



A Parish of the Diocese of Greensburg



Parish Office Hours: 8:00 am to 3:30 pm

**Anointing of the Sick**

The sacrament is available during Confession hour and after each Mass per request.

**Sacrament of Matrimony**

Couples wishing to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony must contact a priest of the parish one year in advance of the wedding. Diocesan regulations require that couples begin to work with the parish at least one year prior to a wedding.

**Sacrament of Baptism**

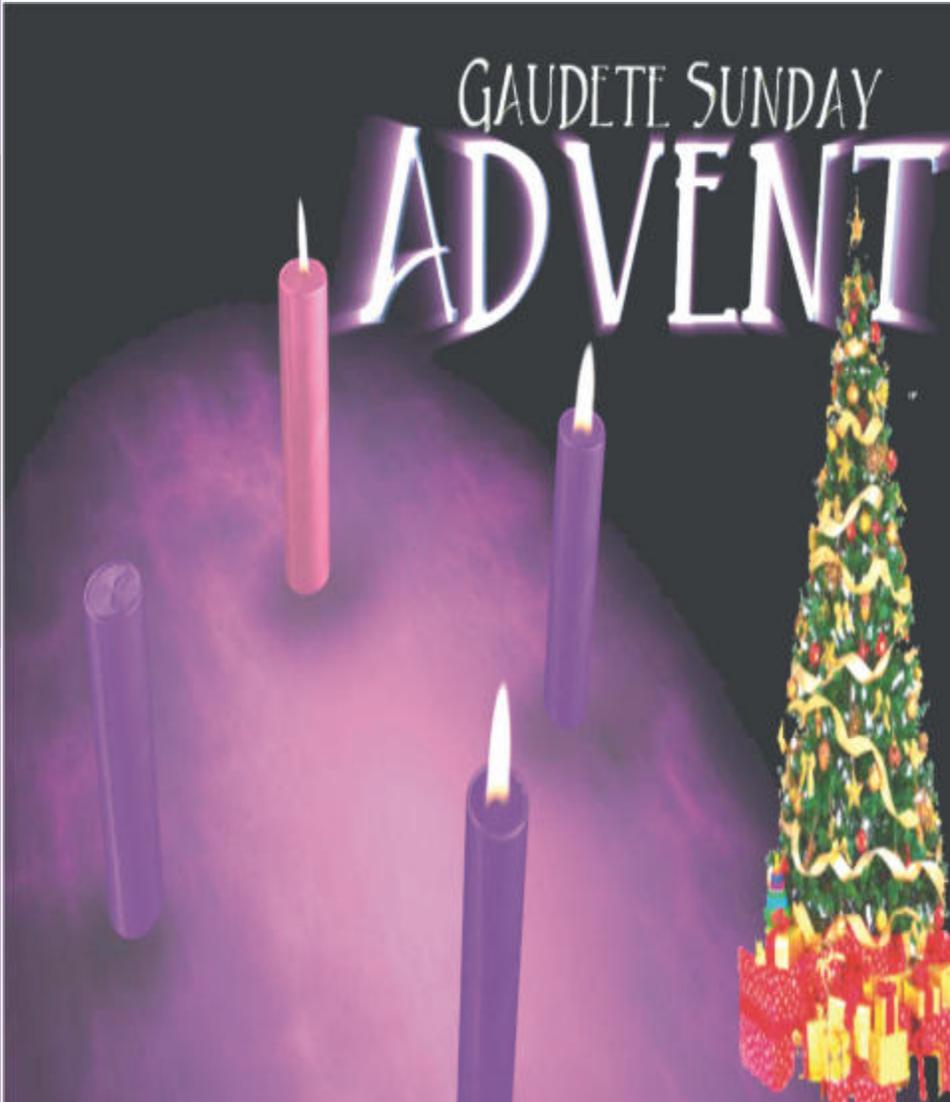
Families of our parish who wish to have their child baptized should call the parish office to register for Baptism Prep. Please call well in advance of birth of your child.

**Confessions – Anytime by appointment**

Tuesdays: 5:15 pm – 6:15 pm; Saturdays: 9:00 am – 10:00 am

December 13, 2020

The Third Sunday of Advent



**MASS SCHEDULE**

**Sunday, December 13**

- 7:00 am Our Parish Family
- 8:30 am Ida & Herman Richardson (Family)
- 10:00 am Donald Wilker (Barbara & Bruce)
- 11:30 am Lenora Snyder (Garsteck Family)

**Monday, December 14**

- 7:45 am Dennis Clipper (Lois)

**Tuesday, December 15**

- 7:45 am Alberta Preston (Bob & Mary)
- 6:30 pm No Mass—Confessions (Mass Scheduled for tonight has been moved to March 2, 2021; 6:30 pm)

**Wednesday, December 16**

- 7:45 am Hedy Dezorzi (Family)

**Thursday, December 17**

- 7:45 am Rosa Luciano (Barb & Tracy)

**Friday, December 18**

- 7:45 am Church Family

**Saturday, December 19**

- 8:00 am John & Millie Fox (Family)
- 4:30 pm Steven Milosvich (Wife & Children)
- 6:00 pm All Souls

**Sunday, December 20**

- 7:00 am Leilah Potthoff (Daughters)
- 8:30 am Bess Alberts (Sharyn & Jerry)
- 10:00 am Judson Shiffler (Mom & Dad)
- 11:30 am Our Parish Family



**Parish Office**  
724-863-9550  
www.icirwin.org



### Parish Staff

**Pastor**  
Fr. John Moineau  
icfatherjohn@gmail.com

**Parochial Vicar**  
Rev. Roniel Bantugan Duenas  
rduenas@dioceseofgreensburg.org

**Business Consultant**  
Barbara Dubosky  
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**Directory of Faith Formation**  
Ginny McConnell  
gmccConnell@dioceseofgreensburg.org

**Regional Sr. Youth Ministry Coordinator**  
Susan Cheplic  
skcheplic@dioceseofgreensburg.org

**Director of Music Ministry**  
Tyler Randolph  
trandolph@dioceseofgreensburg.org

**Operation Safe Mode (OSM)**  
Sunday 8:00 am Mass  
www.YouTube.com/operationsafemode

**Queen of Angels Catholic School**  
Jennifer Filak, Principal  
One Main Street  
North Huntingdon PA  
724-978-0144  
jfilak@queenofangelssch.org  
www.queenofangelssch.org

**Diocese of Greensburg**  
www.dioceseofgreensburg.org

**Catholic Charities**  
724-837-1840

**St. Vincent DePaul**  
724-691-3711

## NOTES FROM THE PASTOR



**Week of Grace:  
Sacrament of Reconciliation  
December 14 – December 18**

**Immaculate Conception:  
5:30pm – 7:30pm**

**Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton:  
Noon – 1:30pm**

### Confessions in “Safe Mode”

As you know the Lenten penance services have always been a great opportunity for all of us to prepare for Easter. Well because we were in the “RED” phase we could not receive the Sacrament. Now that we move to the Advent Season we are still practicing “Safe Mode” but can have that sacred moment of God’s Mercy through the Sacrament during the Week of Grace. Instead of gathering 13 priests and 400 hundred people in the same place for a penance service during the pandemic we will do something a bit different .... **Operation Safe Mode Style!!**

**Face to Face Confessions:** If you thought it was going to be a “virtual confession” or “drive through” I am sorry to disappoint you!!! You will be able to come in the normal fashion for confessions but just with extreme caution to **social distancing and Masked faces!** Perhaps with the mask on Father Roniel and I will not recognize you!

**Timing and Avoiding Crowds:** We will hear confessions in the afternoon at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton for One and a half hours and two hours in the evening at Immaculate Conception. There will not be a prayer service at the start so you can come at anytime to avoid a crowd of penitents. So, come in that frame of time and we will hear your confessions. We will be asking you to make your Act of Contrition on your own to speed up the process of each confession

**Safe distancing and practices:** We will ask everyone who is waiting in line to remain six feet apart as indicated on the floor of the aisle. Also, we will ask you to sanitizer your hands before and after confessions. Father Roniel and I will cleanse your souls and you take care of your own hands!!!! Spiritual Preparation: Please read the following article as a reminder of how important the sacrament is and use the examination of conscience below to be ready to receive God’s Mercy!!

### **CONFESSION PUTS YOU ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW**

*Penance, aka confession, is the sacrament of the forgiveness of sin. You can't beat it for convenience. It's available practically whenever. Tell a priest you want to go to confession and you'll get his attention. One bishop I know was cornered on an airplane. Another passenger figured out what was going on and asked if he could confess too. It must have been an interesting game of musical seats. An interesting question for priests might be: Where was the strangest place you ever administered the sacrament of penance? The answers I've gathered include "in a sports bar, at a graduation party" and "on the golf course, walking up the fairway." Confession has benefits. Here are ten:*

1. **Confidentiality guaranteed.** There's nothing like confessing your sins to someone guaranteed not to tell anyone else. Sometimes you need to talk in absolute confidence. Even under subpoena, a priest can't tell anyone what's said to him in confession. He can't even hint at it. Now that's confidentiality.
2. **Housekeeping for the soul.** It feels good to be able to start a clean life all over again. Like going into a sparkling living room in your home, it's nice when clutter is removed – even if it's your own.
3. **A balm for the desire for revenge.** When you have been forgiven you can forgive others. If the perfect Jesus forgives me, who am I to want to avenge the slights in my life. Think: “Why did they promote him over me?” or “Mom played favorites!”
4. **Low cost therapy.** It's free, which makes it cheaper than a psychiatrist for dealing with guilt.

5. **Forced time to think.** Socrates said that the unexamined life is not worth living. To examine our lives and acknowledge failings marks the first step of making things right with God, others and ourselves. Life can be more worth living when you ponder the meaning of your own life.
6. **Contribution toward world peace.** “*Gaudium et Spes*”, the Second Vatican Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, said that the imbalances in the world that lead to war and tensions “are linked with that more basic imbalance which is rooted in the heart of man.” Peace of soul leads to peace of heart leads to peace beyond oneself.
7. **A better neighborhood.** Confession leaves you feeling good about yourself, thereby cutting back the inclination to road rage and aggressive shopping cart driving. With the grace of the sacrament you’re energized to, as Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, “go and sin no more.”
8. **Realistic self-perception.** Confession helps overcome arrogance when you have to admit you’re as much of a sinner as anyone else. It helps build tolerance for others’ perceived shortcomings.
9. **One more benefit of being Catholic.** There are lots of benefits, including a sense of community, liturgical rites to help us encounter God in prayer, and the wonderful sense of humanity exemplified in the saints, from Mary, the loving Mother of God, to Augustine, the exasperating son of Monica. The sacrament that leads us to inner peace is among the greatest boons.
10. **Closeness to God.** Confession helps you realize that you have a close connection to God and receive his grace through the sacraments. What can be better than knowing God’s on your team, or, to be less arrogant about it, that you are on God’s.

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### PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER:

#### MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- Am I faithful to daily Prayer?
- Am I faithful to Mass?
- Am I going to Mass or saying my prayers as a duty?
- **Ask yourself and our Lord further:**
- Do I trust God’s loving care for me? How do I show this Trust?
- Do I make time to read the scripture, that I may know and hear Jesus and his Father?
- Do I really try to seek God’s will, not mine, in prayer?
- Am I angry with, or afraid of God? Why?

#### MY RELATIONSHIP WITH FAMILY/FRIENDS

- Have I failed to respect any family member or friend?
- Have I failed to accept anyone just as he or she is?
- Have I been patient with another’s differences?
- Have I been tolerant of others shortcomings?
- Have I been sensitive to another’s needs?
- Can I be forgiving, Lord as you forgive?
- *Am I nursing a grudge?*
- *Do I criticize and find fault?*
- *Do I show positive acts of kindness?*

#### MY RELATIONSHIP WITH EVERYONE

- Do I despise any group of people?
- Do I discriminate against any group of people?
- Do I consider any group or individual inferior to me?

#### MY RELATIONSHIP WITH CREATION

- Have I spoiled any part of creation?
- Have I abused animals by cruelty or neglect?
- Have I been wasteful?
- Am I too fond of money?
- Do I act as though what I have is mine to do with as I like?
- Am I generous?
- Do I drive responsibly and with consideration of others?
- Do I make positive contributions to the community?
- Do I take my vocation seriously and fulfill my responsibilities?

#### MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MYSELF

- Do I feel angry often?
- Do I act as if I am God?
- Do I expect others to do what I want, when I want?
- Do I accept God’s love for me?
- Am I seeking to know God’s will?
- Am I unwilling to say “yes” to God’s will?
- Do I prefer my own plans?
- Do I cherish and care for my body as the gift of God?
- Have I been greedy?
- Have I been lustful?
- Have I been lazy?
- Have I abused drugs, alcohol?
- Have I misused my sexuality?

**Through this examination, you will be better prepared!**

**Sanctuary Candle:** In Memory of Millie & John Fox by Family

**Easter Flame Candle:** In Memory of Gina Chruscial

**Divine Mercy Candle:** In Memory of Mary Drummond by Family

**St. Peregrine Candle:** In Memory of Charles Comer

**Altar Candles for the Month of December:** In memory of Joan Corovino from Family

**Third Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah	61:1-2a, 10-11
1 Thessalonians	5:16-24
John	1:6-8, 19-28

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

2 Samuel	7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Romans	16:25-27
Luke	1:26-38

**Prayers and Sympathy**

Please pray for the family of Nancy Sullivan, Theresa Packosky & Ronald Ramsey who died recently. May they rest in peace.

**Stewardship Corner:**

Our Time, Talent and Treasures are the gifts that we share: Sunday Offertory  
The Week of November 29, 2020 ..... \$18,239.34

**Eucharistic Adoration** is held every Tuesday starting after 7:45 am Mass and continuing all day until 6:15 pm; confessions (5:15-6:15 pm), and Mass (6:30 pm). There are special prayer booklets available containing Prayers for Vocations during adoration. If you need to leave and there is no one else in the church during Adoration, please call the church office at 724-863-9550 and someone will come over. Thank you

**Join us for the Divine Mercy Chaplet every** Tuesday at 12:00 noon.

**Servants of Divine Mercy Outreach** - The Servants of Divine Mercy pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet for the sick & dying. To request this beautiful Chaplet to be prayed for a specific person call 724-600-5007 or email kstynchula@msn.com



**Attention** Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Servers —there is a sign up sheet for Masses for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses, in the Gathering Room. Please sign up if you are able to serve. Thank you!

**IN OUR AREA**



As we prepare for the celebration of the Birth of Jesus, we have “Keep Christ In Christmas” yard signs, children’s Advent kits and the Blue Advent meditation books (“little blue books”) available to you.

If you are interested in any or all of these, please call the Parish office at 724-863-9550 (Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 4:00 pm) for “drive by pickup” - and we will bring them to your car.

Donations are appreciated for yard signs and Advent kits.

**Join us for Lectio Divina on Saturdays at 7:00 am in Our Lady’s Plaza (Administration Building), Immaculate Conception.** Each week we will pray and prepare for the weekend Gospel. In our next session - **December 19**



- **The Blessed Mother answers God’s Call with Joy.**



**Children’s Offertory Envelopes** are available at the back of the church. Please sign your name and number on the sheet provided. Thank you



The St. Vincent DePaul Society (SVDP) is in need of restocking their pantry shelves as local food drives were not held due to Covid.

Particularly helpful items that are needed include:

- |                                 |                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Breakfast cereal</b>         | <b>Canned fruits &amp; vegetables</b> |
| <b>Canned Pasta &amp; soup</b>  | <b>Canned tuna &amp; chicken</b>      |
| <b>Pasta &amp; spaghetti</b>    | <b>peanut butter &amp; jelly</b>      |
| <b>Baby wipes &amp; diapers</b> | <b>toothpaste</b>                     |
| <b>Soaps</b>                    | <b>juice</b>                          |

Donations may be brought to the Parish Center at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton during regular business hours Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri (9:00 am—1:00 pm).

**Watch the bulletin for dates when Mack Hall at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton will be unlocked during the week for drop off times.**

*Sunday Mass is aired @ 8:00 am on the “Operation Safe Mode with Father John” YouTube channel.*

*Reminder that the church is open for private prayer Daily. Come and spend some quiet time with the Lord.*



Queen of Angels  
Catholic School *Angel's Corner*

**Thank you** for making the 2020 St. Vincent De Paul and Food Pantry Turkey Drive a great success! The results are in, and together we raised \$1,325.00 and many boxes of food and paper products! Your hard work and the generosity of our school community is truly inspiring.

## Christmas Schedule 2020

### Immaculate Conception

<i>Christmas Eve</i> <b>Thursday, December 24th</b>	4:00 pm; 6:00 pm; 8:00 pm; 10:00 pm and Midnight
<i>Christmas Day</i> <b>Friday, December 25th</b>	8:30 am and 10:00 am
<i>New Year's Eve</i> <b>Thursday, December 31st</b>	<b>5:00 pm</b>
<i>New Year's Day</i> <b>Friday, January 1st</b>	<b>9:30 am</b>

### St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

<i>Christmas Eve</i> <b>Thursday, December 24th</b>	4:00 pm; 6:00 pm; 8:00 pm
<i>Christmas Day</i> <b>Friday, December 25th</b>	8:30 am and 10:00 am
<i>New Year's Eve</i> <b>Thursday, December 31st</b>	<b>4:00 pm</b>
<i>New Year's Day</i> <b>Friday, January 1st</b>	<b>9:00 am</b>

### St. Agnes — Reserved Seating Required for Christmas Masses - Please Call 724-863-2630

<i>Christmas Eve</i> <b>Thursday, December 24th</b>	4:00 pm; 6:00 pm; 8:00 pm; and 10:00 pm
<i>Christmas Day</i> <b>Friday, December 25th</b>	10:30 am
<i>New Year's Eve</i> <b>Thursday, December 31st</b>	<b>4:30 pm</b>
<i>New Year's Day</i> <b>Friday, January 1st</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>

## Around the Diocese

**'The Accent On-Air' presents 'Christmas Traditions'** - "The Accent On-Air" presents "Christmas Traditions" on WTAE-TV with overnight airings at 3:07 a.m. and 3:37 a.m., scheduled for Dec. 12, 19 and 26. Slovak, Italian, German and Filipino Christmas traditions will be featured. This episode includes Msgr. Larry J. Kulick's message that "Advent is Still Ours," Msgr. Raymond E. Riffle's collection of Nativity sets, Father Anthony W. Ditto's reference guide of the Feast of the Seven Fishes, a Christmas nut roll recipe, along with a modern hack; the story of the Feast of St. Nicholas, a Bountiful Night at Christ Our Shepherd Center, Filipino delicacies and good cheer and a celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany. "The Accent On-Air" is always on at TheAccentOnline.org

**Diocese plans Televised Christmas Masses** - In addition to in-person Christmas Masses all over the Diocese of Greensburg, you can also watch Christmas Masses on television or streaming on the Diocese website and Facebook page. Join us for Christmas Vigil Mass at 2 p.m. on Christmas Eve and 10 a.m. on Christmas Day from Blessed Sacrament Cathedral in Greensburg. Both Masses will air on PCNC, the Pittsburgh Cable News Channel. Christmas Day Mass will also air at noon on WPXI Channel 11.

**Children and Family Services Appeal Collection** - As you are aware, every year the second collection at all Christmas Masses has been for those people living within our own diocese who are less fortunate. This collection is titled the "Children and Family Services Appeal." Your support can change the future of an individual, a family or a child through the good work of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Greensburg.

**Diocese provides 'The Week of Grace'** - The Diocese of Greensburg is providing penance opportunities during Advent with "The Week of Grace" from Dec. 14-18. Times are listed by county at [dioceseofgreensburg.org/weekofgrace](http://dioceseofgreensburg.org/weekofgrace). Please check the website for updates or contact your parish for information as times may be subject to change.





IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH

Irwin, Pennsylvania

Office of Liturgical Music Ministry

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 13, 2020 - Order of the Mass

ORGAN PRELUDE

Chorale Prelude om "Savior of the Nations, Come"

Paul Manz

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

People, Look East

Peo - ple, look East. The time is near Of the  
An - gels, an - nounce with shouts of mirth Christ, who  
crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are  
brings new life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley  
a - ble, Trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look  
hum - ming With the word, "The Lord is com - ing." Peo - ple, look  
East, and sing to - day: Love the Guest is on the way.  
East, and sing to - day: Love the Lord is on the way.

Eleanor Farjeon, 1881-1965  
Text © 1928, Eleanor Farjeon, by perm. of Harold Ober Assoc.

French carol

KYRIE

Chant

Ký - ri - e, e - lé - i - son. Chri - ste, e - lé - i - son.  
(Then repeat the first Kyrie.)

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

### FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor,  
to heal the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and release to the prisoners,  
to announce a year of favor from the LORD  
and a day of vindication by our God.  
I rejoice heartily in the LORD,  
in my God is the joy of my soul;  
for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation  
and wrapped me in a mantle of justice,  
like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem,  
like a bride bedecked with her jewels.  
As the earth brings forth its plants,  
and a garden makes its growth spring up,  
so will the Lord GOD make justice and praise  
spring up before all the nations.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Luke 1  
*Batastini/Gelineau*



### SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Brothers and sisters:  
Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.  
In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.  
Do not quench the Spirit.  
Do not despise prophetic utterances.  
Test everything; retain what is good.  
Refrain from every kind of evil.  
May the God of peace make you perfectly holy  
and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body,  
be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

A man named John was sent from God.  
 He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.  
 He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. And this is the testimony of John.  
 When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who are you?"  
 He admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Christ."  
 So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?"  
 And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No."  
 So they said to him,  
 "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us?  
 What do you have to say for yourself?"  
 He said: "I am *the voice of one crying out in the desert,*  
*'make straight the way of the Lord,'*" as Isaiah the prophet said."  
 Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him,  
 "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?"  
 John answered them,  
 "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize,  
 the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie."  
 This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## HOMILY

## CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,  
 maker of heaven and earth,  
 of all things visible and invisible.  
 I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
 the Only Begotten Son of God,  
 born of the Father before all ages.  
 God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
 begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
 through him all things were made.  
 For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,  
 and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.  
 For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
 he suffered death and was buried,  
 and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.  
 He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
 He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead  
 and his kingdom will have no end.  
 I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
 the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
 who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,  
 who has spoken through the prophets.  
 I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
 I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
 and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and life of the world to come. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

People's Mass  
Jan Vermulst adpt. Richard Proulx

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly Lord God of hosts.  
Heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the  
high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the  
Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Text © 2010, ICEL

Jan M. Vermulst, 1925-1994  
Adapt. by Richard Proulx, 1937-2010  
Music © 1970, 2010, WLP

MYSTERY OF FAITH AND AMEN

Danish Amen Mass  
David Kraehenbuehl

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we pro-claim your  
Death, O Lord, un - til you come a - gain.

Text © 2010, ICEL

David Kraehenbuehl, 1923-1997  
Music © 1970, 1973, 2011, WLP

AGNUS DEI

Chant, Mass XVIII

A-gnus De - i, qui tol - lis pec - cá - ta mun - di: mi - se - ré - re no - bis. *(repeat)*  
A - gnus De - i, qui tol - lis pec - cá - ta mun - di: do - na no - bis pa - cem.

Music: Vatican Edition XVIII; acc. by Richard Proulx

COMMUNION HYMN

O Come, Divine Messiah

Refrain

Dear Sav - ior, haste! Come, come to earth. Dis - pel the  
 night and show your face, and bid us hail the dawn of grace. O  
 come, di - vine Mes - si - ah; the world in si - lence waits the day when  
 hope shall sing its tri - umph and sad - ness flee a - way.

Text: 78 76 with refrain; Abbé Simon-Joseph Pellegrin, 1663–1745; tr. by S. Mary of St. Philip, 1877.  
 Music: Trad. French Carol, 16th cent.

RECESSIONAL HYMN

Savior of the Nations, Come

1. Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; Vir - gin's Son, make  
 2. Not by hu - man flesh and blood, But the Spir - it  
 here your home. Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth,  
 of our God, Was the Word of God made flesh,  
 That the Lord chose such a birth.  
 Wom - an's off - spring, pure and fresh.

Text: *Veni Redemptor gentium*; ascr. to St. Ambrose of Milan, 340–397; German tr. by Martin Luther, 1483–1546; English tr. sts. 1–3, 5 by William M. Reynolds, 1812–1876, alt.; st. 4 by Martin L. Seltz, 1909–1967, alt., © 2006, Augsburg Fortress  
 Tune: NUN KOMM DER HEIDEN HEILAND, 77 77; *Geistliche Gesangbüchlein*, Wittenberg, 1524

POSTLUDE

Fughetta on “People, Look East”  
 Richard Shephard



# The Gift of GRACE is waiting for YOU.

Advent is a time of preparation and penance. During the Week of Grace, prepare your heart to receive the Lord at Christmas. Extended opportunities for the Sacrament of Penance are happening at every parish community throughout the Diocese of Greensburg.

For a list of confession times and locations, please visit [DioceseofGreensburg.org/WeekofGrace](https://DioceseofGreensburg.org/WeekofGrace)

Confession times may change due to COVID-19. Please check the website for updates or contact your parish for information.

## THE WEEK OF GRACE

# Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

December 2020

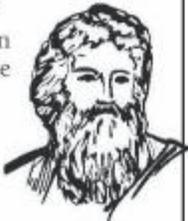
Immaculate Conception Church

Father John Moineau, Pastor

## One Minute Meditations

### Holiday advice

The holiday season is an important time in the Church but, in the midst of a pandemic, it can also be a time when health worries, money worries, family worries, and every kind of worry intrudes. Instead, try to follow this advice from St. Paul, *"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."* (Philippians 4:8).



### Unborn joy

*"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb ..."* (Luke 1:40). Even in the womb, John was filled with joy to serve God. With the coming of Christmas, look for ways to do God's will and then leap for joy as you fulfill His plan.

*"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins"* (Matthew 1:21).



## God is love

We call God "Creator," "Savior," "Father," yet when we really want to understand who He is, one word is enough. God is love.

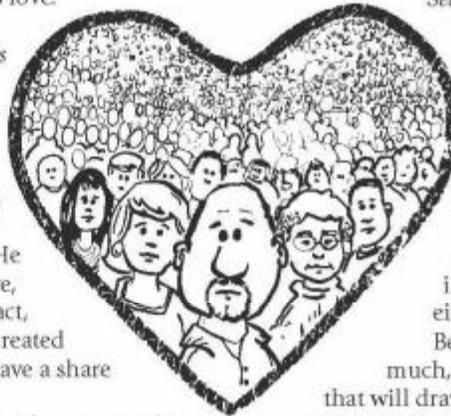
*"Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love."* (1 John 4:7-8). Love is the very nature and essence of God Himself. He doesn't just love, He is love. In fact, that's why He created us, so we can have a share in that love.

We are not simply swept up in the good will God has toward all his creations. He loves each of us as individuals and that love is never-ending and unconditional. *"Can*

*a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you.*

*See, upon the palms of my hands I have written your name"* (Isaiah 49:15-16). This is not necessarily because we are good; we can't possibly earn the vast love He has for us. But the good news is we can't lose it either.

Because He loves us so much, He denies us nothing that will draw us closer to him and to life in Heaven. *"For God so loved the world,"* Jesus declared, *"that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why do Catholics believe in a "virgin birth?"

Before Jesus was born, Isaiah was told, *"the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel"* (Isaiah 7:14). The virgin birth was documented in Luke 1:34.

Had Jesus been conceived like the rest of

us, He could not have been a perfect sacrifice for our sins.

*"And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14).



## Awaken to the presence of God on Christmas morning

*“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). An amazing truth occurred at the first Christmas; God came and lived among us. Even more amazing, He continues to live among us. During Advent, take steps to become more aware of His presence.*

**Begin each day in His presence.** Before you get out of bed in the morning, place yourself in His presence. Take a few minutes to focus on a sacred picture or an image that will help you to



*“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).*

Seek God’s Word. Start your day with Scripture such as the daily Mass readings (found on [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)) or another reading you choose. Ask God to teach you during the day from that selection.

**Speak to him throughout the day.** Picture the Lord next to you throughout your day and talk with Him as you experience the day together. Brother

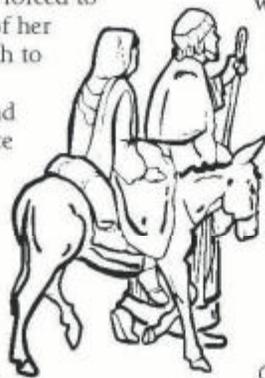
Lawrence, a 17th century monk, suggested prayer shouldn’t be confined to formal times.

### from Scripture

**Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23, God chooses each of us in a special way.**

Mary and Joseph were forced to travel in the last stages of her pregnancy from Nazareth to Bethlehem. On foot or donkey, it was a dirty and exhausting journey. Once there, they had no option for decent housing and had to stay in a stable with animals. Young Mary gave birth in crude conditions with no friend or family to help.

After a short time, they fled to Egypt with their newborn to escape threats from the government, and stayed there for several years. There



were no friendly faces to greet the family once they arrived and they had to make their own way in an unfamiliar land.

Refugees all over the world flee violence like the Holy Family. Catholics have a special charge to protect them and those who are vulnerable: children, elderly, and poor.

Like Mary’s and Joseph’s, God has a special place for each of us in his plan of salvation. Prayerfully ask God what he wants you to do for him and his kingdom.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**Dec. 14 – St. John the Cross (1591).** As a Carmelite, St. John led a return to the Order to encourage more prayer and simplicity. He fell jailed over a misunderstanding, some of his best spiritual writings came from this experience.

**Dec. 21 – St. Peter Canisius (1597).** Born in Holland, he was ordained into the Society of Jesus and vigorously safeguarded the Catholic faith through writings and teaching. His work, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, is still used today.

**Dec. 26 – St. Stephen (first century).** A deacon of the early Church, St. Stephen preached that God can be found everywhere, not just in one place like the temple. He angered the Jewish authorities and became the first martyr of the Catholic Church.

**Dec. 27 – The Holy Family (1st century).** On the feast of the Holy Family, we celebrate the family life of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. By their love and support of one another, the Holy Family is a model for all Christian families.



### Q & A How do Catholics benefit from praying the Rosary?

The Rosary is a simple prayer adapted from the complex prayers of medieval monks. It’s a powerful prayer because in it, we ask Mary—whose prayers are never refused—to pray for us. In addition, the mysteries of the Rosary introduce us to the lives of Jesus and Mary. Each mystery is associated with a fruit. For example, the fruit of the mystery of the Annunciation is humility. Praying the Rosary opens us to the graces to be more Christ-like.

A prayer with roots in Scripture, the Rosary begins with the Apostles’ Creed, which summarizes the great mysteries of the Catholic Faith. The Our Father that introduces each mystery is from the Gospels. The first part of the Hail Mary that follows is from the angel’s words announcing Christ’s birth and Elizabeth’s greeting to Mary. St. Pius V officially added the second part of the Hail Mary.

The repetition in the Rosary is meant to lead one into a peaceful and contemplative prayer related to each Mystery. The gentle repetition of the words helps us to enter into the silence of our hearts, where Christ’s spirit dwells. The Rosary can be said privately or with a group.

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