

# IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH DECEMBER 22 2024 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Saturday, December 21, 2024

8:00 a.m. Jeff Cole (Family)

4:30 p.m. Bob Gutwald (Family)

Sunday, December 22, 2024

8:00 a.m. Robert Fichtner (Family)

10:00 a.m. David Salopek (Family)

11:30 a.m. Alec Patterson (Carol)

Monday, December 23, 2024

7:45 a.m. Hailey Cox (Boccabella Family)

Tuesday, December 24, 2024

4:00 p.m. George Mathews (Tim & Joanne)

6:00 p.m. Bess & Russ Alberts (Family)

8:00 p.m. Michele Ruby (Family)

Midnight Shawn Teamann (Family)

Wednesday, December 25, 2024

9:30 a.m. James Armstrong (Marge & Family)

Thursday, December 26, 2024

7:45 a.m. Ed Behr (Family)

Friday, December 27, 2024

7:45 a.m. William Gallagher (Family)

Saturday, December 28, 2024

8:00 a.m. Our Parish Family

4:30 p.m. Thomas Chismar (Patty & John)

Sunday, December 29, 2024

8:00 a.m. Barbara Dubosky (Courtney)

10:00 a.m. Kaitlynn Beatty (Carol & Angelo)

11:30 a.m. James Armstrong (Julie & Norm)

Monday, December 30, 2024

7:45 a.m. Rudy Roitz (Family)

Tuesday, December 31, 2024

Vigil of the Solemnity Mary, Mother of God

4:30 p.m. Jud & Bill Shiffler Jr. (Family)

Wednesday, January 1, 2025

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

9:30 a.m. Jermone Stewart (Family)

Queen of Angels Catholic School Jennifer Filak, *Principal* 

jfilak@queenofangelssch.org www.queenofangelssch.org 724-978-0144

Diocese of Greensburg

www.dioceseofgreensburg.org

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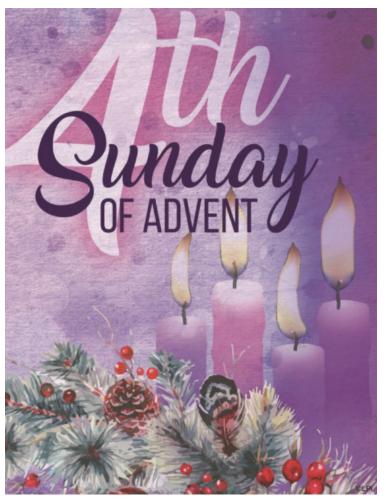
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Rev. Louiegene Arnold Valdez, *Parochial Vicar* lvaldez@dioceseofgreensburg.org

Courtney Ruby, Business Manager cruby@dioceseofgreensburg.org

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Susan Cheplic, *Director of Faith Formation* skcheplic@dioceseofgreensburg.org

Katelyn Waterhouse, Regional Director of Youth Ministry

kwaterhouse@dioceseofgreensburg.org

Immaculate Conception Parish Office 308 Second Street Irwin, Pa 15642 Parish Office: 724-863-9550

## **PASTOR'S NOTES**

#### Blessed are you among Women...

On this Fourth and final Sunday of Advent we are not given a lot of time to digest the wonderful symbolism that our Liturgy brings to us. It is a strong temptation to jump right into Christmas, however we need to be careful and learn from our readings for they once again present a promise and the guarantee of its fulfillment.

We start of the Liturgy of the Word listening to the wisdom of the Prophet Micah. He is an interesting character and lived during the time of the prophet Isaiah. He has often been referred to as the prophet of the ordinary person because he speaks in the language and uses symbols of the common people. Micah condemns empty, external rituals for they do not bring interior piety. He sees the external things being offered in place of the things that God really wants from us: kindness and justice toward a humanity suffering in its longing for peace. He was a man who suffered with the poor rather than simply defending their rights. He focused on divine justice and the rights of the poor.

It is with this background that he speaks of a poor insignificant town which will give birth to the "ruler of Israel." Bethlehem will present the world with a true shepherd and his greatness will reach all the ends of the earth. Micah presents the messiah as a true icon of peace. It is fitting that we hear from him on this last Sunday of Advent.

St. Luke in the Gospel speaks of the promise that Micah was giving to the people. He focuses on two women who both have significant parts to play in God's plan of salvation. The meeting of Mary and Elizabeth has significant symbolism for us in the church today. Many look at Mary's journey to Elizabeth as being difficult and compare that with the journey of the Church through the centuries. Luke's gospel for this final Sunday before the Nativity has the women in center stage. As in the resurrection stories, it is the women who announce the good news. It is the women who bring Christ to us. It is the women who embody the mercy of God. Mary and Elizabeth are the "women of the redemption." It is their encouragement of one another that allows them to go forward with the confidence and joy they will need when their sons, John the Baptist and Jesus, are placed in the hands of executioners.

There is great beauty in the scene of these two women blessing one another and recognizing how God has come into each of their lives. These women were Spirit-filled and announced the saving presence of God. This becomes our own task in life, to announce God's saving presence to all. Through our goodness and generosity we too must bring the presence of a loving and merciful God to our world. We are given many opportunities to recreate that visitation. Through our goodness and care, we can use this holiday season as an opportunity to bring God's message of peace and tidings of great joy to those in our life. What a wonderful opportunity, as we read the story of the visitation, to recall the women in our own lives who have blessed us and revealed the presence of a loving and merciful Lord whose birth we celebrate at Christmas.

#### Christmas Message from Fr. Mike:

As a parish family we celebrate the Birth of Jesus, and we have a much to be grateful for. As we look back over the past year, there have been many blessings of God's love that we have been given. We have shared the joy of our blessings with many people around the world and for that we should be grateful. As a community of God's people we have prayed together which brings God's presence to each one of us.

As you celebrate this Christmas with those who are in your life, be aware of the gifts that count the most for they are worth more than any material possession or wealth. When we are able to open our hearts to one another and share who we are from within, we share what the joy of Christmas is all about. If you are able, even for a little minute, try to escape all of the trappings that this season puts upon us and open yourself to the silence of what the real gift is all about. As we become more aware of what Christ can be for us, we are better prepared to be that presence to those in our world. As individuals as well as a parish family, we ought to look and appreciate who God made us to be and what our God has blessed us with. Only then can the joy of this season bring the real message of Peace on Earth and Good Will to all. My prayer for you is that this Season may touch your hearts with the gentle presence of Christ's love, and that you may find the reserve to do the same to others. A Blessed Christmas to you all!

#### **CANDLES**

Sanctuary Candle:

In Memory of Rick Borland (Wife Carol)

**Divine Mercy:** 

In Memory of Joe Balzer (Wife)

St. Peregrine Candle:

In Memory of Dennis Clipper (Lois)

Easter Flame Candle:

In Memory of Jessie Bianconi (Nancy, Harry, & Dian)

St. Joseph's Candle:

In Memory of Vincent Smith (Wife Nancy)

Altar Candles for the Month of December: In Memory of Jud & Bill Shiffler Jr.

(Meg & Natalie)

Advent Candles:
In Memory of Joe, Jinny, Beverly, Mary Jo & John Ott (Family)

If you would like to have a candle lit in memory of your loved one, please call the parish office. We will be glad to help you. 724-863-9550



Please pray for the family of Mary Cottone and all of our faithful departed.

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

#### **Prayer for Advent Joy**

Dear Jesus, The news of your coming was met with boundless joy — fill us anew with the wonder of your presence. You are Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.



#### **Blessing of A Christmas Creche**

God of Mary and Joseph, of shepherds and animals, Bless us whenever we gaze on this manger scene. Through all the days of Christmas may these figures tell the story Of how humans, angels, and animals Found the Christ in this poor place.

Fill our house with hospitality, joy, Gentleness, and thanksgiving And guide our steps in the way of peace.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.





#### **SACRAMENTS**

#### **Anointing of the Sick**

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

#### Matrimony

Couples wishing to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony must contact the parish office one year in advance of the Wedding.

#### **Baptism**

Families of our parish who wish to have their child baptized please email Susan Cheplic at skcheplic@dioceseofgreensburg.org to register for Baptism Preparation.

#### Confession

Tuesday 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. & Saturday 9-10 a.m. (except for the first Saturday of the month)

#### **Divine Mercy**

Join us for the Divine Mercy Chaplet Monday through Friday at 3:00 pm in the church.



No Eucharistic Adoration on Tuesday December 24 and December 31. Thank you!

**Sunday Offertory** December 8- \$14,884.00

Solemnity of Immaculate Conception - \$2,871.00

**Online Giving** December 2 - December 8- \$3,675.90

Thank you for your generosity!

**Immaculate Conception Parish offers** Online Giving.

- Scan QR Code on the new Pew Cards or QR Code below.
- Click Create a new account.
- Create an ID and password.
- Allow 2 minutes to complete the
- process.



Reminder to please make your end of the year contributions to the parish prior to the close of 2024. All monies need to be received by December 30, 2024 in order to be posted to the 2024 contributions. If you would like a 2024 contribution statement for tax purposes, please call the parish office. Thank you for your continued support to our parish!

### HAPPENINGS ON THE CORNER & AROUND THE DIOCESE

#### This weekend at all Masses

# THE BLESSING OF THE CHRIST CHILD FROM YOUR FAMILY NATIVITY SET

Saint John Paul II loved the tradition of blessing the infant Jesus from the family nativity set every year in Saint Peter's square. The Children would wrap the child Jesus as THE gift of Christmas Morning. The gift (the baby Jesus) would then be set in a prominent place within the home as Christmas neared. Before any other presents were exchanged, the youngest of the family would un-wrap the baby Jesus and place him in the manager.

The Family then offers a Hail Mary in honor of Mary the Mother of God and silently asks from the Little King the prayer of their hearts desire. Then all other gifts are exchanged in the name of the Christ Child.



#### Immaculate Conception Parish Office Hours

Mon. Dec. 23rd: 8 am - 3 pm Tues. Dec. 24 - Fri. Dec. 27th: Closed

Mon. Dec. 30th: 8 am - 3pm Tues. Dec. 31 - Jan. 1st: Closed

Thurs. Jan. 2 - Fri. Jan. 3rd : 8 am - 3 pm

Immaculate Conception Staff wishes everyone a Merry Christmas & Blessed New Year.



The Immaculate Conception Creation Care Team meets the first Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. in the Children's Liturgy Room. The team's focus is to study the encyclical "Laudato Si, Care for Our Common Home" and to turn the Pope's vision into effective actions. For more information, Chris Peta at <a href="mailto:chris@syncrous.com">chris@syncrous.com</a>

Thank you to everyone who purchased gift cards from our giving tree. We were able to help many families purchase gifts for their children and purchase food for their Christmas meal. Thank you for serving in the spirit of the Christmas season.





#### Masses are available for 2025!

To schedule a Mass for your loved one, you can stop in or call the parish office during office hours. The suggested Mass stipend is \$10.00.

### Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship

All boys and girls ages 9 to 14 are invited to participate in the local competition for the Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championships. The local competition will be held Saturday, January 4, 2025 at Queen of Angels Gymnasium, and start time is 12:00 PM. Boys and girls will compete in their respective age divisions with winners progressing through Local, District, Regional and State Competitions. For questions or registration information please call or email Al Borgony at 724-864-3487 or email <a href="mailto:a.borgony@comcast.net">a.borgony@comcast.net</a>, or Matt Cheplic at 412-736-9196 or email mcheplic@gmail.com.



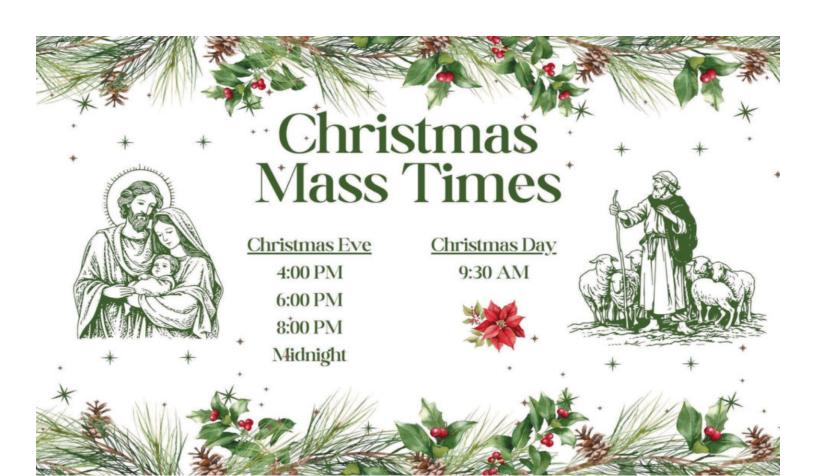
On December 14th in Our Lady's Plaza Santa & all his guests had a delicious breakfast. Santa extended a hearty Ho-Ho-Ho in appreciation to all the volunteers who prepared,

cooked, served and cleaned up after the event. He said upon leaving that he is definitely marking his calendar to visit IC parish next year. Don't miss the 2025 breakfast!



On December 8th Our Christian Mothers/Women's Guild members gathered for their annual Christmas party. Thank you to everyone who planned, decorated, and volunteered. It was a wonderful afternoon celebrating Christmas! Also, thank

you to all the women who donated to our giving tree. We were able to help many families in our parish with the gift card donations.





# CAMP VIRTUE

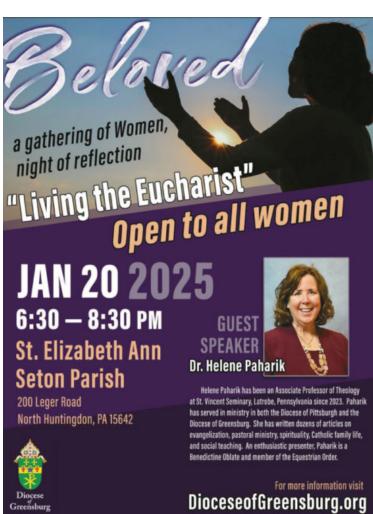
DAILY ADVENTURES INCLUDE:
CAMP GUYASUTA ROPES CHALLENGES
2 DAM KAYAK
SERVICE OUTREACH WITH SATURDAY SUPPERS
RELIC TOUR AT SAINT ANTHONY CHAPEL
IDLEWILD

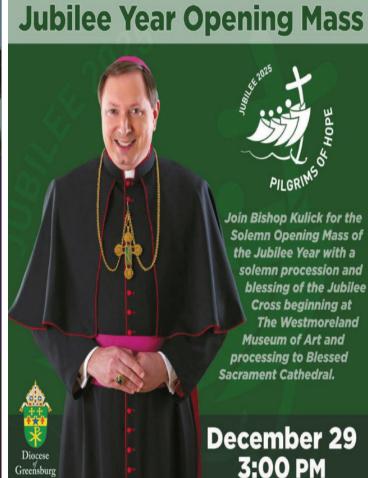
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CAMPERS : CURRENT 5-7TH GRADE STUDENTS

COUNSELORS : CURRENT 8-12TH GRADE, COLLEGE STUDENTS AND ADULTS





# March for Life 2025 in Washington DC

Friday, January 24th

Bus leaves Mother of Sorrows at 5:30 AM

Cost: \$25, \$20 for students, payable on bus or MOS office

Cash or check – payable to Mother of Sorrows Parish

Cash tip for bus driver

To register email Barb Koury at barbkoury@gmail.com

Include <u>name</u> and a <u>cell phone number</u> that you will have with you that day.

Trip includes Mass at the National Basilica in the Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel

at 10:30 AM celebrated by Bishop Larry Kulick.

"Pray for Life" Friday, January 24, 2025

with The Greensburg Diocesan Council of the National Council of Catholic Women

ALL are Welcome Come and go as your schedule permits

Christ Our Shepherd Center, 2900 Seminary Drive, Greensburg

11:30 Rosary for priests

12:00 Mass celebrated by The Very Reverend Eric J. Dinga, VF DCCW Spiritual Advisor

1:30 Rosary for Life

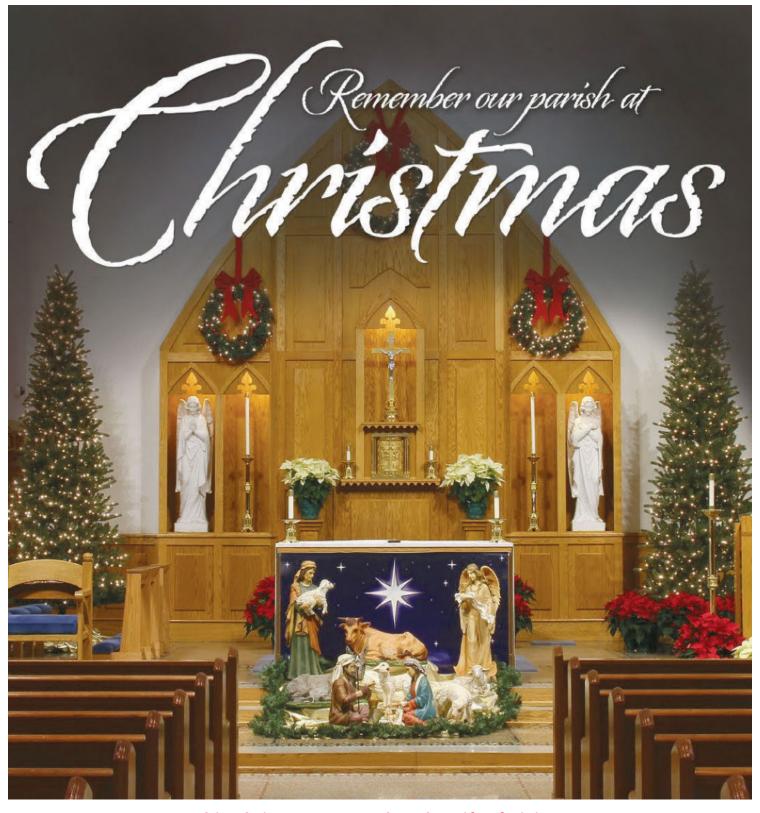
2:15 Stations of the cross

3:00 Divine Mercy Chaplet

3:30 Litany for Life

4:00 Closing Prayer and Benediction

Free will offering and Donations of diapers and baby items will be distributed to pregnancy centers throughout the diocese



This Christmas, remember the gift of giving!
Support our parish and spread joy in our community!
Visit https://www.icirwin.org OR scan QR code below.

Thank you for your generosity!



#### **ANGELS CORNER—QUEEN OF ANGEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL**



# QUEEN OF ANGELS CATHOLIC SCHOOL IS LOOKING FOR A

# PRESCHOOL TEACHER

Applicants are requested to submit a letter of interest and current resume to:

Jennifer Filak, Principal jfilak@queenofangelssch.org

Phone: 724-978-0144

https://www.queenofangelssch.org/



# QUEEN OF ANGELS CATHOLIC SCHOOL IS LOOKING FOR A

# PRESCHOOL AIDE

Applicants are requested to submit a letter of interest and current resume to:

Jennifer Filak, Principal

jfilak@queenofangelssch.org

Phone: 724-978-0144 https://www.queenofangelssch.org/

## Dear Parish Family,

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to you for your unwavering support of Queen of Angels Catholic School. Your prayers, generosity, and encouragement make it possible for us to provide a Christ-centered education that nurtures the hearts and minds of our students. This season is a beautiful reminder of God's love and the blessings He has bestowed upon us. At Queen of Angels, we have been reflecting on the joy, hope, and peace that Christmas brings, and we pray that these gifts fill your hearts and homes this year.

On behalf of our students, staff, and families, I wish you a blessed and joyful Christmas. May the light of Christ guide you into a new year filled with faith, love, and abundance.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

In Christ's peace, Mrs. Filak



CHRISTMAS is filled with symbols – here are a few legends and meanings associated with some popular traditions, activities and decorations. All of them can be beautiful, joyful, and even fun reminders of the true meaning of Christmas – The Birth of Jesus Christ.

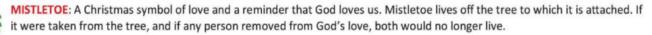
CHRISTMAS: Christ's Mass - the celebration of His birth.

XMAS: While Xmas might seem a secular way to "cross Christ out of Christmas", take heart as the word can also be seen as a Christian abbreviation for Christmas. Christ was often written as XP (chi rho), an ancient Greek symbol. But, still so much better to spell it out!!



STAR: The Christmas Star guided the Three Kings to the manger.

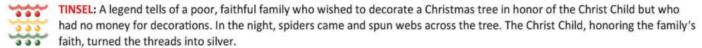
HOLLY: The jagged edges of the holly leaf remind Christians of the crown of thorns; the red holly berries represent Christ's blood.



CHRISTMAS TREE/EVERGREENS: They retain green needles or leaves all year round, symbolizing perseverance, resiliency and hope.



GIFTS: Our greatest gift, of course, is Jesus. The wise men who brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to honor the infant king inspired the concept of gift-giving at Christmas.

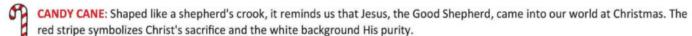




CANDLES AND CHRISTMAS LIGHTS: They represent Christ, the Light of the World.



**BELLS**: They herald joyful celebrations. Historically, bells were part of the Jewish high priest's garb. Christmas bells not only symbolize the joy of Christmas; they also remind us that Christ is the High Priest.





**GINGERBREAD MAN:** Remind us of God's creation of Adam in the Garden of Eden, and God's creation of each of us. Spices make the gingerbread man the color of earth (Adam was created from the dust of the earth). Also, like us, gingerbread people are not immortal (after all, we eat them!!)



**SANTA CLAUS**: Santa Claus, of course, is an alteration of Saint Nicholas whose generosity was transferred to the "jolly old man" who delivers gifts anonymously on Christmas Eve.



**WREATH**: Wreaths can combine several Christmas symbols including holly, evergreens, tinsel, lights, candles, etc., and due to the circular shape, symbolizes eternity, the circle of life, and endless hope.



**STOCKING**: Filling stockings with gifts comes from another tradition regarding Saint Nicholas. One legend is that three poor women in need of marriage dowries, hung their stockings by the fireplace to dry. The saint, aware of their plight, threw money into their house, landing in the stockings.



**REINDEER**: Because Santa Claus, a.k.a. St. Nicholas, was popular in Scandinavia (where reindeer live), they became associated with him.



CHRISTMAS CAROLS: Carols remind us of the angels who announced the birth of Christ by singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth!"



**SNOWMAN**: Associated with Christmas in the Northern Hemisphere, where snow often covers the ground at this season. As snowmen melt in the warmth of the sun, so our cold hearts will melt when we understand the Son's love and sacrifice for us.



**RED** and **GREEN**: Red is the color of holly berries and green the color of evergreens, both of which are associated with Christmas. Red reminds us of the blood of Christ, and green is the color of grass and vegetation - life.



ANGEL: God's messengers.



**POINSETTIA**: One story about this Christmas flower involves a poor Mexican girl who had no gift to present the Christ Child at Christmas Eve services. She made a small bouquet of common roadside weeds and sheepishly presented them at the nativity scene. Suddenly, the bouquet burst into star-shaped blooms of brilliant red, and became known as Flowers of the Holy Night.



#### IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH

Irwin, Pennsylvania

Office of Liturgical Music Ministry

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 22, 2024 - Order of the Mass

#### VOCATIONS PRAYER

Lord Jesus, raise up from our homes those called by the Father: courageous and humble men to the Priesthood, generous servants to the Permanent Diaconate, faithful people to Consecrated Life, and holy men and women to the Sacrament of Marriage. Holy Spirit, help us to live our universal vocation to holiness by listening to the Father's voice and responding with a sacrificial love. Holy Mary, Model of vocations, pray for us. Amen.

#### PROCESSIONAL HYMN

O Come, Divine Messiah



Kyrie Chant



(Then repeat the first Kyrie.)

#### THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

Micah 5:1-4a

SECOND READING

Hebrews 10:5-10

Thus says the LORD: You, Bethlehem-Ephrathah too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from of old, from ancient times. Therefore the Lord will give them up, until the time when she who is to give birth has borne, and the rest of his kindred shall return to the children of Israel. He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the LORD, in the majestic name of the LORD, his God; and they shall remain, for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth; he shall be peace.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Brothers and sisters: When Christ came

offering you did not desire, but a body you

prepared for me; in holocausts and sin of-

'As is written of me in the scroll, behold, I

ferings you took no delight. Then I said,

come to do your will, O God." First he

says, "Sacrifices and offerings, holocausts

and sin offerings, you neither desired nor delighted in." These are offered according

to the law. Then he says, "Behold, I come

to do your will." He takes away the first to establish the second. By this "will," we have

been consecrated through the offering of

into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and

GOSPEL READING

Luke 1:39-45

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 80 Michel Guimont

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.



Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Creed

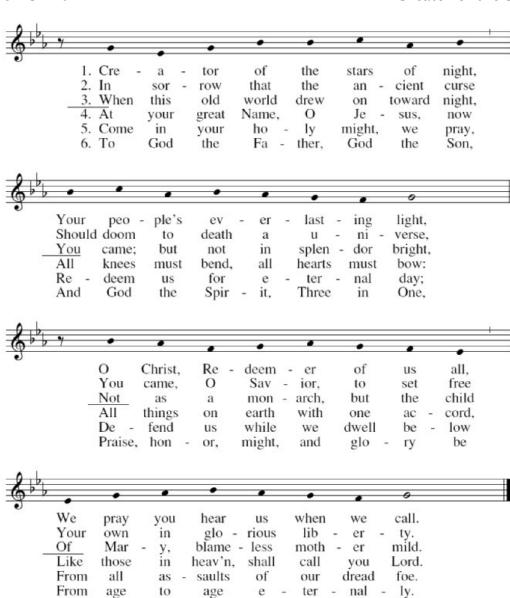
I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with 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

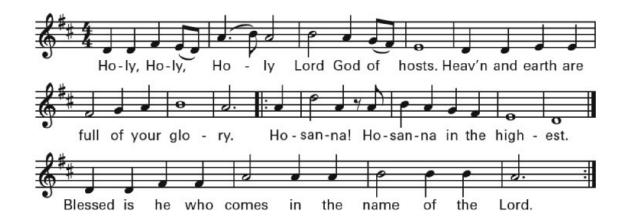
#### THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



Creator of the Stars of Night



Text: Creator alme siderum, Latin 9th. C., revised 1632; tr. The Hymnal 1982, alt., © 1985. The Church Pension Fund Tune: CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM, LM; Mode IV, Sarum, 9th C.; ace. by Gerard Farrell, OSB, 1919–2009



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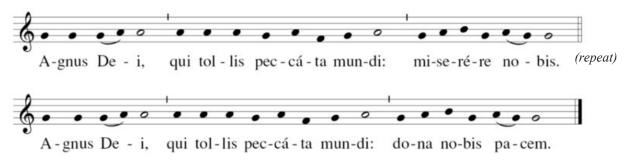


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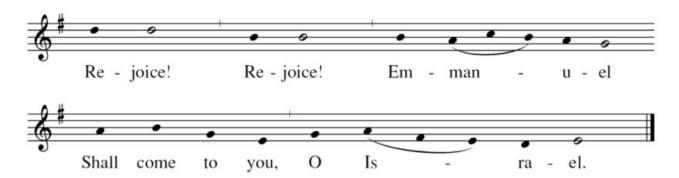


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### AGNUS DEI Chant, Mass XVIII



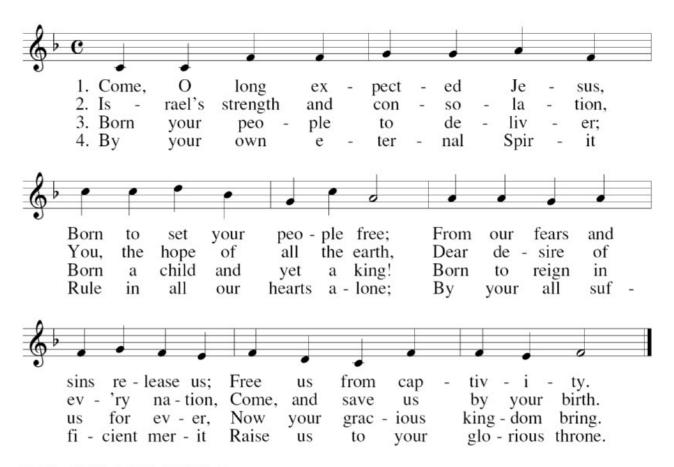
Music: Vatican Edition XVIII; acc. by Richard Proulx



Text: Veni, veni Emmanuel; Latin 9th C.; tr. by John M. Neale, 1818-1866, alt.
Tune: VENI VENI EMMANUEL, LM with refrain; Mode I; adapt. by Thomas Helmore, 1811-1890; acc. by Richard Proulx, b.1937

#### RECESSIONAL HYMN

#### Come, O Long Expected Jesus



Text: Haggai 2:7; Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt. Tune: STUTTGART, 8 7 8 7; Christian F. Witt, 1660-1716; adapt. by Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805-1876





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