



Dear Friends in Christ,

As we enter this final week of Advent, the Gospel turns our attention to the role of Saint Joseph in salvation history. When we ponder the mystery of the Incarnation, our attention is often focused on Mary, our Blessed Mother, and the way God prepared her for her central role as Mother to our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Church, and to all of us. But what about Joseph? He remains a bit more of a mystery, a shadow in the background of these momentous events when the Son of God took on human flesh, became fully human, and united mankind to the divine life forever.

But, if we focus on today's readings in which Joseph plays a role, we can glean some insights and lessons about God and our path of discipleship.

First, as we hear in the story, God invites Joseph's cooperation in his plan of salvation. We see this in Scripture time and again, and it is true in our own lives as well. If we were in God's seat, we might choose to force people into submission and to comply with our will, but this is not how God operates. God wants to win us over and wants to see us participate in the building up of his kingdom.

Second, what is the obstacle the angel identifies? Fear. Do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home, says the angel. Do not be afraid to do this strange thing that runs counter to what you know, to what seems sensible, and even just. Might this be true in our own lives? Might we be afraid to move forward with a choice we know in our hearts is what God wants us to do, but are hesitant because it just doesn't make sense from a worldly perspective?

As Advent draws to a close, let us spend some time pondering these two questions: How is God inviting me to cooperate with the slow work of building up his kingdom, in my own heart, in my family and friendships, in the community? And, examining my heart, how is fear posing an obstacle to my cooperation? As we ponder these questions, let us ask Saint Joseph to intercede for us and show us how to respond with graciousness and humility, with trust and courage, to the Lord's invitation.

Yours in Christ Jesus,  
Fr. Marco

**CHRISTMAS CHILDREN'S PLAY** Volunteers are needed to assist in the acting and production of the Christmas Nativity Play on Saturday, December 24th at 3:30 pm. To make the play happen we will need child volunteers to be actors and adult volunteers (preferably parents of the children) to assist with costumes, organization, and other such responsibilities. Here are some important dates for the play:

Sunday, December 18 at 2:30 pm – costumes given

Thursday, December 22 at 10 am- 12:00 pm - dress rehearsal

Saturday, December 24 at 3:30 pm —Christmas play

If you or your child(ren) are interested in participating, please call the CFF office at 301-863-8793.

**MASS IN THE PARKING LOT** As a reminder, during IHM's weekend Masses we have in-parking lot options available. While parked at IHM, if you tune to 99.7 FM you can hear the Mass broadcast live. If you park in the second, smaller parking lot, we will bring out Communion at the appropriate time if you have your hazard lights on.

**PARISH OFFICE CLOSED** On Friday, December 23rd, Monday December 26th, and Monday, January 2nd.



**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 at 240-542-8369. We are located in the Kerr House (white building at the street entrance). The thrift store is open Fridays from 10 am to 3 pm, and Saturdays from 10 am to 4 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!



If you or someone you know is interested in becoming catholic or you know a catholic desiring to learn more about the faith, please contact Tess Crowe via email at [rcia@ihmrcc.org](mailto:rcia@ihmrcc.org) or contact the office at 301-863-8144 to register.



To sign up for Formed, the premier site to access Catholic Media online, go to [www.formed.org](http://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 create an account, and then enjoy!

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



**December 19 — 25**

<b>Monday</b>	Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25A/Ps 71:3-4A, 5-6AB, 16-17/ Lk 1:5-25
<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>St. Vincent De Paul of IHM (L)</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6/ Lk 1:26-38
<b>5:30 pm</b>	<b>Vicky Lynn Carroll (D)</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	Sg 2:8-14/Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21/ Lk 1:39-45
<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>Bill Durkin (D)</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Samuel 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd/ Lk 1:46-56
<b>5:30 pm</b>	<b>Jim Bailey (D)</b>
<b>Friday</b>	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14/ Lk 1:57-66
<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>Buck and Hiltrude Hewitt (D)</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29/Lk 1:67-79
<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>John and Arlene Sullivan (D)</b>
<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>All IHM Parishioners</b>
<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>All IHM Parishioners</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6/Heb 1:1-6/ Jn 1:1-18
<b>12:00 am</b>	<b>All IHM Parishioners</b>
<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>All IHM Parishioners</b>
<b>1:00 pm</b>	<b>All IHM Parishioners</b>

**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.

**MASS INTENTIONS** may be requested at the parish office during regular office hours (M—F, 8 am—4 pm) in person or by phone (301-863-8144 x11), or by e-mailing julian@ihmrcc.org. Your desired date may not be available. We now have the ability to accept Mass intention stipends online (but only **after** the date has been accepted by the office).

**SMALL GROUP STUDIES ON THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BEGIN JANUARY 11** Two adult small group studies will use The Wild Goose: Discovering a Deeper Relationship with the Holy Spirit by Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR. Both groups will meet in the IHM large classroom for two seven-week sessions: January 11 to February 22 and April 12 to May 24, Mondays at 7 pm or Wednesdays at 10 am. There is no cost for this study. If interested, please contact Nancy Baysinger at 240-298-4713.

## Events Calendar

**December 19 — December 25**

Mon:	6 pm	Advent Penance Service
	7 pm	Mass with healing prayers
Wed:	10 am	Church Christmas Decorating
Thurs:	10 am	Church Christmas Decorating
	10 am	Christmas Pageant Dress Rehearsal
	6 pm	Last chance for Confession before Christmas
Fri:	10 am	Christmas Church Decorating
Sat:	3:30 pm	Christmas Nativity Pageant
	4 pm	Christmas Vigil Mass
	6:30 pm	Christmas Vigil Mass, no incense
Sun:	12 am	Christmas Midnight Mass
	10 am	Christmas Mass
	1 pm	Christmas Mass in Spanish

**CHRISTMAS POSTER CONTEST WINNERS!** The following are the winners of IHM's Poster Contest. Congratulations to the winners, and thank you to all who participated!

Group 1, Ages 5-7 Marianne McNatt

Group 2, Ages 8-10 Julia Bagaporo

Group 3, Ages 11-14 Josiah Roof

## PLEASE PRAY FOR

### THE SICK

### THAT THEY MAY BE RESTORED TO FULL HEALTH

Audrey Somers, Helen Daye, Kathleen Floyd, Mary Oliver, Judith Ann Allgood, Vince Guerin, Jane Keyon, Linda F. Gieser, Ralph Gough Sr., Betty LePore, Bill Wagoner, Joseph Hugh Weiland, Rylee Corliss, Rose Marie Weiland, Alan Stapanon, Ruby Garcia, Mia Garcia, Matthew Riddell, Marie C. Williams, Kaylee Klier, David Kalil, Wanda Slate, Enedina Melendez, Hector Perez, Josephine, Glenn Thompson III, John Worrell, Tim Brosnihan, Jim Makin, Carmen Colby, Tracey Herrera, Gary Green, Grace Miedzinski, Bruce Riddell, Katelyn Corliss, Robert Weaver, Corinne Geraty

*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

We pray that volunteer non-profit organizations committed to human development find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation.

Follow us on



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# DECEMBER 17 & 18, 2022

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**CATHOLIC TEEN SUMMER CAMP** High school teens from St. Mary's County are going to Lifeteen's Covecrest from July 30 to August 5, 2023! Camp Covecrest is a Catholic summer camp in Georgia where parish youth groups from all over the country come together to experience summer camp at its best. Teens are given the opportunity to dive deeply into their Catholic faith and strengthen their relationship with Christ while having unforgettable experiences. For details and local registration, go to <https://www.saintalloysiuschurch.org/camp>.

## **HELP NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS CHURCH DECORATING**

This is the schedule for decorating the church for the Christmas season. Please RSVP for the day or days you will be volunteering. To RSVP or if you have any questions, call or text Paula at 301-904-6393. Thank you in advance for your time and talent!

Wednesday, December 21st at 10 am Decorations need to be brought down from the loft. Climbing up and down steep stairs, teenagers would be a great and much appreciated help!

Thursday, December 22nd at 10 am Instead of gathering greens, we will get together to make swags to enhance the lanterns with materials that will be provided for you.

Friday, December 23rd at 10 am until completed Decorating the altar area manger scene, sanctuary, and other important spots with indoor/outdoor carpet, snow material and ribbon, lighted trees and poinsettias (54 in all).

**CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES** For both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are as follows:

### Saturday, December 24th

4:00 pm Christmas Vigil Mass  
6:30 pm Christmas Vigil Mass (No Incense)

### Sunday, December 25th

12 am Midnight Mass  
10 am Christmas Day Mass (English)  
1 pm Christmas Day Mass (Spanish)

**MARY, MOTHER OF GOD MASS TIMES** On Saturday, December 31st and Sunday, January 1st are the normal weekend Mass times; there is no special schedule.

**LOYOLA ON THE POTOMAC**, A Jesuit Retreat House in Faulkner, MD is open for various retreat weekends, for both men and women. Directed and Private Retreats are also available. See our complete Retreat Schedule at: [www.loyolaonthepotomac.com](http://www.loyolaonthepotomac.com) (301) 392-0800

**DO YOU FEEL ALONE IN YOUR MARRIAGE?** Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue, or have you just stopped talking to each other? Retrouvaille has helped tens of thousands of couples struggling in their marriage. For confidential information or to register for the upcoming program beginning with a weekend on January 20th, please visit: [www.HelpOurMarriage.org](http://www.HelpOurMarriage.org), call (443) 400-7017, or email us at: [3015@HelpOurMarriage.org](mailto:3015@HelpOurMarriage.org).



**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!).

**MASS WITH HEALING PRAYERS** This month's Mass with Healing Prayers is at 7 pm on Monday, December 19. After Mass, we will have Eucharistic Adoration and prayers for healing with laying on of hands. Confessions begin at **6 pm** and continue as long as there are penitents.

**PARISH COOKBOOK SALES** Our 75th Anniversary parish cookbook "Favorite Recipes to Feed the Heart" is here and available at the parish office. Each cookbooks is \$20. Payment accepted in cash, check or credit/ACH through [cookbook.ihmrcc.org](http://cookbook.ihmrcc.org).

**MUSIC MINISTRY** Interested in Music Ministry but don't have a lot of time to commit? We have groups that serve at Mass only once or twice a month. You are needed! Also looking for accomplished pianists willing to play for Masses. Let me know if you are interested. [mary@ihmrcc.org](mailto:mary@ihmrcc.org)

**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.

**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!

**ALTAR FLOWERS/SANCTUARY CANDLES** If you would like to donate the Altar Flowers or Sanctuary Candles in memory or for special intentions of a loved one, please call the Parish Office or email at [cindy@ihmrcc.org](mailto:cindy@ihmrcc.org).





Gaetty Images/Alekhastock

December 18, 2022

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

Is 7:10-14 | Rom 1:1-7 | Mt 1:18-24

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

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

In our family's department-store Nativity set, Joseph blends into the background: Mary and the infant Jesus steal the scene, she in her blue robes and looking over the sweet, tiny and vulnerable Son of God. Even the Magi stand out more than humble Joseph. Yet today's Gospel focuses on Jesus' earthly father, whom many of us Catholics grew to know a little better during the Year of St. Joseph in 2021. Imagine Joseph's shock at learning Mary was pregnant! Rather than quietly divorcing her, he accepts the angel's words at face value: "For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Joseph takes Mary into his home and embraces her and the child Jesus she bears. As we celebrate this fourth Sunday of Advent, we can all do well to follow Joseph and Mary's example by saying "yes" to God, even though it may turn our lives upside down. We can dust off our Nativity scenes and ask the Lord to help us prepare our hearts and homes for Jesus.

### **GO** EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

I remember our first trip to the pediatrician with our newborn. Our job as parents, he said in so many words, was to raise him so that he'd be ready to leave us at 18. As our youngest approaches that milestone, I'm having a hard time letting go. In his apostolic letter *Patris Corde*, Pope Francis holds up St. Joseph as an example of what it means to be a father (and I think this applies to mothers, too): "Every child is the bearer of a unique mystery that can only be brought to light with the help of a father who respects that child's freedom. A father who realizes that he is most a father and educator at the point when he becomes 'useless,' when he sees that his child has become independent and can walk the paths of life unaccompanied. When he becomes like Joseph, who always knew that his child was not his own but had merely been entrusted to his care." Joseph and Mary loved Jesus in this way, accepting that Jesus did not "belong" to them but to all of us. Whether or not we are parents, we can learn from their example, entrusting our lives and those of our loved ones to God. As St. Paul reminds us, we "belong to Jesus Christ."

**ACTION** "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" As you light the Advent candles or say evening prayers this week, reflect on the ways Jesus has made his presence known to you today and give thanks.