Our Lady of Las Vegas

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

- Faith, Family, Friends -

PASTORAL STAFF
Served by Society of Christ Fathers
Rev. Gerald Grupczynski, SChr, Pastor
Rev. Tomasz Ludwicki, SChr, Parochial Vicar
Dave Kowaleski, Director of Music

FAITH FORMATION
Religious Education & Confirmation
Liz Williams: 702-802-2362
lizwilliams1234@hotmail.com

RCIA
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
Julia Dodson: 702-802-2300
jdodson@ollv.org

LIFE TEEN
Marc Sayre: marcsayre@ollv.org

MASS TIMES
Saturday Vigil: 4:30pm
Sunday: 6:30am, 8:00am, 10:00am, 12:00pm, 1:30pm Polish, 5:00pm, 6:30pm with Tagalog music
Weekday: Monday - Friday 8:00am (Rosary before Mass at 7:25am)
Civic & Holiday: Refer to parish bulletin
Holy Days of Obligation: Refer to parish bulletin

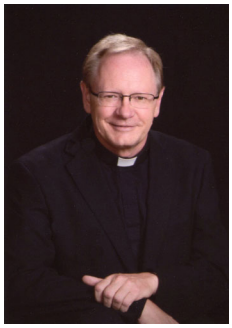
RECONCILIATION
(Confession)
Monday - Friday: 7:45am
Saturday: 3:30pm - 4:15pm

FIRST FRIDAY
7:30am: Sacrament of Reconciliation
8:00am: Mass (Eng.) / Adoration to follow
6:00pm: Rosary & Divine Mercy Chaplet
6:15pm: Sacrament of Reconciliation
7:00pm: Mass (Eng.) / Holy Hour to follow

FIRST SATURDAY
8:00am: Mass (Eng.)

DEVOTIONS
St. Jude: Every Tuesday morning following the 8:00am Mass
Our Lady of Perpetual Help: Every Wednesday morning after the 8:00am Mass

3050 ALTA DRIVE · LAS VEGAS, NV 89107
Parish Office: 702-802-2300 **Fax:** 702-802-2301 **Website:** www.ollvchurch.org **Email:** ollvparish@ollv.org
PARISH OFFICE HOURS: Monday-Friday 8:30am - 4:00pm *(Closed for lunch 11:30am-12:30pm)*
OLLV School: 702-802-2323



This Sunday is the **Second Sunday of Advent**. It seems a bit strange that although it's only December 4th, the second week of Advent is already beginning. This is because Christmas falls on a Sunday this year. When Christmas falls on a Sunday, the fourth and final week of Advent is observed over an entire week of seven days, making the Advent season a full four weeks. Next year, when Christmas will fall on a Monday, the fourth week of Advent will be observed only one day, December 24th.

Nestled within the second week of Advent is one of the most important feasts of the liturgical year. This week, on **December 8**, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the **Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**. As important as the Immaculate Conception is, there is often confusion as to what it signifies. People are often confused by the Gospel passage read at the mass of this day. The Gospel describes the Annunciation to Mary by the Archangel Gabriel that she will conceive and bear a son. This is not, however, what the Immaculate Conception is about.

The meaning of the Immaculate Conception goes back several years earlier when Mary was conceived in the womb of her mother, Ann. At the first instant of her existence in her mother's womb, Mary was graced by God to be without sin.

All human beings bear the stain of original sin on their souls, beginning at the time of our conception. This is not a personal sin through any fault of our own. It is the mark of our fallen human nature through the sin of Adam and Eve. At our baptism, original sin is washed away. However, even though we are washed clean of original sin at baptism, the tendency to sin still remains in each of us. Therefore, we must resist the urge to sin throughout our lives. It is the grace of God which helps us in this battle.

Mary was given a privilege of grace to be free of original sin and all personal sin throughout her life. The official words of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception are as follows, *" We… declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, from the moment of her conception, by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved immune from stain of original sin, is revealed by God…"* This dogma was officially declared by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854. Incidentally, while this proclamation may seem new, the belief that Mary was entirely without sin goes back to the beginning of Christianity.

Many non-Catholic Christians today find this doctrine of Mary difficult to accept. One main reason is that if Mary was without sin, then she did not need a Savior. Mary would then be excluded from the salvific purpose of Jesus' coming into the world. In other words, Mary was not redeemed by Christ. **Duns Scotus**, a prominent Catholic philosopher of the late 13th century, defended the Immaculate Conception by saying that not only is prevention better than cure, but all cure aspires to being prevention. The highest act of Christ's redeeming power would be not just to **cure** sin but to **prevent** it in the first place. He suggests that Mary is more thoroughly redeemed than we are because she was saved from sinning, and has greater cause for gratitude to Christ. Mary was saved by Jesus through prevention, whereas we are saved by cure.

To understand why the Immaculate Conception of Mary was necessary, we must understand the concept of sin. Sin is alienation from God in various degrees. Sin puts us under the influence of Satan. Since Mary was to be the bearer of the Son of God, she could not ever, for one moment, be under any influence of Satan or be alienated from God in any degree. As the Mother of God, Mary needed to be wholly and entirely united to God. It is God's grace and favor that made Mary the Immaculate Conception.

The Immaculate Conception, Thursday, December 8 is a **Holy Day of Obligation**. Please see the mass schedule for mass times. Let us honor Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God.

Fr. Gerry

PARISH INFORMATION

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, December 3 ~ FIRST SATURDAY; Saint Francis Xavier
8:00am: †Amy Reynolds
4:30pm: Ofel Suchy

Sunday, December 4 ~ Second Sunday of Advent
6:30am: †Markus Gallant
8:00am: †Richard Webb
10:00am: †Angelo Gaberiele Tenuta
12:00pm: †Zan Bealmark
1:30pm: (Polish) For the Parishioners of OLLV: †Maria Olslewska; ††Edward & Jessie Laczynski
5:00pm: For the Unborn
6:30pm: †Concordia Paredes

Monday, December 5
8:00am: †Edward Kalata

Tuesday, December 6 ~ Saint Nicholas
8:00am: †James Golden

Wednesday, December 7 ~ Saint Ambrose
8:00am: †Richard Waters

Thursday, December 8 ~ The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
8:00am: †Daria Kowal
9:30am: (School) †Angelita Caputo
12:00pm: †Waldo DeCastroverde
6:00pm: †Edith Baptiste
7:30pm: Polish Intentions

Friday, December 9 ~ Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtatoatzin
8:00am: Gilma Ospinia

Saturday, December 10
4:30pm: †Abelardo Cruz, Sr.

Sunday, December 11 ~ Third Sunday of Advent
6:30am: †Lilia Ceres
8:00am: †Angelita Cabreros
10:00am: †Mariannina Ferro Alessi
12:00pm: †Mary Tantone
1:30pm: (Polish) For the Parishioners of OLLV:
5:00pm: †Minviluz Bojador
6:30pm: ††Hermine Bardolasa & Bryson Bardolasa

Sanctuary Lamp Sponsorship

DECEMBER 4 - 10, 2016

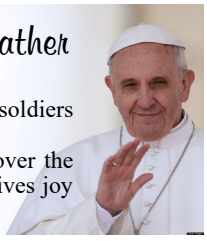
This week the **Sanctuary Lamp** is memory of

MERWIN DESOUZA

Sponsored by the Fernandez Family

Prayer Intentions of the Holy Father
DECEMBER 2016

End to Child-Soldiers: That the scandal of child-soldiers may be eliminated the world over.
Europe: That the peoples of Europe may rediscover the beauty, goodness, and truth of the Gospel which gives joy and hope to life.



TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading — He shall bring justice for the afflicted; the earth shall overflow with the knowledge of the LORD (Isaiah 11:1-10).
Psalm — Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever (Psalm 72).
Second Reading — Glorify God by living in harmony with one another, welcoming each other as Christ welcomed you (Romans 15:4-9).
Gospel — Produce good fruit worthy of your baptism; repent, for the reign of God is near (Matthew 3:1-12).

The English translation of the Psalm Responses from *Lectionary for Mass* © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

WEEKLY PARISH CALENDAR

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5
✧**No Parish Events**

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6
✧**Boy Scouts Troop 99:** 6pm-7:30pm-Kenny Room

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7
✧**RCIA:** 6pm-9pm-McFarland Room
✧**Life Teen-Life Nights:** 6-7:30pm-Gym
✧**Boy Scouts Troop 99:** 6:30pm-9pm

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8
✧**Immaculate Conception Mass:** 8am, 9:30am (School), 12pm, 6pm, 7:30pm (Polish)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9
✧**Polish Dance Group:** 7pm-9pm-McFarland Room

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10
✧**Angel Tree Gift Returns:** In the Church Vestibule
✧**Polish School Dance:** 12pm-1pm-McFarland Room
✧**KofC Christmas Dinner:** 6pm-Gym

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11
✧**Scouts:** 11am-2pm-Gym
✧**Polish Dance Group:** 3pm-5pm-Gym
✧**Polish RE:** 12:30pm-1:30pm-Church McFarland Rm & Kenny Rm
✧**Polish Social:** 2:30pm-3:30pm-McFarland Room

Catholic Mass for the Homebound - The Diocese offers a televised Mass for the home-bound each Sunday at 7:30am on KFBT Channel 33.1 Digital (no longer an analog signal) or Cox Cable Channel 6.

Immaculate Heart Radio - Now in Las Vegas, you can listen to Catholic radio 24-hours a day by tuning your radio to 970am.

Please remember that no pamphlets, flyers or literature of any kind should be left in the church or posted on the doors of the church. If you have a church event that you wish to advertise, please contact the parish office.

PARISH NEWS

Sunday Offering Totals

November 20, 2016

1st Collection
$14,154.00

Catholic Campaign for Human Development
$3,376.00

November 27, 2016

1st Collection
$14,636.00

Thank you for your continued support!

WORKSHOP for New Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

There will be an Extraordinary Minister Workshop on **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13** at **6pm** in the **Welcome Room** of the church.

All those wishing to serve in this important liturgical apostolate must have received all the sacraments of initiation in the Roman Catholic Church:

- Baptism
- Confirmation
- Holy Eucharist

The Extraordinary Minister should be living a sacramental life:

- Holy Communion regularly
- Confession regularly
- If married, the Extraordinary Minister should be living a sacramental marriage in the Church

Our Lady of Las Vegas' Next

Baptism Class

For Parents & Godparents

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
In the Welcome in the church.

As a courtesy to the priest who is facilitating the class and other attendees, we ask that infants & children ***do not*** *attend this class.* Please call the parish office to register at 802-2300.

PLEASE PRAY for THOSE WHO ARE ILL

If you have the sick person's permission, you may request that their name be printed in the bulletin for prayers. This is strictly for the sick only. Their name will remain for four consecutive Sundays. If a longer period of time is needed, please contact the parish office. (The date next to the name is the date their name will be removed)

John McCauley	12/11	Jason & Sophia Ludwicki	12/11	Elianna Alderete	12/18	Steve Reinert	01/01
Linda McCauley	12/11	Vincent Falcone	12/11	Pamela & Tim Watts	12/18	Fran Zgonc	01/01
Jayne McCauley	12/11	Tadcusz Syposz	12/11	Val & John	12/18	Michael Zgonc	01/01
Rosalie Cusimano	12/11	Dcn. Bill & Sylvia Cobbett	12/11	Connie & Jill Stefanchuk	12/18	Vester Shultz	01/01
Rebecca Chambers	12/11	Jennifer Johnson & Family	12/18	Elizabeth & John Stefanchuk	12/18	Kay Schmitz	01/01
Truth Thayer	12/11	Shannon Boyd	12/18	Kirsi Mbacke	12/18	Becky Pauley	01/01
Steve & Jami Grant	12/11	Sara Ayoub	12/18	Rose Macalma	12/25	John Blas	01/01
Phillip Chavez	12/11	Rosa E. Soto-Sanchez	12/18	Marco Lorio	01/01	Jean Hill	01/01
Jamie Kimball	12/11	Debra Patnoe	12/18	Fernandina Lledo	01/01	Mary Schmitz	01/01
Bill Mitchell	12/11	Aragon Family	12/18	John Tarich	01/01	Diane Sinder	01/01
Debbie Wilson	12/11	Marjorie Martinez	12/18	Marla Gretka	01/01	Myriam Dake	01/01
Burnie Wilson	12/11	Arnold Family	12/18	Diana Snyder	01/01	Myriam Rodriguez	01/01
Mark & Ryan Gorman & Fam.	12/11	Tonnie Blea & Family	12/18	Gavin Prince	01/01	Olivia Grace	01/01

Our Lady of Charity
of El Cobre in Las Vegas

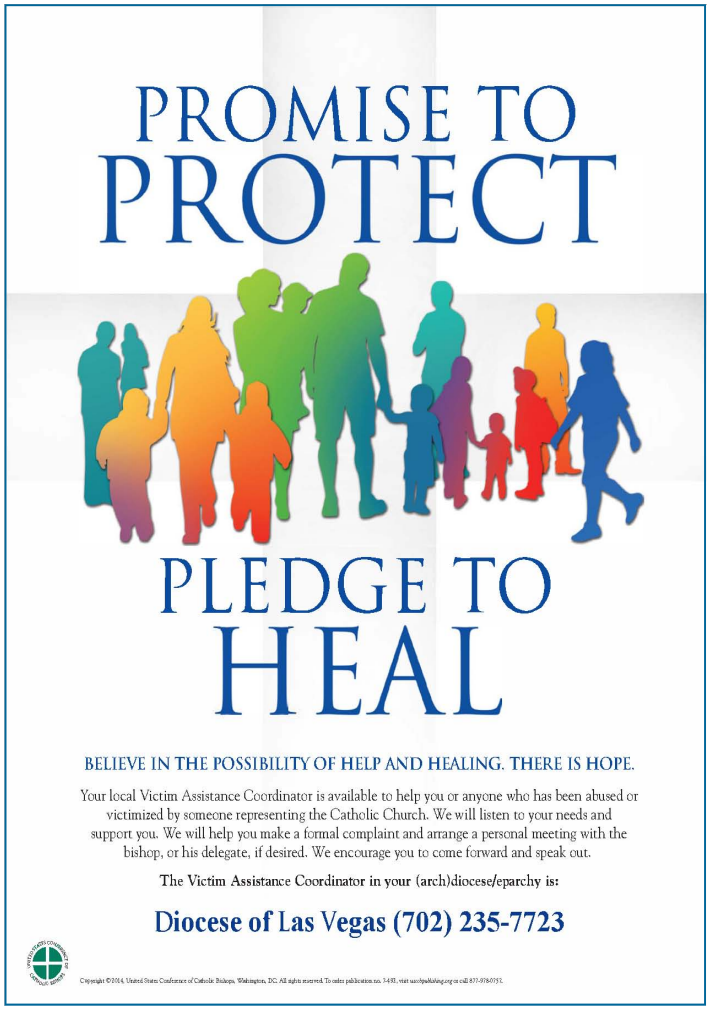
The image of Our Lady of Charity that was brought from Cuba to the United States by Pope Francis to honor the 100th Anniversary of the pontifical declaration of Our Lady of Charity of *El Cobre* as Patroness of Cuba will come to the Diocese of Las Vegas. This papal image may be venerated during the week of **December 4 - 9** at

St. Anne Parish
1901 S. Maryland Pkwy | Las Vegas
702-735-0510

- ✧ 6:00pm - Holy Hour
- ✧ 7:00pm - Holy Mass
  Celebrant: Most Rev. Bishop A. Pepe, Bishop of Las Vegas
- ✧ 8:00pm - Reception at the Ghanem Center, Saint Anne Catholic School - *Cuban refreshments and music*

We welcome all, particularly those in our Diocese of Cuban heritage, to join us in honoring the Patroness of Cuba, as we also honor the Patroness of the United States. May Mary's heavenly intercession and maternal love be ever upon us.

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God



DIOCESAN SIMBANG GABI

Friday, December 16 at 8:00am
Christ the King
4925 Torrey Pines Dr., Las Vegas 89118

Saturday, December 17 at 5:30pm
St. Francis of Assisi
2300 Sunridge Heights Pkwy, Henderson 89052

Sunday, December 18 (two parishes)
Holy Spirit at 12:30pm
5959 S. Hualapai Way, Las Vegas 89148
On Bishop Gorman High School's Campus
and
St. Bridget at 5:00pm
220 N. 14th Street, Las Vegas 89101

Monday, December 19 at 6:00pm
St. John Neumann
2575 W. El Campo Grande Ave., N Las Vegas 89031

Tuesday, December 20 (two parishes)
St. Joseph Husband of Mary at 8:00am
7260 W. Sahara Ave., Las Vegas 89117
and
Our Lady of Las Vegas at 7:00pm
3050 Alta Dr., Las Vegas 89107

Wednesday, December 21 at 6:00pm
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
1811 Pueblo Vista Dr., Las Vegas 89128

Thursday, December 22 at 8:30pm
St. Anne
1901 South Maryland Pkwy, Las Vegas 89104

Friday, December 23 at 6:00pm
St. Peter the Apostle
204 South Boulder Hwy, Henderson 89015

Saturday, December 24 at 8:00am
St. Joan of Arc
315 S. Casino Center Blvd., Las Vegas 89101

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Sunday, December 11
12pm - 7pm
Our Lady of Wisdom Catholic Church
2120 Lindell Ave | Las Vegas

Angel Tree

OLLV Women's Guild invites you to participate in the Angel Tree Donations for the following:

- Children from Catholic Charities
- Women's Resource Center
- OLLV Homebound Seniors
- Senior Residents of Stella Fleming Towers

DECEMBER 3 & 4: Choose your angel from the tree in the vestibule of the church.

DECEMBER 10 & 11: **All gifts must be returned.** Members of the Women's Guild will be in the vestibule of the church to assist you.

For any questions, please contact Nelda Bruce at 702-363-0863 or the-bruce@cox.net.

Breakfast with Santa

Sponsored by Society of St. Mary

Sunday, December 4
9am - 12pm

Santa Claus will arrive on a Fire Engine at 9am in front of Our Lady of Las Vegas Church after the 8am Mass.

One FREE Professional 4x6 print (per family) with Santa, courtesy of JMac.

- **Raffle Tickets to Win a Boys or Girls Bike and other prizes!**
- **Organized craft activity for all children.**
- **All parish members are welcome to a Free Breakfast.**

Donations Welcomed

The Knights of Columbus Council 9102 Presents

Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree

December 10

Doors Open at 5pm / Dinner Begins at 6pm
In Bevan Hall's Gym

Tickets: $30 couple / $20 Single / $10 Child
Children 3 & under are free

A Traditional Christmas Dinner will be served buffet style. Beer, Wine & Soda are available for purchase. Face Painting, Bounce House & a visit from Santa! Live Band, Dancing, Silent Auction *& Raffle. We will be collecting new, unwrapped toys for a local hospital or charity. Toys should be valued at least $10 & you will receive a "free" raffle ticket. Maximum 5 "free" raffle tickets per couple. Additional raffle tickets can be purchased.*

Buy tickets by December 5
Contact GK Tom Villardi or Gigi Villardi
kofc9102@gmail.com or 702-331-0869

Tickets will also be sold after the Masses on November 19 & 20 and December 3 & 4

Our Lady of Las Vegas Simbang Gabi

(Prayers 30 minutes prior to the Mass times below.)

Thursday, December 15 at 7:00pm
Friday, December 16 at 7:00pm
Saturday, December 17 at 7:00pm
Sunday, December 18 at 6:30pm
Monday, December 19 at 7:00pm
Tuesday, December 20 at 7:00pm
(Reception to Follow in McFarland Room)
Wednesday, December 21 at 7:00pm
Thursday, December 22 at 7:00pm
Friday, December 23 at 7:00pm
(Reception to Follow in McFarland Room)

Parish Advent Confessions

Wednesday, December 14
9:00am - 11:00am
6:00pm - 8:00pm
In English and Polish

Oplatek Christmas Wafers

Available in the Vestibule & in the Parish Office during office hours.

You may place your suggested donation of $2 in the CSA Box.

Christmas Mass Intention Offering Envelopes

Envelopes are available in the vestibule of the church if you would like your loved ones, living or deceased, remembered during the Christmas Masses. Please put your completed envelope in the CSA box, in Sunday's collection basket or bring it by the parish office no later than **Wednesday, December 21**.

The Little Blue Book

Advent & Christmas Seasons 2016-2017
Six-minute reflections on the Infancy Narrative of Luke
Available in the vestibule of the church and the parish office. You can place your $2 donation in the CSA box.

Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve

Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord

Saturday, December 24
4:00pm, 6:00pm

10:00pm "Pasterka"
A Mass celebrated during Christmas between December 24 & 25 by Roman Catholics across Poland.

12:00 Midnight

Christmas Day

The Nativity of the Lord

Sunday, December 25
8:00am, 10:00am,
12:00pm 1:30pm (Polish)
There will be no Mass at 6:30am, 5:00pm or 6:30pm

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

The Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord

Sunday, January 1
Regular Mass Schedule

Symbols of the Season

Advent is rich with sacred symbols. The Scriptures are filled with images of light and darkness, cacophony and silence, waiting and fulfillment. The color deep purple reflects the penitential and reflective nature of the season. Both the circular shape and the evergreen of the Advent wreath suggest eternal and everlasting life. Watch for these symbols throughout the season:

Candlelight - Christ is the light of the World
Evergreen - In Jesus, we are given the gift of eternal life
Water - We recall our baptism and are born anew in Jesus
Angels - Witness to the Good News
Star - The cosmic sign that the King of Kings has been born!

FAITH FORMATION

Religious Education & Confirmation

Coordinator: Liz Williams
3046 Alta Drive ♦ Las Vegas, NV 89107
Phone: 702-802-2362 **Email:** lizwilliams1234@hotmail.com

Office Hours: **Monday, Wednesday & Thursday** 8:30am - 2:30pm; **Tuesday** 1:00pm - 2:30pm; **Friday** CLOSED

*All **Religious Education & Confirmation** classes are held on the **OLLV School Campus**. Contact the Religious Education & Confirmation Office if you have any questions regarding these programs.*

2016 - 2017 Schedules

A full schedule can be found at www.ollvchurch.org | Click on Faith Formation | Click on Documents

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	CONFIRMATION - I	CONFIRMATION - II
Wednesday, December 7 Class: 6:00pm - 7:15pm	**Saturday, December 10** Service in Bevan Hall for Christmas Dinner *Students who want hours, sign up in the RE Office*	**Wednesday, December 7** Class: 5:45pm - 7:30pm
Wednesday, December 14 Class: 6:00pm - 7:15pm	**Wednesday, December 14** Class: 6:00pm - 7:15pm	**Wednesday, January 11** Class: 5:45pm - 7:30pm
CHRISTMAS BREAK **No Class on December 21 & 28**	**Wednesday, January 4** Class: 6:00pm - 7:15pm	**Wednesday, January 25** Class: 5:45pm - 7:30pm

"Changed by the working of grace into a new creature, the Christian thus sets himself to follow Christ and learns more and more within the Church to think like Him, to judge like Him, to act in conformity with His commandments, and to hope as He invites us to."

— St. John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*

JOURNEY OF FAITH

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

Coordinator: Julia Dodson
3050 Alta Drive | Las Vegas, NV 89107
Phone: 702-802-2300 **Email:** jdodson@ollv.org

2016 - 2017 Schedule

A full schedule can be found at www.ollvchurch.org
Click on Faith Formation | Click on Becoming Catholic (RCIA) | Under Documents, click on Schedule

Wednesday, December 7	**Class:** 6:00pm - 8:30pm **McFarland Room**	**Review and Q&A** John Kirk
Thursday, December 8	**See Mass Schedule on page 4 and attend on your own.**	**Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary** - *A Holy Day of Obligation*
Wednesday, December 14	**Class:** 6:00pm - 8:30pm **McFarland Room**	**Christmas Potluck**

OLLV SCHOOL INFORMATION

Our Lady of Las Vegas Catholic School

3046 Alta Drive ♦ Las Vegas, NV 89107
Phone: 702-802-2323 Fax: 702-802-2324 School Website: www.ollv.org
Principal: Phyllis Joyce Vice-Principal: Monica Futryk

During this past Year of Mercy, OLLV School contributed to the **Coat & Blanket Drive** with 89 coats and jackets, 37 blankets and more than 100 scarves, hats and gloves. These items were given to the homeless and low-income families. Thank you to all those who donated to this drive, to the volunteers and to Ms. Daley for coordinating this drive.

2016 - 2017 Weekly Schedule

Monday, December 5	• **JV Boys Basketball Quarter Finals @ St. Anne**
Tuesday, December 6	• **Varsity Boys Basketball Quarter Finals @ OLLV** • **Advent Confessions, Grades 6-8**
Wednesday, December 7	• **JV Boys Basketball Semi-Finals @ St. Anne** • **Advent Confessions, Grades 3-5**
Thursday, December 8	• **School Mass: 9:30am** Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary *A Holy Day of Obligation* • **Varsity Boys Basketball Semi-Finals @ OLLV**
Friday, December 9	• **Boys Basketball Finals @ BGHS (tentative)**

OLLV LIFE TEEN

LIFE TEEN: Our high school aged Life Teen program offers the youth of our parish the opportunity to gather amidst their peers to explore the truth and beauty of their Catholic faith and grow in the love of Christ in a fun and relaxed environment. We currently have two separate meetings: **every other Wednesday**, called **LIFE NIGHTS**, where we explore different issues that are relevant to teenagers, and **every other Sunday**, called **SOCIAL NIGHTS**, where teenagers gather to build and strengthen community through various social activities. All high school aged teenagers are welcomed and encouraged to attend!

LIFE NIGHTS 5:45pm - 7:30pm in the Gym	SOCIAL NIGHTS 6:15pm - 7:45pm in the Gym
DECEMBER 14 - Advent Special	DECEMBER 4
DECEMBER 28 - No Meeting / Christmas Break	DECEMBER 18
JANUARY 4 - Immaculata: Mary's Role in Salvation History	JANUARY 1 - No Meeting / Christmas Break
JANUARY 18 - Immaculata: Lost Ark—Sin & Salvation	JANUARY 8

NEXT WEEKEND'S SECOND COLLECTION

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On the weekend of **December 10 and 11**, we will take part in the national collection for the **Retirement Fund for Religious**. This annual appeal for retired religious, helps to educate and assist religious institutes in the United States to care for their elderly and frail members. Nearly 33,000 sisters, brothers, and religious order priests, women and men who have consecrated their lives to serving God and the Church, will benefit from this collection.

Pope Francis tells us, "Every consecrated person is a gift for the People of God on its journey." Many of us, myself included, can recall special women or men religious who played meaningful roles in our lives. Their support of our journeys often required great sacrifices. Most senior religious worked for small stipends, leaving a substantial gap in retirement savings. As a result, hundreds of religious communities now struggle to provide adequate care for aging members.

The Retirement Fund for Religious offers us an opportunity to support elder religious in this phase of their journeys. While many continue in some form of ministry, others are frail and need assistance. Your gift provides vital funding for medications, nursing care, and more. It also helps religious congregations to implement long-term retirement strategies that ensure both quality eldercare and continued service to the People of God.

This is but one of many worthy causes in need of our assistance. I ask simply that you give what you can in thanksgiving for the faithful service of senior religious. Won't you please join me in supporting the Retirement Fund for Religious and in praising God for the gifts that consecrated life offers our Church.

Assuring you of my gratitude and prayers, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph A. Pepe, D.D., J.C.D.

Bishop of Las Vegas