

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Mass Schedule

Saturday, December 5th

8:30 am - St. John – Mass for the people
 9:00 am - 9:30 am – *Confessions at St. John*
 3:15 pm - 3:55 pm – *Confessions at St. John*
 4:00 pm - St. John – Mass for the People

Sunday, December 6th First Sunday of Advent

7:30 am - 7:55 am – *Confessions at St. John*
 8:00 am - St. John – Steve Hahr by Chris Hahr
 9:35 am - St. Elizabeth – Keith Millie by Deacon & Mrs. Pete Gummere
 11:30 am - Queen of Peace – Mass for the People
Confessions at QP before Mass (time permitting) or following Mass as needed

Monday, December 7th St. Ambrose

8:30 am - St. Elizabeth – Joan Downing by Ray & Diane Bailey

Tuesday, December 8th The Immaculate Conception

8:30am - St. Johns – Spiritual welfare of our Children by M/M Scott Schoppe
 10:15am - School Mass – Mass for the People

Wednesday, December 9th

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm – *Holy Hour of Adoration with Confessions at St. John*
 5:15pm - St. John – Special Intention by Deacon & Mrs. Pete Gummere

Thursday, December 10th

8:30 am - St. John – Kenneth Budd by his daughter Vicki Mednick

Friday, December 11th St. Damacus

8:30am - St. Elizabeth – Wilhelm & Lizzi Goebel by M/M Reg Haselton

Saturday, December 12th Our Lady of Guadalupe

8:30 am - St. John – Mass for the people
 9:00 am - 9:30 am – *Confessions at St. John*
 3:15 pm - 3:55 pm – *Confessions at St. John*
 4:00 pm - St. John – George Maistros by Sue Maurice

Sunday, December 13th Third Sunday Of Advent

7:30 am - 7:55 am – *Confessions at St. John*
 8:00 am - St. John – Mass for the people
 9:35 am - St. Elizabeth –
 11:30 am - Queen of Peace – Hap & Betty Hutchins by their children (Wedding Anniversary)
Confessions at QP before Mass (time permitting) or following Mass as needed

Please keep our parishioners in mind who are ill & in need of your prayers, especially: George Thurston, Pam Austin, Charlene Chase, Connie Lapage, Martin Fortin, Charlie Weis, & Randy Thomas, Dick and Anita Bedor

Dec. 18 2020	St. John	St. Elizabeth	Queen of Peace
LECTORS:	4pm 8:00am	9:35am	11:30am

Good Shepherd Early Ed & Childcare Center

Good Shepherd Early Ed and Childcare Center is a year-round child care option offering a nurturing and faith-based program for children age 6 weeks to 5 years old. Openings are available. Call 751-8223

The **FORMED** program is available to everyone in our parish. To start enjoying this free gift, please visit the FORMED website:

1. Go to: nekcatholic.formed.org
2. Click on REGISTER to create a personal account

DECEMBER 6, 2020

PARISH EVENTS

Sun. Nov. 22nd 6:00-7:30 pm Confirmation Class/Center

FINANCIAL REPORT

Fiscal Year: 7/1/20-6/30/21 Budgeted Regular Collection: \$243,650
 Reg. Collection Year-to-date: \$61,882.74+
 On-Line: \$32,117.55

Collections and Receipts: November 29, 2020

Regular Offertory: \$3405.00

Please consider using the Online Giving tool for your weekly offertory donations. Visit our website at: nekcatholic.com and click "Give Online" to sign up!

THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, Corpus Christi Conference offers assistance in name of Jesus to the needy in our community. To contact us call: Patrick McWilliams: 274-3542 Ann Lovett: 751-8187; or the Rectory: 748-8129
 We will arrange a visit to see if we are able to serve you!

The Co-op Giving Tree

Many tags remain on the tree at St. John's. Please help brighten someone's Christmas by taking a tag and dropping the unwrapped gift to Mayo's store by **Thursday, Dec. 10th**. Thank you.

Queen of Peace Giving Tree

This year we will be helping a family of 8 with fuel, gifts, gas, etc. This grandmother is raising her grandchildren. A Monumental task to be sure. Please take an envelope off the tree with a dollar amount listed on it and put amount in it. Thank you for your support.

Proposed Christmas Mass Schedule

December 24th – Christmas Eve

4pm St. John
 7pm Queen of Peace

December 25th – Christmas

12am Midnight St. John
 8am St. John
 10am St. Elizabeth

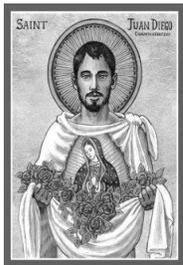
For social distancing we need to have an idea of numbers attending each Mass; we'll add a Mass if needed. Please let us know the Mass you and your family are planning to attend. Sign-up for a Mass time at the back of the church, or send an email to stjchurch@charter.net Please include family NAME and NUMBER attending. Thank you!



During the season of Thanksgiving, we often take time to reflect on our many blessings. With the *Christ Our Hope* campaign, we are especially grateful for those who have given their time and talents to help along the way.

At Corpus Christi, we would especially like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all who have contributed to the campaign. We are building for the future of the Catholic Church in Vermont and want everybody to share in that excitement and vision. Please continue to pray that our efforts will bear fruit that will last, as we strive to do something good for God.

Please remember to have one person from each family 'sign in' when attending Mass (including Daily Masses) by recording the family name and number attending. This is used to contact families in case of a covid outbreak in the community. We're reminded also of the Bishop's instruction to please wear a mask in the Church.



Dec. 8th: Feast of the Immaculate Conception

December 8th is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. It was not always thus. In the fifth century, a celebration of the "Conception of the Most Holy and All Pure Mother of God," was celebrated on December 9th. The Eastern Orthodox today celebrate "The Conception by St. Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos (God-bearer)" on December 9th. And in the

calendar of the Spanish Empire operative in 1531, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception was celebrated on December 9th, and so it was on this Feast Day, December 9, 1531, a lady who called herself "the ever virgin Holy Mary, Mother of the True God" made her first appearance to St. Juan Diego on Tepeyac hill in Mexico. This Immaculate Conception day revelation of the Mother of the True God occurred 34 years before the first European settlement in what was to become the United States, 76 years before the first successful English settlement at Jamestown and 245 years before the founding of our country.

In December 1531, at Tepeyac Hill near Mexico City, Blessed Mother Mary instructed a poor indigenous convert, Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin, to ask the bishop of Mexico to build a church in her honor. Failing in his first attempt to convince the bishop, Juan Diego thought himself unworthy of this mission. Consequently, he avoided a planned meeting with the Blessed Virgin because his uncle was sick, and at one point walked a different route around Tepeyac so as not to be delayed by conversation with her.

Despite Juan Diego's imperfections, Our Lady kept him as her messenger and sent him to the bishop with a sign of her patronage, a gift of roses wrapped in his cloak or *tilma*. When Juan Diego unfolded his *tilma* and presented the roses to the bishop, the *tilma* itself was imprinted with a miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin as a *mestiza* queen and mother. This image of Our Lady, full of Aztec symbolism, led millions of indigenous Mexicans to convert to Catholicism, founding the first Christian people in the Americas and establishing a "spiritual headquarters" for the evangelization of the continent. For this reason, Pope Pius XII proclaimed Our Lady of Guadalupe to be Patroness and Empress of the Americas.

The Blessed Mother's remarkable intervention and her appearance at Tepeyac to Juan Diego all fall within the octave of the Immaculate Conception. Juan Diego's *tilma* portrays Holy Mary as the Woman of the Apocalypse, "clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet" (Rev 12:1), a portrayal identified with the Immaculate Conception. In these days, as we celebrate the patronage of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, let us not be afraid to reflect also on the life of her beloved messenger, St. Juan Diego. Let us learn from his missteps and not ignore the Blessed Mother Mary amid our cares and insecurities. Rather, as the saint of Tepeyac did, let us draw close to Mary Immaculate, whose imprint on our lives teaches us to follow God's will, and strengthens us to build up the Church on our continent, dedicated to her.

"Listen and let it penetrate your heart...do not be troubled or weighed down with grief. Do not fear any illness or vexation, anxiety or pain. Am I not here who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not your fountain of life? Are you not in the folds of my mantle? In the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else you need?"

~ Our Lady's words to her servant Juan Diego

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

What does the "Immaculate Conception" refer to? It does not refer to conception of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mary, but to the special way in which the Virgin Mary herself was conceived. This conception was not virginal. (That is, she had a human father as well as a human mother.) But it was special and unique in another way ...

What is the Immaculate Conception? The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains it this way:

490 *To become the mother of the Savior, Mary "was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role." The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as "full of grace". In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give the free assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was necessary that she be wholly borne by God's grace.*

491 *Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854: "The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin."*

Does this mean Mary never sinned? Yes. Because of the way redemption was applied to Mary at the moment of her conception, she not only was protected from contracting original sin but also personal sin. The Catechism explains:

493 *The Fathers of the Eastern tradition call the Mother of God "the All-Holy", and celebrate her as "free from any stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature". By the grace of God Mary remained free of every personal sin her whole life long.*

Does this mean Mary didn't need Jesus to die on the Cross for her? No. What we've already quoted states that Mary was immaculately conceived as part of her being "full of **grace**" and thus "**redeemed** from the moment of her conception" by "a singular **grace** and privilege of almighty God and **by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ**, Savior of the human race." The Catechism goes on to state:

492 *The "splendor of an entirely unique holiness" by which Mary is "enriched from the first instant of her conception" **comes wholly from Christ: she is "redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son"**.*

508 *From among the descendants of Eve, God chose the Virgin Mary to be the mother of His Son. "Full of grace", Mary is "**the most excellent fruit of redemption**" (SC 103): from the first instant of her conception, she was totally preserved from the stain of original sin and she remained pure from all personal sin throughout her life.*

How does this make Mary an icon of our own destiny? Those who die in God's friendship and thus go to heaven will be freed from all sin and stain of sin. We will thus all be rendered "immaculate" (Latin, *immaculatus* = "stainless") if we remain faithful to God. Even in this life, God purifies us and trains us in holiness and, if we die in His friendship but imperfectly purified, He will purify us in purgatory and render us immaculate. By giving Mary this grace from the first moment of her conception, God showed us an image of our own destiny. He shows us that this is possible for humans by His grace.