

Father Paul's Weekly Email

December 8, 2023

"*Authentic*" was selected as the 2023 word of the year by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, landing among the most-looked-up words in the dictionary's 500,000 entries, the company said in a recent press release. After all, this was the year that Chat GPT disrupted academic integrity by writing papers for students and Artificial Intelligence drove Hollywood actors and writers to the picket lines.

"But wait. There's more!" Pictures are photo-shopped or taken with filters that try to make people look better than they are, videos are deep-faked and most can't realize it. In recent years there have been discussions about the cultural appropriation of ethnic clothing and cuisine. Acting roles are being race and/or gender swapped. The BBC revealed that the science fiction character Dr. Who is gay, and Isaac Newton was a person of color. Last year's word of the year was "*gaslighting*," which is manipulating people by feeding them false information. By the way, it's a toss up which group average Americans trust less: politicians or the so-called mainstream media.

The definition of *authentic* is genuine; real like an authentic antique. It is also having an origin supported by unquestionable evidence; authenticated; verified. Synonyms include accurate, authoritative, convincing, credible, legitimate, original, pure, reliable, true, and trustworthy. Advent is an invitation to prepare ourselves spiritually to celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh into the world. He says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." (John 14:6). The Letter to the Hebrews declares, "Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

Here are opportunities to grow in knowledge and faith in the next few weeks.

Sun. Dec. 10 • 10:15 am The Infancy Narratives — Fr. Paul — The Library
Sun. Dec. 10 • 3:00 pm Communal Reconciliation Service — The Church
Sun. Dec. 17 • 10:15 am Rabbi Victor Urecki — Chanukah and more — Parish Hall
Sun. Dec. 17 • 3:00 pm **BLUE** Christmas Service — The Church

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Parish website <https://www.blessedsacramentwv.org>
Faith in West Virginia <https://faithinwv.org/latest-bulletin/>
This Sunday's Readings <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/121023.cfm>
Wednesday Bible Handout <https://blessedsacramentwv.org/en/download/december-13-2023-for-third-sunday-ofadvent/?wpdmdl=1534&refresh=65732d31dd1011702047025>
This Sunday's Bulletin <https://blessedsacramentwv.org/en/download/december-10-2023/?wpdmdl=1536&refresh=65732d31d08431702047025>

MYSTIC MORSEL

Without the Way, there is no going, Without the Truth, there is no knowing,
Without the Life, there is no living.

— Thomas a Kempis (1380-1471)

CARBONATED GRACE ***

A friend stopped with a strange look in his eyes. This unannounced visit smelt fishy to me. He had a tall tale to tell. "I took my wife fishing yesterday and she wandered off. I thought I lobster, but then I flounder. Thank Cod. When we went to bed that night, she said, 'Not tonight, dear, I have a haddock.'"

An Advent Reflection

Advent is waiting for the birth of Jesus,
but it's a strange waiting:
we are waiting each year for someone who we
know is already here!

We recall in Advent
that the Lord Jesus has come among us,
is present all the time
and will come again in glory.

He is the child who is born each year,
for the world always needs its God and Saviour.

He is the child awaited each year,
for our lives are new each year,
and we need him in different ways at different stages
of life,
and the world has different needs of God at different
times.

We need the child of peace to be born
in our wars and violence,
the child of wisdom in our search for truth and
meaning,
the child of gentleness in a world which can be harsh
and greedy.

We need to know in Jesus
that birth and life
are among the most precious gifts of God,
and that in the birth of Jesus each year,
there is the everlasting promise that God
will be with us.

And Advent looks ahead,
letting us see that the life of Jesus is never over,
that the truth of Jesus is always spoken,
that the love of Jesus is always real,
and that he will one day be seen in glory.
For we are people of Advent and Easter,
of waiting and of resurrection;
we are people of earth and heaven,
as he is the Son of God and Son of Mary,
and leads us through our life on earth
to the eternal glory of heaven.

Now fish puns have me hooked, even though really good ones make me eel. I need some

new sofishlicated puns. I haven't found any yet, guess I need to mullet over. I am trying hard, but I am floundering. I can't even get to first bass. Maybe I've been herring on the side of caution. I'll try to mussel one up for you. A reel good one.

Holy Mackarel, I'm not being koi here. Don't be shellfish. If you find any good fish puns, let minnow.

*** Anne Lamott calls laughter *carbonated grace*

CHRISTMAS SEASON SCHEDULE

Saturday 12/23	4pm	Fourth Sunday of Advent	
Sunday 12/24	10am	Fourth Sunday of Advent	(NOTE TIME CHANGE)
Sunday 12/24	4pm	Christmas Vigil Mass	
	7pm	Christmas Mass	
	Midnight	Christmas Mass	
Monday 12/25	10am	Christmas Day Mass	
Saturday 12/30	4pm	Holy Family Feast	
Sunday 12/31	9am	Holy Family Feast	
	11:30	Holy Family Feast	
Monday 1/1	10am	New Year's Mass	(NOTE TIME CHANGE)
			<i>Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>

