

Two New Eras

Two men unroll parchment scrolls and each reads his to the people. Their proclamations signal the beginning of a vast new era. One man is Ezra the scribe, and the other is Jesus of Nazareth. Four centuries separate their readings.

Let's look.

We find Ezra in the First Reading. He is in Jerusalem after the return of the Jewish exiles from captivity in Babylon. What is the "captivity in Babylon," you ask? Perhaps it will help to have more of that story.

Ancient Israel was captured by the Babylonian empire 586 years before Christ. They took Jerusalem itself. They demolished the great temple built by Solomon centuries before and deported all productive citizens to Babylon, leaving peasants to run the holy city, if they could.

After fifty years or so of their captivity, Cyrus the Great, king of Persia (now Iran), came into possession of Babylon and he let the captives go. Many had switched their faith by this time in favor of foreign gods and customs, but the remainder, perhaps 5000, made ready to return home. By this time a lot of them had never even seen Jerusalem.

There were great caravans. Ezra—priest, scribe and teacher—led one of them on the four-month journey across the desert.

They arrived to find Jerusalem a ruined city with widespread moral decay.

Reconstruction of a urban center is immensely difficult, as we know from our own day.

Ezra worked long and hard to bring back the ecclesiastical and civil fiber of Jerusalem and the nation.

At last a new temple was finished in 516 BC, and the ruined city walls were rebuilt.

At this point Ezra stood up on a high wooden platform built for the occasion so he could be heard and seen, and he "read plainly" from the scroll that held "the book of the law."

He started reading at daybreak and continued until midday!

Not only did they have their city again, but also they now had heard the Word of God again. And finally there was again a temple where they could worship.

Their new era had begun!

Four centuries later we find Jesus of Nazareth making a similar return. He is going back to Galilee, the region where he grew up (Gospel). He has been baptized and has spent time in the desert. His trip is now "in the power of the Spirit," Luke says, and it takes him to his home town of Nazareth. Like Ezra, he takes up a scroll, this one containing the book of Isaiah—much of which, coincidentally, had been written during the Jewish exile.

He reads the passage, which says that the Spirit of the Lord has sent him to "bring glad tidings to the poor, ... to let the oppressed go free," to proclaim a time of favor from the Lord (Is 61:1-2). This is what Ezra had done in the First Reading, but Jesus' mission is much, much more.

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A far greater new era has begun.

He sits down now, at the same level as the people. He says almost casually, "today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

His mission is to rebuild their hearts, not just their city, to return them to God, who is their real home. Would they accept this startling new epoch?

Will we?

Stay tuned for more next Sunday.

John Foley, SJ

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time January 23, 2022

St. Stephens Indian Mission

www.saintstephensmission.com

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Fr. Jim Heiser.....Pastor

Fr. Drew Duncan.....Associate Pastor

Sr. Monica Suhayda, CSJ.....Past. Asst./ Gift Shop 856-4330

Patti McMahan.....Director of Religious Education

Blessed Sacrament & St. Josephs

332-9090

Sr. Teresa Frawley, OSF.....Past. Asst./Director of Religious Education

St. Stephens

Friday: Adoration followed by Benediction 3:45pm

Saturday: Sacrament of Reconciliation 2:00 PM to 2:30 PM

Sunday Masses: 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM

Tuesday & Thursday: Mass at 7:15am

Wednesday & Friday: Mass at 5:00pm

1st Saturday: Adoration at 8:00am; Mass at 9:00am

St. Josephs, Ethete

11am Sunday Mass

Sacrament of Reconciliation 15 minutes before Mass

Blessed Sacrament, Ft. Washakie

Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 PM

Sacrament of Reconciliation 15 minutes before Mass

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Come in seeking; come in wondering; come in hurting. Come into this house of companionship and compassion. Come in. You are welcome here. Our faith Family opens its doors to you and in the name of Christ, bids you Welcome!
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The purpose of St. Stephen's Indian Mission, the presence of the Roman Catholic Church among the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho, is to grow into a strong community of believers, sharing our lives in the Holy Spirit, forming one welcoming People of God, who are committed to Jesus Christ, His gospel and mission.

Readings January 24th through January 30th:

Mon: 2 Sm 5:1-7, 10; Ps 89:21-22, 25-26; Mk 3:22-30
 Tue: Acts 22:3-16; Ps 117:1bc, 2; Mk 16:15-18
 Wed: 2 Tm 1:1-8; Ps 96:1-3, 7-8a, 10; Mk 4:1-20
 Thur: 2 Sm 7:18-19, 24-29; Ps 132:1-5, 11-14; Mk 4:21-25
 Fri: 2 Sm 11:1-4a, 5-10a, 13-17; Ps 51:3-7, 10-11; Mk 4:26-34
 Sat: 2 Sm 12:1-7a, 10-17; Ps 51:12-17; Mk 4:35-41
 Sun: Jer 1:4-5, 17-19; Ps 71:1-6, 15, 17; 1 Cor 12:31-13:13

Sunday Ministry Schedule-St. Stephens

1/16/21

9:00am Mass

Lector: Penny Robertson

5:00pm Mass

Lector: Volunteer Needed

1/23/21

9:00am Mass

Lector: Linda Bebout

5:00pm Mass

Lector: Volunteer Needed

Parish Collection

1/16/22

TBD

"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Corinthians 9:7

As we continue to celebrate Mass at St. Stephens, we are limited to 25% occupancy in attendance and face masks are required at Mass, per Wind River Intertribal Council Health Order. Please use hand sanitizer and maintain a safe distance apart from parishioners not in your household. The number of those testing positive have increased dramatically so thanks for doing your part to keep everyone safe!

Mass Intentions this week

1/22:	4:30pm Blessed Sacrament	Mary Ellen Hayes
1/23:	Sunday 9am St. Stephens	For the people
	Sunday 11am St. Josephs	+Don Petska
	Sunday 5pm St. Stephens	+Kenneth Blackburn
1/25:	Tuesday 7:15am St. Stephens	+Rex Phipps
1/26:	Wednesday 5pm St. Stephens	+Kenneth Shakespeare
1/27:	Thursday 7:15am St. Stephens	Joann Esquibel
1/28:	Friday 5pm St. Stephens	Hayler Squires for good health
1/29:	Saturday 4:30pm Blessed Sacrament	Father Jim
1/30:	Sunday 9am St. Stephens	Howard Brown
	Sunday 11am St. Josephs	For the people
	Sunday 5pm St. Stephens	Geraldine Brown

Please pray for the family of:

+Mary Patricia Bell Dodge

Eternal rest grant unto her O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May her soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

**Praised be Jesus Christ!
Praise Him now and always!**

WYOMING CATHOLIC RETREAT

A Eucharistic centered retreat. Twenty-one years of offering a deeper relationship with our Lord through the Eucharist. "Let Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament speak to your hearts. It is He who is the true answer of life that you seek."
(St. John Paul II)

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

February 18-20, 2022

Ages 13-30

Lander Community & Convention Center

For more info or registration visit: www.wyomingcatholicretreat.com

Respect for the dignity of persons is a principle of Catholic Social Teaching and one ignored by traffickers who treat persons as commodities. Join the U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking in its efforts to abolish this horrific crime. U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking is a 501 c (3) organization, 2039 N Geyer Road, St. Louis, MO 63131 (sistersagainstrafficking.org)

Blessed Sacrament and St. Josephs

Synod Listening Session scheduled for 1/23 will happen at a later date.

The Blessed Sacrament community will come together to pray and discuss how the Holy Spirit has guided the Church's journey through history and, today, calls us to be witnesses of God's love. In preparation for our gathering, pray with Acts 15:1-12 throughout the week. Remember to gather your thoughts and bring your journal to our first synodal experience as a community.

Please contact Sister Teresa if you would like to have your child Baptized.