



Dear Friends in Christ,

The Advent season is the Church's time of preparing for the coming of the Lord. We prepare our homes and we prepare our hearts. As God's chosen people awaited the Messiah, we now look forward to celebrating that Messiah's birth, and we also anticipate in joy-filled hope his return in glory.

In the first reading, the prophet Baruch proclaims to all of Israel that God is *leading Israel in joy by the light of his glory, with his mercy and justice for company*. The Lord has commanded that the gorges be filled and the mountains be laid low, *that Israel may advance secure in the glory of God*.

John the Baptist will proclaim similar words as he himself directly prepares the way of the Lord. The tradition around John the Baptist is a rich one. John, son of Mary's cousin Elizabeth, is the one destined to announce the coming of the Messiah. He proclaims Jesus' coming and foretells of his importance. He is a powerful witness to the Son of God who came to take away our sins, calling out to all of us: Prepare the way of the Lord; he is coming.

God is faithful to his promises. The prophets foretold that God was sending a Savior to the world, and he did. God sent his Son, Jesus, born of Mary, just as he promised. Christ is the fulfillment of all of God's promises. The Father has prepared the world for the coming of Christ, who came to save us from sin and to restore our relationship with God.

Jesus is the Savior of the world, and the new covenant. By his incarnation, he unites us to the Father and the Spirit. He has restored the relationship that was lost because of original sin.

This season helps us prepare for Christ's birth at Christmas, while being filled with hope and a joyful expectation of when he will come again. It can be very easy to get swept up in the business and the busyness of Christmas in our society. Commercialism and activity often distracts us from the true meaning of Advent, which then makes it all the more difficult to stay connected with the true meaning of Christmas. May we remember to slow down from time to time during Advent, to spend time in prayer, and to recall and give thanks for the different ways Christ makes His presence known in our lives.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
Fr. Marco

FIRST TUESDAY COFFEE The next First Tuesday Coffee will be held on Tuesday, December 7th from 9 am until 11 am in the church hall, bring a friend and a non-perishable item for the food pantry.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST WITH SANTA Knights of Columbus will be hosting Pancake Breakfast with Santa – 12 December 2021, 9 am to 12 noon. Suggested Donation, \$10 per person or \$30 per family of 4 or more. Proceeds to Support the Christmas in April Program 2022.

MASS TIMES FOR THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION are as follows: Tuesday, December 7th at 5:30 pm, Wednesday, December 8th at 9 am, 12 pm, and 7 pm.

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED The office will be closed on Wednesday, December 8th in observance of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

PRO LIFE ART CONTEST The Archdiocese of Washington will be hosting their first annual Pro-Life Contest. Youth are invited to share projects in any of three categories: protest art, visual art, and video art. For more information about submitting art and descriptions of each category, go to youthrallyandmassforlife.org or contact prolife@adw.org. Art must be submitted by midnight on January 1, 2022. Submission accepted from youth ages 13-18.

ONLINE SURVEY FOR THE SYNOD The entire Catholic Church is called to participate in the upcoming Synod of Bishops! In preparation for the international Synod of Bishops in 2023, Pope Francis wants your input on the topic of "For a Synodal Church, Communion, Participation, and Mission." People of all ages, Catholics and non-Catholics, are invited to give their feedback on the Church's mission. To participate in the survey, visit www.adw.org/synod.

PERPETUAL ADORATION Did you know our very own Immaculate Heart of Mary offers you the opportunity to participate in Perpetual Adoration? Some may ask "What is Perpetual Adoration?" Perpetual Adoration is a Eucharistic devotion whereby members unite in the adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament with the goal of adoring The Blessed Sacrament perpetually (24 hours a day). If you are interested, please call our adoration coordinator, Jeff Harmon, at 240-538-5017 or email adoration@ihmrcc.org for more information.

IHM MUSIC MINISTRY If you are interested in sharing your musical talents with the parish, there is a place for you in this ministry! Please call Mary at 240-434-8876 (leave a message!).

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



December 5 — December 12

Monday	Is 2:1-5/Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9/ Mt 8:5-11
9:00 am	Dr. Horst Schirmer (L)
Tuesday	Rom 10:9-18/Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11/ Mt 4:18-22
5:30 pm	Dominic Pruss (L)
Wednesday	Is 25:6-10a/Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6/ Mt 15:29-37
9:00 am	Lucas K. Sitch (S)
12:00 pm	Rev. Daniel Gallagher (L)
7:00 pm	All IHM Parishioners
Thursday	Is 26:1-6/Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a/ Mt 7:21, 24-27
5:30 pm	Orest Kawka (L)
Friday	Is 29:17-24/Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14/ Mt 9:27-31
9:00 am	Jim and Donna Brown (L)
Saturday	Is 30:19-21, 23-26/Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6/ Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8
9:00 am	Helen Donovan (D)
4:00 pm	Cheryl Karg (D)
Sunday	Bar 5:1-9/Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6/ Phil 1:4-6, 8-11/Lk 3:1-6
8:30 am	Rose Ann Breslin (D)
11:15 am	Henry Stauffer (D)
1:00 pm	All IHM Parishioners

75th ANNIVERSARY PLANNING Our parish will celebrate it's 75th Anniversary next year, and planning for the celebrations has begun. We have several ideas for events, culminating in mid-November with the blessing of a new altar and dinner. Interested parishioners are invited to the planning committee's next meeting on Wednesday, December 15 at 1:30 pm. If you are coming, or if you would like to collaborate but cannot come that day, please contact Fr. Marco at schad@ihmrcc.org or 301-863-8144 x12.

W.A.R.M Great News! Immaculate Heart of Mary will once again be hosting the Wrapping Arms 'Round Many guests from the evening of Jan 16th through the morning of Jan 23rd. Graciously, St. John Francis Regis' in Hollywood has offered to partner with us. We are in need of monitors for three shifts through the night and a hot breakfast and dinner each day. A sign up sheet is located in the Main Foyer. Please prayerfully consider volunteering to serve the homeless of St. Mary's County. If you would like additional information, contact Marcie McLaughlin at (240) 298-1462.

SURVIVING DIVORCE was created to bring hope and healing to those who have experienced the pain and loneliness of a broken marriage. It is for the newly separated and divorced and those still struggling with issues many years later. This group will meet at IHM on Sunday evenings from 6:30 pm until 8 pm starting on January 16th, 2022. To register or to learn more about this program, email atthewell@ihmrcc.org or call 240-298-4044. A suggested donation of \$25 covers the cost of materials.

TAGALOG MASSES Two Tagalog Masses will be celebrated at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church this month of December. On Sunday, December 12, the once-a-month Tagalog Mass (scheduled every second Sunday of the month) will be celebrated by Fr. Ryan Pineda at 4pm, followed by Fellowship in the Large Classroom inside the Raley Education Center. On Tuesday, December 21, there will be a Simbang Gabi Mass at 6am, also followed by fellowship. All are invited to share in this Filipino Christian tradition as Filipinos continue to celebrate 500 years of Christianity this year. Contact janet.harmon@gmail.com for more information.

SVDP CHRISTMAS PROGRAM If you picked up a white envelope from the giving trees, please bring your wrapped gift(s) to the church hall between 8 am-8 pm on December 14th, 15th, or 16th. All gifts need to be received by December 16th. If you have any questions, call Janet at 301-863-7263 evenings.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

THE SICK

THAT THEY MAY BE RESTORED TO FULL HEALTH

Audrey Somers, Louise Shafer, Helen Daye, Kathleen Floyd, Mary Oliver, Judith Ann Allgood, Vince Guerin, Jane Keyon, Linda F. Gieser, Jim Brown, Ralph Gough Sr., Betty LePore, Dinnette Briscoe, Bill Wagoner, Paula Coxon, Vincent Campanella, Ray Dion, Joseph Hugh Weiland, Rylee Corliss, Rose Marie Weiland, Alan Stapanon, Ruby Garcia, Mia Garcia, Matthew Riddell, Marie C. Williams, Jim Hoffman

Please note: names will remain on this list for two months, unless otherwise notified. To keep a name on the list, please resubmit by contacting bulletin@ihmrcc.org, or call the Parish Office.

PAPAL PRAYER INTENTION FOR DECEMBER

Let us pray for the catechists, summoned to announce the Word of God: may they be its witnesses, with courage and creativity and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Follow us on



WALK WITH MARY The Archdiocese of Washington's annual Walk with Mary procession and Mass to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas, will take place on Saturday, December 11, 2021. The gathering for the procession will start at 11:30am at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart (16th St. & Park Rd., NW), and the procession will conclude at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (4th St. & Michigan Ave., NE). Following the praying of the Rosary at 1:30 pm, Mass at the Basilica will begin at 2:30pm, with Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory as the main celebrant and Bishop Mario Dorsonville as the homilist. For more information, visit adw.org/walkwithmary or search on social media using #WalkwithMary.

"WHAT ABOUT MARY?" Join us at Immaculate Conception Church and Parish Hall (Mechanicsville) on Saturday, December 11th, to learn more about the gift Mary is to us! The morning begins with Registration at 7:15 am, (parish hall) and will include a nice breakfast with fellowship, followed by Rosary Prayers and Mass at 9:00 am (in the Church), two talks and healing prayers scheduled to end by 2 pm. Please register through Bread of Life Center for Peace on Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/what-about-mary-tickets-185053498997>. You can also call: 301 475 7139 or stop by Heavenly Presents in Leonardtown. Registration ends on Friday, December 10th, at 3 pm, (this helps us to prepare for food and set up!) Your free will offering will help us to defray cost, but is not required!

GARDEN AND GROUNDS MINISTRY We have various projects around the church that need to be completed. Any adult or child would be welcome. If you want to volunteer, please contact Martha Davie by phone or text at 240-434-3510. Thank you!

BULLETIN DEADLINE Please email your submission to bulletin@ihmrcc.org by Wednesday at 10 am prior to the Sunday of publication. All entries are subject to editing.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL OF IHM Our food pantry provides food to those who need assistance. We'd like to have you help us bag groceries from the food in our food pantry for our clients, or to pick up food from grocery stores in our area that donate to us. We do this throughout the week, excluding weekends. We have meetings just once a month. If you'd like to volunteer in our food pantry, please call 301-863-8193 on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays from 8:30 to 11:30 am, which is when the pantry is open. Leave your name and number and we will work to get you started as soon as you'd like.

WOMEN'S NIGHT OF REFLECTION with Fr. Larry Swink on Tuesday, December 14th at St. Cecilia's in St. Mary's City. 7PM. "Got Hope? – It's Unshakeable!" How can we take captive our thoughts and allow our hearts to live in hope? The one who has hope lives differently. We invite all women to come and be strengthened in the virtue of hope. Evening includes Eucharistic Adoration, talk, Confession, and healing prayers.

SIGN UP TO FORMED! In order to sign up to Formed, the premier site to access Catholic Media online, go to www.formed.org and press "sign up" and then "sign up as a parishioner". Type in the zip code of the parish "20653", follow the directions to make an account, and then enjoy!

LAZARUS COMMITTEE The Lazarus Committee provides funeral repasts for the funerals of active and registered parishioners. If interested in joining the Lazarus committee or for more information, please contact Pat at 301-863-5133 or Linda at 240-298-5264.

IT SHOULDN'T HURT AT HOME The Catholic community cares about families experiencing violence and unhealthy relationships. Visit www.CatholicsforFamilyPeace.org to learn more about this issue, how to help, who to call, and the rich Catholic teaching that supports survivors. If you need help now, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 800-799-7233 (24 hours); 800-787-3224 (TTY); www.ndvh.org to find assistance near you.

SYNOD LISTENING SESSION The entire Catholic Church is called to participate in the upcoming Synod of Bishops! In preparation for the international Synod of Bishops in 2023, Pope Francis wants your input on the topic of "For a Synodal Church, Communion, Participation, and Mission." You are invited to join Fr. Marco and Fr. Dan for a parish listening session on Saturday, January 29th, 10 am - 1 pm with a snow date Saturday, February 12th at 10 am to 1 pm. Invite family, friends, neighbors- we want everyone to participate in this listening session. To RSVP, please email: julian@ihmrcc.org. If you can't make the parish listening session, share your opinion online at www.adw.org/synod.



ALMOST IMMACULATE IHM THRIFT STORE is in need of help! Please stop by the store during operating hours to check out what we do. Then, if you want to help, please contact Deacon Mike 240-542-8369. We are located in the Kerr House (white building at the street entrance). The thrift store is open Fridays from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, and Saturdays from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Donations (no clothing) accepted during those hours. The thrift shop supports the food pantry and our local community, so stop by and see what you can do!

December 5, 2021

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Second Sunday of Advent

Bar 5:1-9 | Phil 1:4-6, 8-11 | Lk 3:1-6

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Today we have blogs and life coaches, Facebook groups and self-help books, all of which can help us become better human beings. These resources come to mind as I read St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians – I think St. Paul would be the ultimate life coach! All of his letters to the early Church offer wisdom, encouragement, and instruction, and the words we heard today are particularly significant as we prepare for Jesus' coming this Advent: "the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus." Unlike some of our modern-day resources, Paul's words go beyond simply helpful advice; they are rooted in faith and prayer, and in the truth of the Paschal Mystery. These words assure us that we are not alone on our journey, that what God has promised in the person of his Son will come to fruition: Christ will come again! And so, as John the Baptist did, we who are disciples are meant to witness to his coming, announcing the Good News and preparing for his – second – coming. Repent. Believe. "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." How do we do this? Engage with Scripture – read it and really hear what the Word of God is saying to you. Pray for insight, that the grace of God might transform you to go forth and announce the Gospel.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Even pre-Google, I spent more time than perhaps I should have hunting down the perfect gifts, especially for my young boys. I'd scour the ads, then get up early on Black Friday and hit the stores in search of deals and hard-to-find items. Perhaps that's why these words from St. Paul stopped me in my tracks: "And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, *to discern what is of value* [italics added], so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ." During Advent, these words can both assure and challenge us – to grow in love, knowledge, and a sense of what really matters during our time on earth. For me the challenge will be to spend less time shopping this season and more time focusing on deepening my relationship with God, who is preparing to turn the darkness into light. This doesn't mean we can't take delight in finding that perfect gift; but we ought also to increase our recognition that all gifts come from God, including our ability to have access to and means to purchase material gifts. We can find joy in God's presence (and presents?) among us.

ACTIONS Re-read today's Gospel, and then consider how Saint Paul followed in John the Baptist's footsteps in his Letter to the Philippians. Think of ways you, like John and Paul, can encourage one another, and be a voice crying out in the desert. Participate in the sacrament of reconciliation and pray that God may cleanse your heart to welcome him at Christmas, and when he comes again.

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**PREPARE
THE WAY
OF THE
LORD, MAKE
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”

(LK 3:4)