Book, that is available before each Saturday and Sunday Mass, located on a stand at the main entrance of the Church.

We Remember...

We Pray for and remember our parishioners who have died.

Remedios Calimquim 11/2 Andrew Periaswamy 11/30

Jessie Slusher 12/4

Today's Readings

First Reading — The barren deserts will rejoice and flower. Tired bodies will receive strength. Aching hearts will be made glad (Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10).

Psalm — Lord, come and save us (Psalm 146).

Second Reading — Be patient, for the coming of the Lord is as sure as the rain (James 5:7-10).

Gospel — Tell of what you hear and see: The blind regain their vision, the crippled their movement, the deaf their hearing (Matthew 11:2-11).

The English translation of the Psalm Responses from *Lectionary for Mass* © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

Readings For The Week

Monday: Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; Jdt 13:18bcde, 19; Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47, or any readings from the Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary, nos. 707-712

Tuesday: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13; Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-19, 23; Mt 21:28-32

Wednesday: Is 45: 6b-8, 18, 21b-25; Ps 85:9ab, 10-14; Lk 7:18b-23

Thursday: Is 54:1-10; Ps 30:2, 4-6, 11-12a, 13b; Lk 7:24-30

Friday: Is 56:1-3a, 6-8; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 7-8; Jn 5:33-36

Saturday: Gn 49:2, 8-10; Ps 72:1-4ab, 7-8, 17; Mt 1:1-17

Sunday: Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-6; Rom 1:1-7; Mt 1:18-24

Saints & Special Observances

Sunday: Third Sunday of Advent

Monday: Our Lady of Guadalupe

Tuesday: St. Lucy

Wednesday: St. John of the Cross

Friday: *Las Posadas* begins

LAS POSADAS is a novenario (nine days of religious observance) celebrated in Mexico and by Mexican-Americans in the Southwestern United States, beginning December 16 and ending December 24, during which families participate in nightly Christmas processions that re-create the Holy Pilgrimage of Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus on their way to Bethlehem. Each evening, a small child dressed as an angel leads a procession through the streets of the town. The procession is made up of children dressed in silver and gold robes carrying lit candles and images of Mary and Joseph riding a donkey. Adults, including musicians, follow the procession, which visits selected homes and asks for lodging for Joseph and Mary. Traditionally, the procession is always refused lodging, though the hosts often provide refreshments. At each stop, passages of scripture are read and Christmas carols are sung.



Parish News

FAITH DIRECT

In this season of Advent, we are continuously preparing ourselves for the celebration of Christ's birth. Why not help our own parish prepare for the coming new year by signing up with Faith Direct? By supporting St. Barnabas through Faith Direct, both you and our parish can save some time and peace of mind this holiday season. Already using Faith Direct? Don't forget to add your Christmas or End-of-Year contributions to your account. **You can also download the free Faith Direct App on your phone!**



Visit www.faithdirect.net and use our church code: CA794

You may still continue to receive collection envelopes. This is just another option and convenience for our Parishioners! Thank you for your continued support of our parish family!
God Bless You! - Rev. Antony J. Gaspar

COMMUNAL ADVENT PENANCE SERVICE

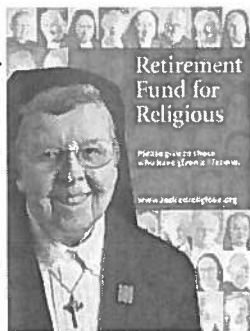
Wednesday, December 14th, 2016

Rosary: 5:30pm
OLPH Novena: 6:00pm
Mass: 6:30pm
Penance Services: 7:30pm-9:30pm



RETIREMENT FOR THE RELIGIOUS

Aging religious need your help. Senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests have offered their lives in service to others—educating the young, comforting the sick, seeking justice for the oppressed. Today, many are frail, elderly, and in need of assistance. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious helps to furnish medications, nursing care, and other necessities. Special envelopes are in the pews. You can also take it home and bring it back next week. **Please give generously to today's second collection.**



ST. BARNABAS HOLIDAY MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday, Dec. 24th (Christmas Eve)
— No Confessions —
5:00pm— Children & Family Mass
9:30pm— Caroling/Choir-Singing
10:00pm— Traditional Mass
Sunday, Dec. 25th (Christmas Day)
Regular Sunday Mass Schedule, except **NO** 5:30pm Mass!
Sunday, Jan. 1st (New Year's Day)
Regular Sunday Mass Schedule, except **NO** 5:30pm Mass!



Welcome Fr. Sebastian Venni

Fr. Sebastian Venni is from the diocese of Trichirapalli, Tamilnadu, South India. Soon after completing his undergraduate work, while preparing himself for business school and to take up his dad's business, Fr. Sebastian was led into a powerful retreat by the will of God which served as a turning point in his life and made him decide about his vocation to the priesthood. He joined the seminary and did his philosophy studies in Arulanandar College and his theology at Sacred Heart Seminary in Tamilnadu. Fr. Sebastian was ordained for the diocese of Trichirapalli on May 2, 2004.



Soon after his ordination, Fr. Sebastian was appointed as the secretary to his Bishop Antony Devotta for 3 years. Later he was appointed as a parish priest of a newly erected Divine Mercy Parish at Nagamangalam, Trichy for a period of three years where he built a Church for Divine Mercy which is the first Church for Divine Mercy in his diocese of Trichy. He was also in charge of 2 primary schools during that time.

In 2010, his Bishop asked him to serve the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin where he served the combined parishes of Sacred Heart and Corpus Christi in Marshfield, Wisconsin. Considering the needs of his diocese at Trichy, Fr. Sebastian continues further studies at Loyola Marymount while a Priest-in-residence at St. Margaret Mary. **He is now assigned to our Parish, at St. Barnabas! He's a familiar face, since he's helped us with Masses before. We are happy and blessed to have him here!!!**

Knights of Columbus Corner

COME JOIN US! MONDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 2016

The Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Our Lady of Guadalupe (Spanish: *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*) is the title of the Blessed Virgin Mary who appeared to Juan Diego in December 1531. The Virgin arranged flowers in Juan's *tilma*, or cloak, and when Juan Diego opened his cloak before Archbishop Zumárraga on December 12th, on the fabric was a marvelous portrait of herself. This miraculous image has proved to be ageless, and is kept in the shrine built in her honor, the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City and is the most visited Catholic pilgrimage site in the world, and the world's third most-visited sacred site.



In honor of the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Knights of Columbus Council #3449 is sponsoring the celebration on **Monday, December 12, 2016** at St. Barnabas Church. There will be a **Mass at 8:00am to be followed by a reception at the Hall**. Also, another **Mass will be held at 5:30pm to be followed by a procession of the Our Lady of Guadalupe icon** in the church premises. The event will culminate with a reception dinner at the Parish Hall. Please come and join us!

St. Barnabas School News

SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Join us in the Church on Tuesday, December 13th from 6:30pm to 8:30pm for our School's Christmas Program!

SENIORS LUNCHEON

Will be on Thursday, December 15th at 11am in the Parish Hall. There will be delicious food, holiday music and raffle prizes. Christmas entertainment by Miss Dannelle's Dance class and St. Barnabas students.

RSVP by Monday, December 12th to the School Office at (562) 424-7476.

Join Our New Children's Choir

St. Barnabas Children's Choir is actively recruiting, so if you'd like to join, please come to their upcoming practice on Saturday, December 17th from 6pm to 7pm, at the Parish Center/Music Room, or contact the Parish Office with your information.



If you would like to sing, or play an instrument, what a great way to share your beautiful talent!!!

Treasures From Our Tradition

When the ties of affection and authority that bound Europe's Catholics unraveled in the sixteenth century, many cultures lost time-honored customs of faith. Some customs proved to be especially difficult for the reformers to wrest away from the people, especially those celebrated in the home. This week in Sweden, a country where the Catholic Church was disestablished four hundred years ago, a Catholic martyr from Sicily is the most beloved figure. St. Lucia, Lucy, is celebrated on December 13. The long-story-short is that Lucy was a Christian whose father wanted to marry her off to a pagan fellow, and she rejected her father's authority. To make an example of her, her father had her killed. In the course of the brutal martyrdom, Lucy lost her beautiful eyes, but her vision was miraculously restored. The candles worn today by the eldest daughter of the family are tokens of the fire that refused to harm the saint. So this patroness of light and clear vision is revered on the shortest, darkest days of the Nordic winter. Before the reform of the Gregorian calendar in the sixteenth century, December 13 was the winter solstice.

Today, young girls appear in the morning wearing lighted candles on their crowned heads (battery-operated now after many mishaps), and serve sweet rolls and coffee to everyone in the house. For the Swedes, who are not churchgoers, the "Lucias" are the official heralds of the holiday season and a sign of everyone's yearning for more light in this world. Europe once abounded with customs like this; the survival of this custom in Scandinavia is a sign of God's grace, and how fertile the soil is to receive the true message of Advent.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Holy Humor

One day, the boss asked one of his frequently absent employees, "Do you believe in life after death?"

"Why, yes, in fact I do," replied the employee.

"Well then, that makes everything fine," the boss went on.

"Because after you left yesterday to go to your grandmother's funeral, she stopped in to see you!"

THE LAST BOOK OF CATHOLIC JOKES, by Deacon Tom Sheridan published by ACTA Publications, Chicago.



Philanthropizza.

Please join us at California Pizza Kitchen for a flavormsome fundraising event. All you need to do is bring in this flyer on our scheduled date and present it to your server when ordering. 20% of your check will benefit our organization. So come out and enjoy something delicious from the CPK menu. Your taste buds will thank you, and so will we.

St. Barnabas School
California Pizza Kitchen
125 Lakewood Center Mall
Lakewood, Ca 90712
(562) 633-0854
Wednesday, December 14th 2016

Thanks for your support.
We can't wait to see you.

Donation amount includes proceeds from tax and gratuity.
Manager please attach this flyer to the guest check.
Valid for dine-in and take-out only.
Event proceeds used if flyers are distributed in or near the restaurant.

SBS RESTAURANT NIGHT: CPK

Join us for our last Restaurant Night of the year on Wed. Dec. 14th at California Pizza Kitchen at 125 Lakewood Center Mall. 20% of all sales will be donated to SBS!

MUST PRESENT FLYER

'Tis The Season For Helping!

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

It's a great opportunity for service hours too!

We need a few strong people who can help Michelle in decorating the Church for the Christmas season. Please contact Michelle Feiner at (562) 208-7310 to offer your services.

DONATING POINSETTIAS!

To continue the tradition, if you would like to donate POINSETTIAS, please drop them off freely, near the Baptismal Font, for the use of decorating the Statues and Altar. Please drop-off only now through Fri. Dec. 23rd.



SPONSOR A CHRISTMAS TREE!!!

On a first come, first serve basis!

This year we are offering our Parishioners a chance to sponsor one of the Christmas Trees around the Church. It's a nice way to thank your Family, or in honor of a loved one. Their names will be featured on the trees. Come by the Parish Office or email us at: church@stbarnabaslb.org for more details!!!



Annual Giving Tree Program

All gifts are due today, December 11th. The gifts will be gathered and delivered to the Marian Center here in Long Beach by the Pack 32 Cub Scouts on December 11th. Thank you for your generosity by helping our brothers and sisters in Christ. If you have questions, please contact pack32longbeach@gmail.com or (562) 726-4894. Also, if you are in need or know of any other families in need from St. Barnabas Parish, please contact the Parish Office. We would also like to reserve Giving Tree presents for local parishioners.



Congratulations To The Following:

WEDDING BANNES:

Jaime Espinosa & Aldrina Arias

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:

Dan & Erna Selvik 12/6 (30 yrs)
 Augusto & Elizabeth David 12/10 (44 yrs)
 Eli & Dolores Herrera 12/17 (61 yrs)
 Lal & Gigi Laluan 12/18 (45 yrs)
 Eddie & Rose Reyes 12/23 (48 yrs)
 Damon & Jacqueline Smith 12/23
 Tony & Beth Silva 12/23
 Virgil & Josette Sangria 12/27 (35 yrs)
 Steven & Adriana Lake 12/28 (40 yrs)



Christmas Eve Dramatization

We are in need of angels, shepherds, kings, narrators, sheep, and more! Come one-come all!! The Christmas Eve Dramatization for children will once again be at the 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass on December 24th. **Rehearsal will be announced/posted on our website.** Your child will need to be in the church Christmas Eve at 4:00 pm. Mass usually is about 1 hour and 30 minutes.



NEW/RE-REGISTERED PARISHIONERS:

Eladio & Alicia Estrada and their family

Celebrating your Wedding Anniversary?
 Email us (a month before date) with Names, year you're celebrating, along with your Wedding Anniversary date: church@stbarnabaslb.org

Simbang Gabi 2016

The St. Barnabas Filipino-American Association invites everyone to come, celebrate, and experience Simbang Gabi (Tagalog for: Advent Night Mass)

Here is the Nine-Day Simbang Gabi Advent Mass
 Schedule: **December 15th - 23rd, 2016**
 Theme: **MARIAN VIRTUES**

	Date	Day	Time	Theme
1 st	12/15	Thursday	6:30pm	Most PURE
2 nd	12/16	Friday	6:30pm	Most PRUDENT
3 rd	12/17	Saturday	5:00pm	Most HUMBLE
4 th	12/18	Sunday	5:30pm	Most FAITHFUL
5 th	12/19	Monday	6:30pm	Most DEVOUT
6 th	12/20	Tuesday	6:30pm	Most OBEDIENT
7 th	12/21	Wednesday	6:30pm	Most PATIENT
8 th	12/22	Thursday	6:30pm	Most MERCIFUL
9 th	12/23	Friday	6:30pm	Most JOYFUL

Please come and invite your friends and family to join as a spiritual offering in preparation for celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus! All are welcome!



If you are interested in donating or for any questions, please contact: Helen Cajayon (562) 290-2019, Dr. Gene Lowther (562) 427-1386, Gigi Laluan (562) 225-3061 or Eva Talastas (562) 818-9541.

Good News!

December 11, 2016
 Third Sunday of Advent
 Is 35:1-6a, 10, Jas 5:7-10, Mt 11:2-11

John came to announce a savior, but in his difficult imprisonment, he and his disciples began to wonder if the one he announced was truly the one. It is easy to doubt when difficulty comes our way and life doesn't treat us as we think we deserve.

In this painting, a young John the Baptist is accompanied by an angel who points up the hill. John is shown kneeling in prayer, referencing the months he spent in the desert preparing himself as well as preaching conversion. Even with this long and fruitful preparation, John's heart is tempted to doubt. Yes, even saints struggle.

John sends his disciples to ask Jesus if he is the Messiah. It does us much good to bring our concerns and doubts to Jesus directly! Jesus responds as he often does. Rather than just answer, "I am he"—which could easily be considered an empty claim—he invites them to look at the evidence. He fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 35:5: "The eyes of the blind shall see, and the ears of the deaf be opened," the poor shall find a new reason to hope.

Jesus' mission is to change lives and to save us from the blindness of egoism, the deafness of a hardened heart, and the closed mind that cannot accept the other. He is the savior of those who let themselves be saved.

Saint James' exhortation could have been meant for John the Baptist or anyone who finds it hard to persevere in trusting and following Jesus: "You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand" (5:8).

For Reflection

What doubts about God arise in my heart? How do I deal with these moments of uncertainty?

Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

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