

## O Antiphons

*O Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love:  
come to teach us the path of knowledge!*

*O Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:  
come to rescue us with your mighty power!*

*O Root of Jesse's stem, sign of God's love for all his people:  
come to save us without delay!*

*O Key of David, opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom:  
come and free the prisoners of darkness!*

*O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:  
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.*

*O King of all nations and keystone of the Church:  
come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!*

*O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law:  
come to save us, Lord our God!*

*~ Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*

**St. Thomas Aquinas Church**

5376 State Street  
Saginaw, MI 48603  
989-799-2460

[www.stasaginaw.org](http://www.stasaginaw.org)

## Father Rick's Reflections . . .



Sometimes, trying to understand traditions and practices during the days of Jesus, Mary and Joseph through contemporary eyes can lead to the wrong conclusions. Once betrothed to Joseph, Mary was truly his wife and not a pregnant, unwed teenager, as some homilists preach. Betrothal was, by Jewish law, the first stage of marriage, a legal agreement that bestowed on the couple the status of husband and wife. Further proof that the betrothed were married are the facts that betrothal could be terminated only by death (after which the remaining spouse was considered widowed) or by the man divorcing his wife. Any infidelity on the woman's part during betrothal was regarded as adultery. The strong honor code of the Middle Eastern world demanded that no man could take possession of what belonged to another, including a child in the womb who had been conceived by another man. Joseph had his dreams of married life, but then comes the nightmare, and the painful human agony of a just man torn between his loyalty to the Jewish Torah (law) and his love for Mary – pregnant, but not by him and therefore considered an

adulteress who could possibly be stoned, or at least subjected to public humiliation.

Matthew describes Joseph as a just man, who plans to make some attempt to reconcile steadfast love and law. With deep unease in his soul, perhaps remembering the prophets' call for *"loyalty ... not sacrifice"* Joseph decides to divorce Mary quietly to spare her as much public shame as possible. Such an attitude is an overture to the mercy that Jesus will show in his interpretation of the Law and surely a reminder to the church of all ages to listen to the echo of the prophetic words.

In a dream, a messenger of God tells Joseph not to fear what he cannot understand, not to disown the mystery but enter into it. Joseph wakes up and succeeds where we often fail – he does something about his dream. Obedient to God's word, he responds for the first of many times *"as the angel of the Lord has commanded."* This biblical dreamer is also a person of action. Joseph offers the hospitality of his love and lineage to Mary and to the stranger-child whom she carries in her womb. He is the radically blessed poor man, ready to surrender the right to choose a name for the child, and generously offering to Jesus, he who waves, a paternity not of his own flesh. What onlookers might consider a scandal, Joseph and Mary believe is the action of the Holy Spirit, who continues to do *"scandalous"* things in our midst.

Joseph is cast by Matthew along the lines of another Joseph,

the patriarch of Genesis, who was also a man of dreams and a man of God's providence. Out of the granaries of Egypt over which he was the Pharaoh's chief steward, Joseph cared for his family in a time of famine, despite their poor treatment of him as a young man. The Joseph of the gospel also cares unobtrusively for his family, stewarding the Grain and the Bread that continues to feed our hunger at every eucharistic assembly.

The celebration of Christmas is quickly upon us. First, our Mass schedule for Christmas is as follows: Christmas Eve at 4:00 pm (children are invited to bring bells to play during the singing) and 7:00 pm. Christmas Day at 10:00 am only. The parish office will be closed on Friday, December 23 and December 26-30, the week between Christmas and New Year's. Some of the staff will be in and out that week so it would be wise to call first to see if someone will be in the office. Any contributions for 2022 need to be to the parish office by December 25, 2022.



With bulletin deadlines, I am writing these few words early in December. We are still in the throes of Advent but preparing for the coming of the kingdom of God through the incarnation of God-made-man. May these last days of Advent be times of peace and justice, awaiting the renewal of God's kingdom in our hearts. Happy Advent!

*F. Rick*

## Mission Statement of St. Thomas Aquinas

We, the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Community, united by our love for God and one another, are called to evangelize through worship, service, life-long learning, promoting God's truth, peace and justice, and respecting all creation.

## Prayers

Please pray for all who have been commended to our prayer that they will respond to God's healing will, especially:

Lois B.  
Linda Smith  
Tessa Mary  
Olivia Monsour  
Larry S.  
Al V.  
Betty  
Monica  
Larry S.  
Rose K.  
Joann H.  
David B.  
Mandy  
Larry  
Ken



Peggy

And those who are homebound and in assisted/nursing facilities.

We are happy to list names of those who request prayers for one month. The list will be purged again on December 30. Please remember to contact the office 799-2460 ext. 1 when a loved one's name no longer needs inclusion on the prayer list.



## Readings for the Week of December 18 2022

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b> Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6; Rom 1:1-7; Mt 1:18-24
<b>Monday</b>	Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a; Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17; Lk 1:5-25
<b>Tuesday</b>	Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6; Lk 1:26-38
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Memorial of Saint Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church</b> Sg 2:8-14; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk 1:39-45
<b>Thursday</b>	1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd; Lk 1:46-56
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Memorial of Saint John of Kanty, Priest</b> Mal 3:1-4, 23-24; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9,10 & 14; Lk 1:57-66
<b>Saturday</b>	2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14 a, 16; Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 & 29; Lk1:67-79
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)</b> <i>Vigil Mass:</i> Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 or Mt 1:18-25 <i>Mass during the Night:</i> Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14 <i>Mass at Dawn:</i> Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20 <i>Mass during the Day:</i> Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 or Jn 1:1-5, 9-14

Jenny (McInerney)

Eisbrenner

Lord, we remember in our prayers Jenny whom you have called to be with you. May the calming peace of your love be with her family. Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and may the perpetual light shine upon her. Amen.

# Fourth Sunday of Advent

## **First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14**

In today's reading, the prophet Isaiah speaks to the Jewish King Ahaz, who is more interested in politics than religion, Isaiah announces that Ahaz will soon have a son, who will be a better king than his father. Christians have seen in this passage a deeper meaning, namely, Mary giving birth to Jesus.

## **Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7**

The opening words of Paul's letter to the Romans are an example of the classical style of letter writing at that time: he identifies himself, extends a greeting, gives some helpful information about himself, and personalizes his letter by naming the community to whom he is writing. You will also notice how Paul highlights the fact that Jesus was descended from the Royal House of David. Early Christians (many of them from the lower class) were particularly proud of this.

## **Gospel Reflection: Matthew 1:18-24**

The ultimate gift of Christmas is God-with-us, Emmanuel/ God has become forever involved with humanity. This should whet our appetite to know and believe in the Lord more deeply, and stay in union. Mary's role has been both minimized or exaggerated by some. We honor Mary as one whose response to God was "yes". Through her, God-with-us became flesh. Mary protects Christianity from merely being ideas, doctrines or opinions. Mary constantly keeps before us the relationship with Jesus that is the core of her faith and ours.

*For your reflection:* Do I see my life as a response to the gift of God? In what ways do I respond?

## **Stewardship Reflections**

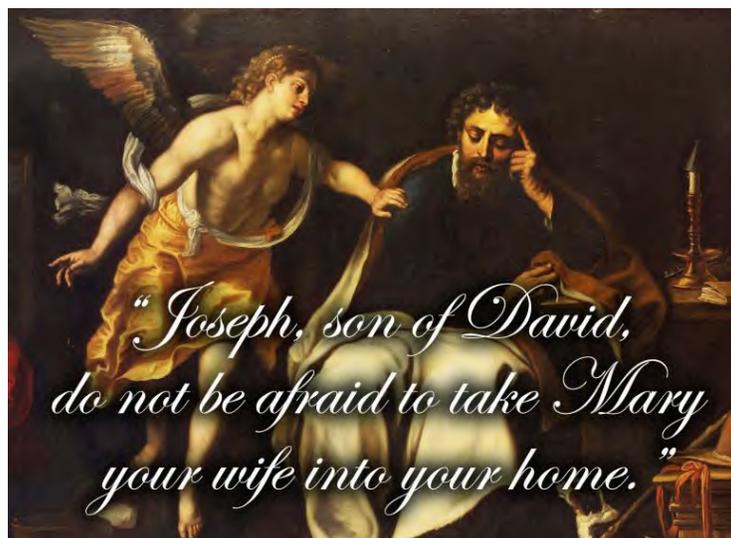
"When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home."

Matthew 1:24

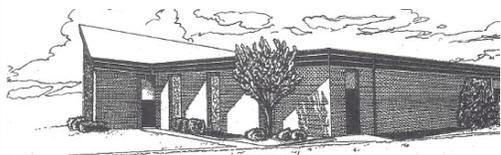
Putting our complete trust in the Lord without expecting anything in return. Striving to put God first in all things and follow Him wherever He may lead us. As we prepare for the birth of our Lord, pray for the strength and courage to be a model of discipleship, just as Joseph was.

## **Family Perspective by Bud Ozar**

The child born to Jesus and Mary was named Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." Every child is EMMANUEL, reminding us "God is with us." Children are signs of God's continuing presence in our lives.



## In Our Parish



### Tuesday, December 20

8:30 AM Mass

### Wednesday, December 21

8:30 AM Mass

### Thursday, December 22

8:30 AM Mass w/  
NCCE/MS Community

### Saturday, December 24

4:00 PM Mass

7:00 PM Mass

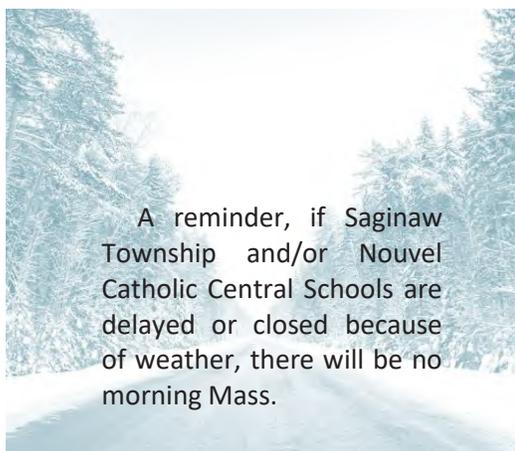
### Sunday, December 25

10:00 AM Mass

### **OPLATEK - Christmas Wafer**

The breaking of the Christmas wafer is a custom that began in Poland in the 10th century and is practiced by people of Polish ancestry around the world. It is considered the most ancient and beloved of Polish traditions. Oplatek are available in the narthex for you start or continue our own family blessing.

### **Wesołych Świąt**



A reminder, if Saginaw Township and/or Nouvel Catholic Central Schools are delayed or closed because of weather, there will be no morning Mass.

## Christmas at St. Thomas Aquinas

### Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord

December 24

4:00 PM • 7:00 PM

### The Nativity of the Lord

December 25 10:00 AM

### Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

December 31 4:00 PM

January 1 10:00 AM

LORD,  
MAKE US TURN  
TO YOU; LET US  
SEE YOUR  
FACE AND  
WE SHALL  
BE SAVED.



## St. Thomas Aquinas News

### **Thank You • 2023 Calendars**

Our sincere gratitude to the Owners, Staff and families of Snow Funeral Home for the beautiful 2023 calendars. Thank you for this wonderful gift to our parish.

### **Parish Office Hours**

The office will be CLOSED Friday, December 23 through Monday, January 2. Should you have business between Christmas and New Year's Day, please call the office and/or leave a phone message as someone will be checking messages. Thank you and Happy Holidays.

### **Financial Donations**

All donations for 2022 **must** be to the parish office by **Sunday, December 25** to be posted for the 2022 calendar year. Thank you for your cooperation.

### **Food Program Outreach •**

#### **East Side Soup Kitchen • December 24 & 25**

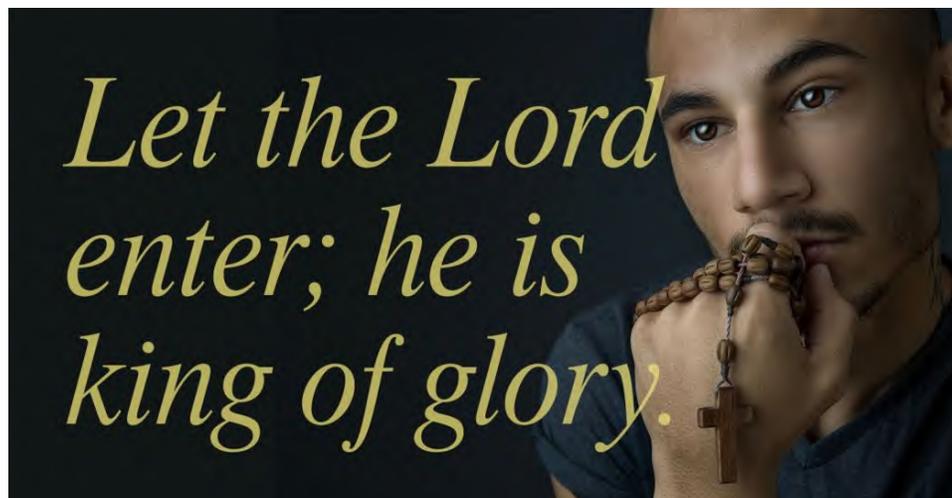
The food collection for next weekend will be for the EAST SIDE SOUP KITCHEN. Thank you for your continuing support. ESSK is in always need of the following items: #10 cans of Corn, Green Beans, Carrots, and Peas, Peaches, Pears, and Fruit Cocktail; Applesauce, Pork & Beans; Juice/Kool-Aid Pouches, Small Bottled Water, Yams/Sweet Potatoes, Pudding & Fruit Cups any kind of Packaged Cookies and Cooking Spray. Monetary donations can be sent directly to 940 E. Genesee, Saginaw, MI 48607, checks payable East Side Soup Kitchen.

### **Bible Sharing • Holiday Break**

There will be NO Bible Sharing on Wednesday, December 21 & 28 and January 4, 2023. Please join us on January 11, 2023 at 10:00 AM in the Parish Office Meeting Room. Have a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

## Welcome Visitors & Friends

If you are worshipping with us for the first time or have visited before, We Welcome You! If you are looking for a church home in this community, we invite you to consider St. Thomas Aquinas Parish. Contact the Parish Office for more information on becoming a member.



## Around Our Parish

### ***Safe Environment and Code of Conduct Policies*** ***Diocese of Saginaw***

In an effort to continuously improve policies and procedures to keep our children and vulnerable adults safe, the Diocese of Saginaw has updated the Safe Environment and Code of Conduct Policies.

Effective date is January 1, 2023.

### **WEEK 5**

#### **Code of Conduct Updates**

Personnel who visit the homebound, especially individuals who live alone or are frequently alone at the time of visits, are encouraged to do so in the company of another adult whenever possible. They are highly encouraged, but not required, to participate in Safe Environment education.

### ***Worldwide Marriage Encounter***

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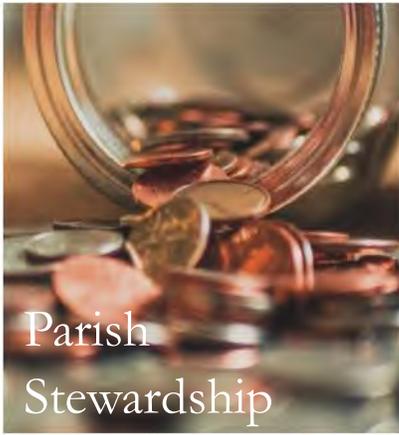


### ***Knights of Columbus 4232***

No Family Burger Night on December 26 & January 2, 2023.

Next Parish Benefit Breakfast—January 15, benefiting St. Dominic Parish.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



Vocation from God are not always clear. Not all of us are as lucky as Joseph who had an angel appear to him saying: "Take Mary as your wife, and fear not."

The Parish Financial Stewardship will be listed in future bulletins due to holiday publication dates. Thank you.

*Please remember St. Thomas Aquinas in your estate planning.*



## Sponsor of the Week

**Morley Travel**

To view the full ad see the back of the bulletin. Be sure to patronize all of our businesses as their generosity allows us to provide the bulletin to you at no cost to the Parish.

## St. Thomas Aquinas Church

5376 State Street  
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### Welcome to Our Parish

If you are a visitor to St. Thomas Aquinas, we want you to know how welcome you are. If you wish to become a member of our parish, please call the parish office.

**Parishioner Info:** If you are moving, changing phone numbers or need to update family status, kindly notify the parish office.

### Parish Staff

**Pastor** ..... Fr. Richard Bokinski  
[rickb@stasaginaw.org](mailto:rickb@stasaginaw.org)

**Deacon** ..... Deacon Gary Patelski  
[gapatelski@aol.com](mailto:gapatelski@aol.com)

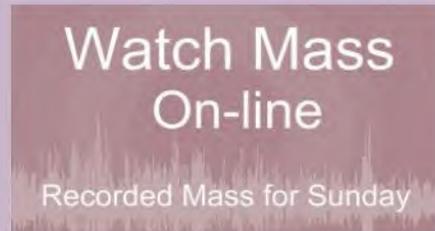
**Pastoral Associate** ..Sr. Ann deGuise, OSF  
[annd@stasaginaw.org](mailto:annd@stasaginaw.org)

**Parish Secretary** ..... Dawn Drago  
[dawnd@stasaginaw.org](mailto:dawnd@stasaginaw.org)

**Bookkeeper** ..... Pat Messing  
[patm@stasaginaw.org](mailto:patm@stasaginaw.org)

**Baptism & Funeral Coordinator & RCIA Director** ..... Karen Bartels  
[starcia@stasaginaw.org](mailto:starcia@stasaginaw.org)

**Interim Music Director** ..... Deborah Kraklow  
[debk@stasaginaw.org](mailto:debk@stasaginaw.org)



### Eucharistic Liturgies

Saturday ..... 4:00 PM  
Sunday ..... 8:30 & 11:00 AM  
..... *Winter Hours*  
Tuesday - Thursday ..... 8:30 AM  
First Friday ..... 8:30 AM  
*(In the event of a funeral on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or First Friday, morning Mass will be cancelled.)*

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

2nd & 4th Saturday ..... 9:00-10:00 AM  
(Or by Appointment)

### Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.)

Anyone seeking information about the Catholic Faith should contact the parish office for more information. Sessions meet from September through Spring.

### Baptisms

Baptisms will be scheduled after the required Baptism Preparation Class. Parents are required to be practicing Catholics and attending Mass regularly. Call the parish office to register.

### Marriage

Individuals must be registered in the parish at least six months before scheduling a wedding. A wedding date can only be set after meeting with the parish priest.

### Care of the Sick • Pastoral Visits

Please notify the parish office when seriously ill at home, in the hospital or a nursing/assisted facility. Also, If you or a loved one has had a hospital stay and are recovering at a rehab facility or moving into an assisted living facility and wish a pastoral visit.

### Nouvel Catholic Central Schools

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# Awaiting Emmanuel

## Spend Time Listening

*Isaiah 7:10–14; Romans 1:1–7; Matthew 1:18–25*

**B**ehold. Listen. Because, after a pregnancy that quietly changed the course of history, and a dream in the night that quietly changed history again, a baby is going to be born in a small stable, amid the hushed rustles and deep sighs of the animals slumbering in the dark.

Behold the calm before the arrival of the Lord, a child who will one day take the world by storm.

Behold the power that could move mountains and part seas, as its thunderous strength is corralled into the mewing and cooing of an infant.

It is magnificent all the more for taking the shape of vulnerability, humility, and love.

For many of us, the days leading up to the Fourth Sunday of Advent have been relentlessly busy, full of parties and planning, friends and feasting, giving and doing.

So, for today, as the moment draws near, we pause to contemplate the mag-

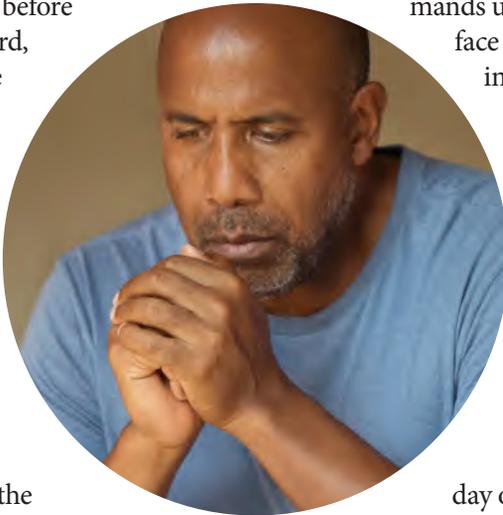
nitude of this greatest miracle.

It's a miracle dependent on vast reservoirs of faith — that of Mary, to say yes to the Angel Gabriel, and that of Joseph, to stay with Mary at the command of the angel in his dream.

How often do we buck the pressures of society to do as the Lord commands us, especially if we face great shame? Speaking truth is difficult.

Living truth is risky. It could mean alienation, lost opportunities, or criticism. Mary and Joseph both knew that ... and yet they obeyed. Could you do it?

On this final Sunday of Advent, just a few days away from the celebration of this great gift, take some time to pause amid the flurry of preparations and expectations. Maybe even say no to a few things today, so that you may say yes to the invitation to greet this new life. Spend some time listening. Behold the magnificent miracle that takes place in the quiet night.



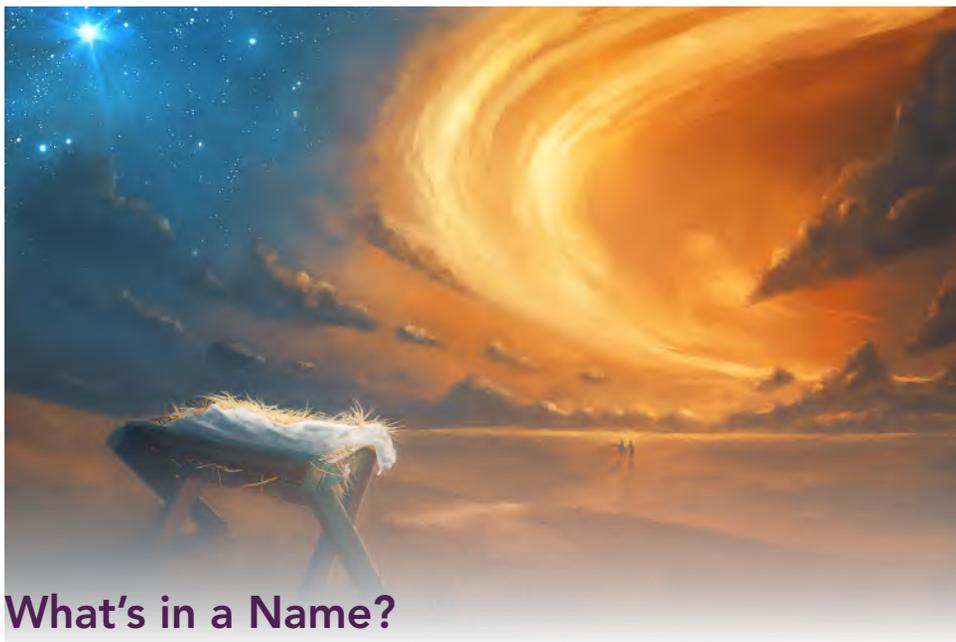
## POINTS TO PONDER

- ▶ Can you think of a time when it was risky or scary to say yes to Jesus' call? What did you do?
- ▶ How can you carve out some calm to behold the coming of Christ?
- ▶ Do you know someone who is a model of strength and courage on behalf of God?



## The Celebration Doesn't End

The twelve days of Christmas aren't just the lyrics to an old carol; they are also part of Church tradition, when we wait for the coming of the three Wise Men. Look back at your plans and reflections from the four weeks of Advent and carry them forward through the Epiphany on January 6. Even better, as we described in the first week, shape your new habits into a lifestyle. Because, even when the Christmas season has ended, we still are watching and waiting for the day when he comes again!



## What's in a Name?

Today's Gospel tells us that Christ will be called Emmanuel, meaning, "God is with us" (Mt 1:23). This fulfills a prophecy by Isaiah: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; the young woman, pregnant and about to bear a son, shall name him Emmanuel" (Is 7:14).

The Gospel also says that Joseph called the baby Jesus, as instructed by

the angel, for "he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21).

While "Jesus" may have been the name his friends and family used in the usual way we think of a name, both of Christ's names — Jesus and Emmanuel — describe his roles, becoming man and saving man. As we await Emmanuel during Advent, we look forward to that time when God is with us here on earth.

## Awaiting *Together*

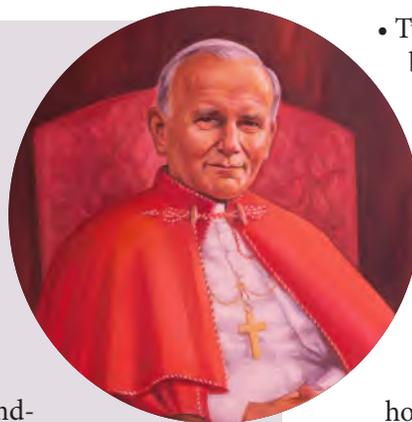
Perhaps one of the most memorable traditions you can establish during Advent is carving out time for quiet. I have deeply spiritual memories of riding to Christmas Eve Mass with my sisters and parents in a silent car, through dark and silent streets, when everything closed early to honor the holiday. It lent a special intimacy and anticipation to the near arrival of Jesus. How might you behold him? Perhaps ...



## Raising Your Hand

"Be generous in answering Jesus' call inviting you to put out into the deep and become his witnesses, discovering the trust he puts in you to devise a future together with him," Pope St. John Paul II said in a 2003 address to young people. "To fulfill this mission the Church is entrusting to you requires that you cultivate a genuine life of prayer nourished by the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and confession."

Prayer and the sacraments help inform our understanding of what the Lord commands, to discern what we're asked to do, and how and when we should speak out. And the Father will be by our sides to give us strength and courage to say yes.



- Turn off the lamps and dine by the light of all four Advent wreath candles now through Christmas.
  - Spend ten minutes each day in silence, meditating on courage, Jesus' miraculous birth, or God's call for you.
  - If you haven't already, set up a Nativity scene in your home. Invite members of your family to describe elements of the scene as they might imagine it.

## An Advent Prayer

Dear God, be near me and give me strength and courage when I go out into the world to do your will. May my yes be as unshakeable as Joseph and Mary's. I'm listening for your call. Amen.



## ST. THOMAS AQUINAS FIRST FRIDAY MEMORIAL

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 The Klownowski Family  
 Susan Webber  
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 Bob & Vi Bloniarczyk  
 M. James Robinson Family  
 James & Kathy Gunther  
 Sitarski Family  
 Chris Gunther Family  
 L&D Leo Eigner Family

Rose Martino  
 Garske & Riha Family  
 Floyd Maday Family  
 Ed Meyer & Family  
 Al Luplow Family  
 LaVern Fox Family  
 Blair R. Loessel  
 The Webster Family  
 Gerald R. Maczik Family  
 L. Wizner & Skimbrauskas Families

Health & Safety of Tom & Nancy  
 L&D Stanley Dorywalski Family  
 ILM of Edilberto S. Navarra  
 Health of Remy  
 For the Souls in Purgatory  
 Tom Stankiewicz Family  
 Lopez Family  
 Ernie & Nickie Jones Family  
 For Those in Need in Our Parish  
 Groll & Slasinski Families

Tim & Roz Jantesky Family  
 The Carter Family  
 John Sauvie Family  
 Daniel P. Sauvie +  
 Mary A. Sauvie +  
 Basil N. Sauvie +  
 Woodrow J.J. Sauvie +  
 Gabriel T. Sauvie  
 Norbert Berent  
 David Berent

Edward Stanulis  
 Theresa Stanulis  
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 Gerald Fortier  
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