

Dear Padre,

If Christmas is on December 25, why is the Immaculate Conception on December 8, rather than sometime in March?

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception asserts that Mary was free of the stain of original sin from the time she was conceived in her mother's womb. Jesus was also free of the stain of original sin and his conception by Mary is referred to as the Incarnation of Christ. Mary's Immaculate Conception is often confused for Christ's Incarnation.

In the Church's liturgical calendar, Mary's conception is celebrated on December 8; her birthday is celebrated exactly nine months later on September 8. Likewise, Christ's conception is celebrated on March 25 on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord; his birthday is celebrated exactly nine months later on December 25.

Mary's Immaculate Conception was celebrated many centuries before Pope Pius IX defined it as dogma on December 8, 1854: "The doctrine that maintains that the Blessed Virgin Mary in the first instant of her conception, by a unique grace and privilege granted to her by Almighty God, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ the Savior of mankind, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful" (*Ineffabilis Deus*). In fact, eight years before, in 1846, the bishops of the United States had already adopted the Immaculate Conception as the patronal feast for Catholics in this country.



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION BY PHILIP VERIT (1830) RENATA SEDNANOVA / SHUTTERSTOCK

Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / DearPadre.org

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
December 9 <i>Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> Gn 3:9–15, 20 Eph 1:3–6, 11–12 Lk 1:26–38	December 10 <i>Advent Weekday</i> Is 40:1–11 Mt 18:12–14	December 11 <i>Advent Weekday</i> Is 40:25–31 Mt 11:28–30	December 12 <i>Our Lady of Guadalupe</i> Zec 2:14–17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab Lk 1:26–38 or Lk 1:39–47	December 13 <i>St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr</i> Is 48:17–19 Mt 11:16–19	December 14 <i>St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church</i> Sir 48:1–4, 9–11 Mt 17:9a, 10–13	December 15 <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i> Zep 3:14–18a Phil 4:4–7 Lk 3:10–18



YARA NARDI / CNS

A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

By calling us to conversion, John urges us to go “beyond” where we presently are; to go beyond what our instincts tell us.... Let us ask for the grace to believe that with God things really do change, that he will banish our fears, heal our wounds.... Let us ask for the grace of hope....

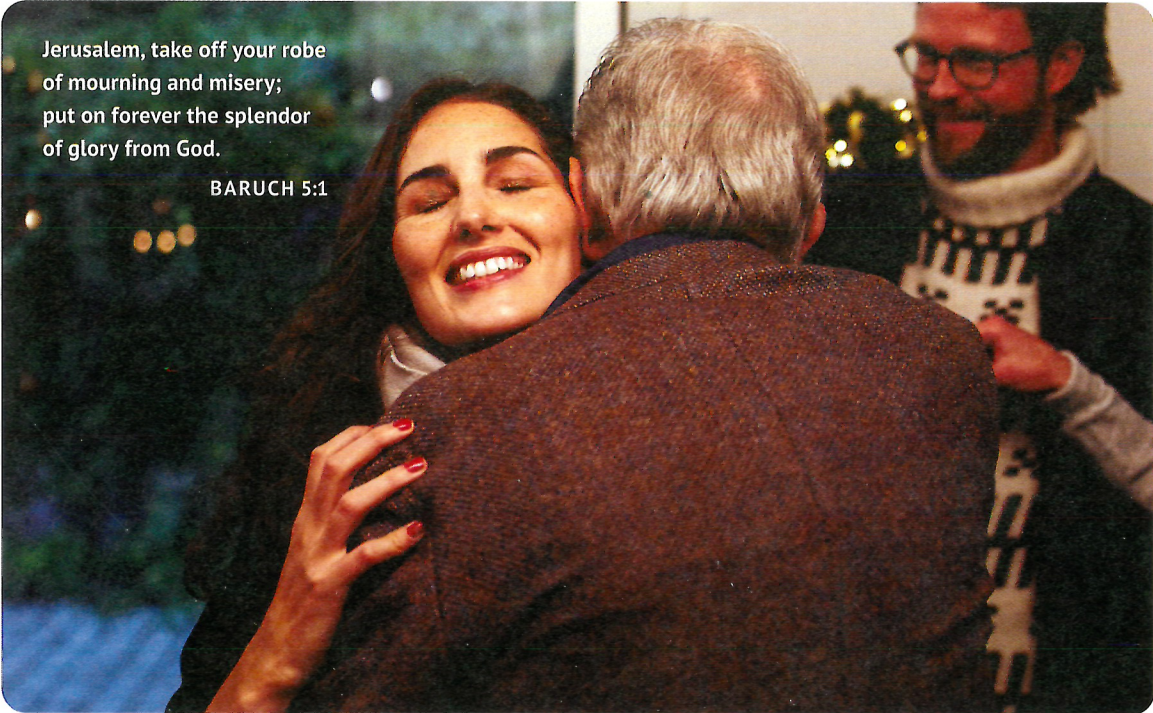
HOMILY, ATHENS, DECEMBER 5, 2021



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Our Parish COMMUNITY

December 8, 2024
Second Sunday of Advent (C)
Baruch 5:1–9 / Philippians 1:4–6, 8–11 / Luke 3:1–6



Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning and misery; put on forever the splendor of glory from God.

BARUCH 5:1

Coming Home

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

Coming home can take place in many varied ways. Sometimes it's at the end of a long day when we come home to where we can be ourselves without any pretensions. Sometimes it's going back to the neighborhood we grew up in, to the old haunts that remind us of the dreams we had and how they now seem tucked in every niche. Sometimes coming home is what happens after many wanderings, after we've sown our oats and harvested little and now have nowhere else to go. That too is a coming home, back to where it all began, back to where we dare to hope that life might begin again.

All of this is how the Hebrew people found themselves coming home to Jerusalem after eighty years of exile, coming back to start anew with the hope that their God would once again be proud of them, back to where they could be as God intended them to be. All of that is what we do when we decide we will try to be the sort of person we'd always hoped to become. It's when we attempt a second effort at making a marriage work, or a job productive, or maybe simply putting the pieces of our lives back in some sort of order. It's all about coming back home to God's dream for us, a kind of second Advent, when God comes into our lives and is born once again. ●

Reflect

Have you wandered too far from the values of your true home? Can you find your way back?



ST. JUDE PARISH

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WEEKLY MASS CALENDAR: Confession: Thursday Mornings after Mass CELEBRANT:

Sunday	Dec. 8, 2024	9:30 a.m.	Mass	Fr. Creagan
Thursday	Dec. 12, 2024	9:00 a.m./10:30 p.m.	Adoration/Mass	Fr. Creagan
Sunday	Dec. 15, 2024	9:30 a.m.	Mass	Fr. Schmidt
Thursday	Dec. 19, 2024	9:00 a.m./10:30 p.m.	Adoration/Mass	Fr. Creagan

WEEKLY MASS INTENTIONS:

Sunday	Dec. 8, 2024	Charles Schneider	By: Tom & Carolyn Noack
Thursday	Dec. 12, 2024	Marietta Bailey	By: Darlene Hollar
Sunday	Dec. 15, 2024	Judy McKenna	By: Chuck McKenna
Thursday	Dec. 19, 2024	Maudie & Harry Kalisiak	By: Don & Jan Kalisiak

TODAY: SUNDAY, 12-8-24 NEXT SUNDAY: 12-15-24

Reader	Brianna Price	Reader	Tony Karsen
EO Ministers	Jennifer P. & Tony K.	EO Ministers	Tony & Jenny Karsen
Servers	Bo, Sadie, Rocky, Hayzel	Servers	Alexa, Lydia, Alanah, Noah

OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Sunday	Dec. 01, 2024	Target	\$ 1,800	Offered	\$ 2,374.00	\$ 574.00
Year to Date		Target	\$ 40,400		\$ 43,343.00	\$ 2,943.00
Attendance		93	Year To Date Attendance			2777

God's work is complete through Christ

In this season of preparation, of waiting in joyful hope, our readings invite us to heed the voice of John the Baptist: *Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.*

What do our preparations for Christmas usually include? Planning, buying gifts, cleaning, baking? There is much that can demand our attention at this time of year. In contrast to these many pressures and voices, the Church offers these words from John the Baptist, quoting the prophet Isaiah: *Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth.*

This echoes the command from our reading from Baruch, *that every lofty mountain be made low and that the age-old depths and gorges be filled to level ground.*

What does this mean for us? How can we carry this Word into our lives? Well, it likely means some time spent in prayer and discernment. It means prioritizing listening to God's voice over some of the other pressures, tasks, and voices that can crowd in this time of year. If we can create some space for silence – for reflection and prayer – we might find God speaking into the questions raised by today's readings.

What mountains are keeping us from drawing nearer to God? What barriers are affecting our relationship with Christ? What valleys might be impeding our journey into the heart of the Divine? What wounds or fears might be keeping us from drawing close to His Sacred Heart?

This is the invitation of this sacred season: to pray with these questions. But if that sounds overwhelming, take heart! This is not discernment intended to add to our already-too-long list of things to do. Remember, we are preparing and waiting for Emmanuel, God with us – God who draws near and unites Himself to us. If you are tired or too busy, perhaps this is the valley or the mountain our Savior wants to cross to come to you. For, as Saint Paul reminds us in our second reading, *the One who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

How can we open space for Jesus to draw near to us today? How can we keep a hopeful watch for Him crossing mountains and valleys to be with us? As we prepare ourselves for the Eucharist, how can we open our hearts to God, who is with us at this Mass? This is the work of this holy season. This is our calling as we prepare for the joy of Christmas.

May our God, who crosses mountains and valleys to draw near to us, make us pure and blameless ... filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

FROM THE DRE:

December 15th – Adoration and Reconciliation for students and parents during class time.
There will be no Class on December 29th

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN: As Deacon Jim stated, our building project is on hold until after the 1st of the year. We will still take any donations that anyone wants to give, as any project we want to do will take additional funds. Look for future meetings after January 1st in the bulletin and Flocknote messages.

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL: Lillian A. Wheeler, Julie Haley, Steve Klein, Pete & Barb Percival, Joan Rumery, Margie Burris, Lillian B. Wheeler, Frances Parsons, David Vana, Sonny Laughlin, Donna Murphy, Jack Secondi, Mary Heinz, Vicki Clark, Brett Middleton, and those on our prayer chain.

WOMEN'S GUILD CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE SUN., DEC. 22ND AFTER MASS

Let us bake for you this holiday season! There is no muss, no fuss! If you're interested in baking for the sale, contact Laine Reisch at 269-655-6298.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE HERE AT ST. JUDE:

Reconciliation after Mass on Sunday, December 22 and
also decorating the Church – all are welcome to help!

Midnight Mass (Tues., 12/24/24) at St. Augustine Cathedral.

9:30 Mass on Christmas Day (Weds., 12/25/24).

9:30 Mass On (Weds., 1/1/25) Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

These are both Holy Days of Obligation

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS FOR DECEMBER – Shampoo, canned peas, canned soups, cereal, dish/laundry soap, toilet paper, paper towels. If someone is 60 years of age and over, and their monthly income is \$1580 a month for one person, they can apply to receive CSFP/Senior Commodities each month. If you have any questions, feel free to call 269-501-0224.

ADVENT PRESENTATION at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Allegan. Wednesday, December 11 “Make Straight His Path; Learn to Pray” This is a video presentation offered by Catholic speaker Chris Stefanik followed up with discussion based on the Catechism section on Prayer. He offers practical tips and ways to prepare our hearts for Jesus’ birth. What does it look like to pray? How do I pray well? Supper at 5:30, Presentation at 6 p.m. All are welcome!

SENIORS TOGETHER – Please join us for a Christmas lunch on Thursday, December 12 at the St. John Bosco Parish Center at 11:30 a.m. Food will be catered from Chinn Chinn. Please RSVP as soon as possible. Cost is \$15/person. Also, you are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item for the SVDP Pantry.

WOMEN AND MEN RELIGIOUS OFFER GRATITUDE – “Sincere thanks to the donors of the Retirement Fund for Religious. I hope we meet, if not in this world, then in the next,” says Sister Teresa Korycka, 81, of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate. Your gift impacts over 24,000 senior women and men religious, providing them a dignified retirement. To learn how your donation helps, [visit retiredreligious.org](http://visitretiredreligious.org)
Through your generosity, St. Jude Parish was able to donate \$777.00 to this worthy cause. Thank you!

FROM THE DIOCESE

**2024 KALAMAZOO AREA ADVENT PENANCE SERVICES
ARE POSTED ON THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE HALLWAY.**

FROM BISHOP LOHSE – Decree of Promulgation – providing a dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass for the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. “I am granting a general dispensation for the faithful of the Diocese of Kalamazoo applicable only for December 9, 2024, from the obligation to attend Mass on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.” *The Most Reverend Edward M. Lohse, JCD, Bishop of Kalamazoo.*

AN ADVENT ORGAN RECITAL will be held on Friday, December 13 at 7 p.m. at St. Augustine Cathedral featuring guest organist Jacob Minns playing an Advent repertoire by Bach, Walther, Pachelbel, Bédard and more. The concert is family-friendly and open to the public. A free-will offering will be taken up for the Fr. Selner Fund after the concert.

Anyone aware of child sexual abuse should report the matter to the appropriate law enforcement agency and make a report to the Michigan Department of Attorney General at 844-324-3374.