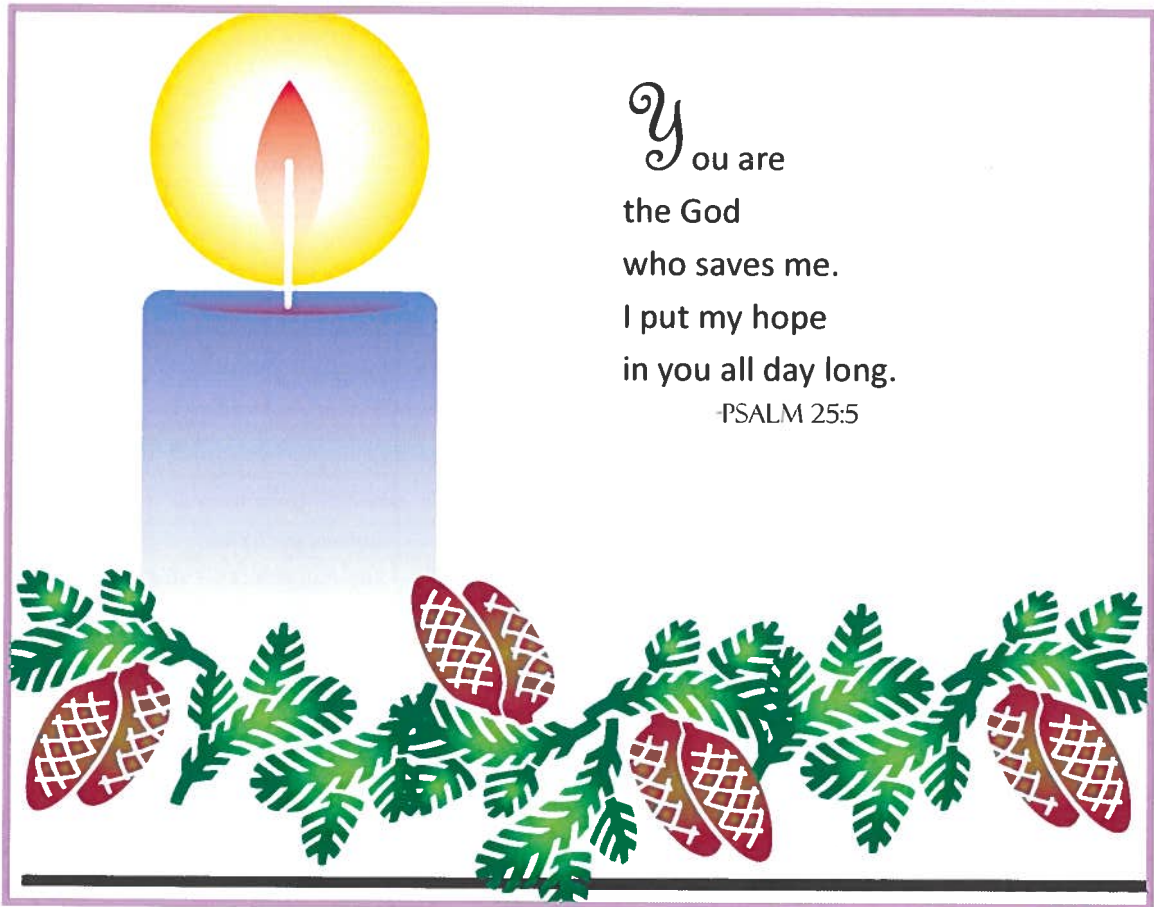


The Roman Catholic Parishes of  
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher  
St. James the Apostle, Irwin  
Sacred Heart, Goodrich

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

NOV. 30/DEC. 1, 2024



# Hope

Weekend Masses:

St. Margaret Mary	Sat. 5:00 pm	Sun. 10:30 am
Sacred Heart	Sun. 7:30 am	
St. James	Sun 9:00 am	

Confessions:

St. Margaret Mary	Sat. 4:15 pm
Sacred Heart	Sun. 7:05-7:20 am
St. James	Sun 8:35-8:50 am

Church Mailing Address:

207 E. 5th Street

Herscher, IL 60941

Phone: 815-426-2550

**Quotable:** "Blessed are they who see beautiful things in humble places where other people see nothing."  
*—Camille Pissarro*

Second Sunday of Advent			December 7-8, 2024	
Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, Dec. 7 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, Dec. 8 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, Dec. 8 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, Dec. 8 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron
Ushers	Dave Emling Bob Schultz Todd Datweiler Dan Hoffman	Daryl Ferris Dennis Pankey	Dan Forsythe Jerry Ogrentz Mary Offerman Arlen Hansen	Larry Wolles Jeremy Wolles Kim Smicker Galen Fritz
Lector	Rob Landeck	Alicia Kirkpatrick	Carrie Abrassart	Julie Splear
Eucharistic Minister			Jonathan Wood	Diane Long
Servers				Caroline Fulton
Greeters			Greeter—Dallas Ferris R. Leader—Peerboltes	Brent Fulton

**Mass Intentions for the Week**

**Monday, Dec. 2 (SMM)**  
**8:00 am** +Sterling Bouchard (Tom Smolkovich Family)

**Tuesday, Dec. 3 (SH)**  
**8:00 am** +Russ LaGesse (Terri/Jerry Weakley)

**Wednesday, Dec. 4 (SJ)**  
**8:00 am** +Jared Devine (Jerry/JoLynn Ogrentz)

**Friday, Dec. 6** **8:00 am** **First Friday at SH**  
 +Janet Denault Menke (Donna Morrical)

**Saturday, Dec. 7 (SMM)**  
**5:00 pm** +Bill Koerner (Sheila Koerner)

**Sunday, Dec. 8**  
**7:30 am (SH)** +JoAnn Anderson (Terri/Jerry Anderson)  
 +Rhonda Harris (Dale/Marilyn Pfeiffer)  
**9:00am (SJ)** +Marian McKenna (Maureen O'Connor)  
 +Cindy Frerichs (Gene/Darlene Bertrand)

**10:30 am SMM For All the Parish Family**

**Question of the week**

What will I do to prioritize Christ's coming over all the persistent anxieties of the season? Can I take ten minutes of each day this Advent to pray?

**A Look Ahead**

**Friday, December 6**—First Friday Adoration at SH  
**December 7/8**—2nd Collection for Retired Religious  
**Sunday, Dec. 15**—St. James Christmas Pageant, Breakfast, and Raffles

Pastor— Fr. Ron Neitzke- 815-426-2550  
 Deacon – Ron Gagnon— rjgckg@aol.com  
 Home—815-933-4077  
 Parish Email – smm\_sja\_sh@yahoo.com  
 TriParish web page – [www.triparishcatholics.org](http://www.triparishcatholics.org)  
 Like us on Facebook [triparishcatholic communities](https://www.facebook.com/triparishcatholiccommunities)  
**Tri Parish Church office** –Barb Riker 426-2550  
 Julie Bisailon 426-2550

**Bulletin** – Debbie Jensen - 426-2550  
 debjen04@gmail.com  
**Religious Education** –  
 St. MM – Jill Fulton [jfulton.stmm@gmail.com](mailto:jfulton.stmm@gmail.com)  
 Sacred Heart – Rhonda Berns – 426-5015  
 St. James—Tanhya Osenga [tosenga81@gmail.com](mailto:tosenga81@gmail.com)  
**Parish Nurse** – Jackie Eberle – 815-421-4048  
**Prayer Line**—  
 SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 [Jdstreefarms@aol.com](mailto:Jdstreefarms@aol.com)  
 St. James— Mary Offerman-602-670-8888 (call or text)  
 Sacred Heart-Marilyn Pfeiffer 815-955-8246 (call or text)  
 Terri Weakley— 815-514-8171

**Collections Week of Nov. 16-17, 2024**

St. Margaret Mary—\$1,711  
St. James—\$1,185  
Sacred Heart—\$856

Thank you for your generosity!

**Gospel Shorts—**

“But watch at all times, praying...”

What do we do when we observe that the world is in a tangle, and we see no way out of the many difficulties? The author of Psalm 144 cried for God to get involved. “Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down,” he pled. Don’t we also call out for God to invade the earth and help us?

Advent affirms that God did just that in the Person of Christ. A Christian thinker, Dr. George Buttrick, thought of Christ’s coming as “an invasion of history from beyond history — by events and by the Event.” He called the invasion a miracle.

We need to appreciate the miracle of Christ’s coming and all that it means for us. Furthermore, we need to recall that Christ taught there would be a Second Coming. If there was a beginning, there will also be an ending. There will be another miracle invasion from the heart of God. No one knows when. Our Lord said, “Take heed ... lest your hearts be weighted down with ... the cares of this life. Watch at all times, praying” (Luke 21:36). The miracle we need will happen.



**Mark your Calendars! The St. James Christmas Pageant/ Breakfast and Basket Raffle will be held on December 15.**

**If you would like to donate a basket for our raffle, please have it to the church by December 8.**

**If you have any questions, please contact Tahnya at 815-530-4406 or at the religious ed office.**

**Set up will be done on December 11.**

**Immaculate Conception**

The feast of the Immaculate Conception falls on a Sunday this year and does not replace the celebration of the First Sunday of Advent. The feast itself has been transferred to Monday December 9. Bishop Hicks has dispensed our obligation for the holy day so the only celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception will be on Monday morning at the 8:00 Mass.

**Dartball Practice!** Come one, come all! Your TriParish the Dec. 1 and Dec. 15. If you’ve ever wondered what it’s all about, or just want to try your hand, please join us. The team will be holding practice at St. James at 7:00pm in an effort to improve their standing in the league.

**Parish News:**

St. Margaret Mary—

- ◆ Joy in January is January 4, 2025. Registration 11 am, lunch at 12pm at the Kankakee Country Club. SMM ladies interested in joining us for Joy in January, please sign up in the back of the church and pay \$19 to the CCW by Dec. 15.

St. James—

- ◆ Christmas is coming! Please join us Tuesday, December 10th for church cleaning at 5 pm and Christmas decorating at 6 pm. We’ll take any time you can donate. Thanks!
- ◆ We are collecting winter wear accessories (mittens, hats, etc) in the hallway of St. James for the Salvation Army. Thanks to all who participate!
- ◆ The St. James CCW Christmas breakfast is Sunday, December 8th after mass at the Herscher Restaurant. Please sign up in the foyer if you’d like to attend.

- ◆ Christmas Pageant/ Breakfast, Basket Raffle Dec. 15

Sacred Heart—

- ◆ We wish to thank all who contributed in so many ways to the Sacred Heart Fall Cash Bash; those who attended, sold and purchased tickets, solicited donations of supplies and sponsors, helped with setup and cleanup, donated food and auction items, and staffed the event. A special thank you to Dan and Denise Lowe for their emcee services and to all of our community sponsors.
- ◆ The week of November 24th, the Blessed Virgin Mary candle burns for the Wedding Anniversary of Don and Shirley St. Germaine and the St. Joseph candles burns in memory of Roberta Gagnon

All Parishes—

- ◆ Adult Religious Ed Class—Class on December 4 7pm
- ◆ Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.

**1<sup>st</sup> Friday Adoration**



“Every consecrated host is made to burn itself up with love in a human heart.”

-St. John Vianney

First Friday Mass and Adoration will be held on Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at Sacred Heart Church. Adoration will conclude with Benediction at 3:00.



**Obscure saint of the week: St. Alexander Briant (Dec. 1)** was born to a yeoman family. He was described as a handsome young man and was raised Protestant. Alexander studied in Oxford. He converted to Catholicism and then studied at the English College at Rheims, France. Alexander was ordained on March 29, 1578.

Alexander returned to Somersetshire, England as a missionary in August 1579 and was arrested on April 28, 1581 in London at the home of Father Robert Persons. He was tortured in the Tower of London, partially for information on Father Robert's location. During this misery, he wrote to the Jesuits, asking for admission; they accepted him sometime in his last weeks in prison.

Condemned to death with six other priests on November 16, 1581 at Westminster for the treason of priesthood. He was martyred with Saint Ralph Sherwin and Saint Edmund Campion in the persecutions of Queen Elizabeth I, and one of the *Forty Martyrs of England and Wales*.

In prison, Alexander made himself a small wooden cross, and gripped it tightly all the time, even during trial. In the courtroom it was wrestled away from him. He told the judge, "You can take it out of my hands, but not out of my heart." The cross was later bought by Catholics and is at the English College at Rome.



**Obscure saint of the week: St. Ansanus (Dec. 1)** was born into the imperial Roman nobility. The son of a pagan senator, Ansanus became a Christian convert at age twelve. His father denounced him to the authorities. The boy escaped, and converted so many pagans in Bagnorea and Siena, Italy that he gained the title *the Baptist-er*. He was martyred in the persecutions of Diocletian.

#### Reflection — Advent

Advent is celebrated during the winter equinox when darkness is longer than daylight, when cold is more predominant than heat, and nature goes dormant. During this time, humankind hopes for a better day, a better season, a more inviting time. We light candles to express the hope of a new light.

So it is that Christians looked upon the coming of Christ, the unending light, as their hope. His light and warmth would replace the darkness and coldness of sin.

The primary symbol of Advent is the ADVENT WREATH. The form, a circle without beginning or end, is covered with branches of evergreen — a symbol of the never-ending love of God. We place four candles on the wreath — one for each week. They can be blue or purple, the color of anticipation. We light each candle — and as the light grows brighter, we look forward to the coming of Jesus — the Light who breaks through our darkness.

h candle — and as the light grows brighter, we look forward to the coming of Jesus — the Light who breaks through our darkness.

#### The Sunday gospel in everyday English

"It will seem like all hell has broken loose—sun, moon, stars, earth, sea, in an uproar and everyone all over the world in a panic, the wind knocked out of them by the threat of doom, the powers-that-be quaking.

"And then—then!—they'll see the Son of Man welcomed in grand style—a glorious welcome! When all this starts to happen, up on your feet. Stand tall with your heads high. Help is on the way!

"But be on your guard. Don't let the sharp edge of your expectation get dulled by parties and drinking and shopping. Otherwise, that Day is going to take you by complete surprise, spring on you suddenly like a trap, for it's going to come on everyone everywhere, at once. So, whatever you do, don't go to sleep at the switch. Pray constantly that you will have the strength and wits to make it through everything that's coming and end up on your feet before the Son of Man" (from Luke 21).

#### Christmas Traditions

This Christmas season I encourage you to keep your focus on faith and family. Family activities during this holy season will help build bonds between family members. One thing to consider is making a birthday cake for Jesus to be eaten on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Several recipes are available online. Each color of the cake has a spiritual meaning. Please remember on the weekend of December 14/15 we will be blessing the baby Jesus for your nativity set. Oplatki will be distributed on the weekend of December 21/22.

## Catholic Snacks , Get Fed

7 Saints to help you with holiday hosting and receiving Christ in every guest.

The autumn and winter months are the days when we all think about hospitality, due to Thanksgiving and Christmas falling one short month apart. A lot of work goes into preparing the house for family and friends who are spending the holidays with you, but once again, there are saints eager to help you in this work.

The list of those who offered shelter, food, protection, and friendship to others is an immense one, so we'll just look at seven of the best known hospitable saints:



**St. Elizabeth**, queen of 13th century Thuringia, chose simplicity and penance over the ease available to a queen. She distributed bread to large numbers of the poor and built a hospital for them, working in it herself.

**Sts. Martha and Mary**, according to Jewish custom, welcomed any guest into their home without question. Their hospitality was more than a custom to them, however, as we learn through Christ's visits to their home: at a time when the Carpenter from Nazareth was viewed with doubt (at best), they served Him and His Apostles eagerly and frequently.

**St. Louis IX** was respected throughout turbulent 13th century Christendom for his holiness and justice. He fed 100 poor from his own table every day, washed their feet, and ate the leftover scraps; he revealed that the poor were very precious to him as a means of attaining heaven.

**St. Benedict** wrote in his Rule that every guest was to be treated as Christ, quoting Our Lord's words in Scripture, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." He and his followers made hospitality part of their charism, setting up a porter's lodge near the monastery gate to receive visitors.

Also a Benedictine, **St. Meinrad** tried to live as a hermit in the 8th century. Because of his holiness, however, he had frequent visitors, and he welcomed all of them with generosity. He was eventually martyred for this virtue by two thieves whom he received.

**Bl. Solanus Casey** was a Capuchin who lived in New York, Detroit, and Indiana. He served as the porter, a humble duty usually assigned to young friars. Being the porter was a great joy to him, however, and visitors sought him out for his wisdom, joy, and Christ-like attention to every guest.

### Sponsor a Needy Individual or Family for Christmas



Catholic Charities is offering you the opportunity to help their clients at Christmas this year. The Gift of Christmas is an annual program that fulfills wish lists for individuals and families served by Catholic Charities. Read stories about clients and choose who

you would like to help this Christmas. Or, if you prefer, you can direct your donation to an individual or family who hasn't been chosen yet. Donating is simple: visit [catholiccharitiesjoliet.org](http://catholiccharitiesjoliet.org) and click on "donate." Or, call 815-724-1140 to make your donation over the phone. To send a check, please note "Gift of Christmas" in the memo and send checks to:

Catholic Charities  
16555 Weber Road  
Crest Hill, IL 60403

## Retirement Fund for Religious

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.

**Our aging religious need your help.** Like those pictured, more than 24,000 senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests have devoted their lives to prayer and ministry—usually for little pay. Today, many religious communities struggle to care for aging members. Please give back to those who have given a lifetime.

Please give at your local parish.

To donate by mail:  
National Religious Retirement Office  
3211 Fourth Street NE  
Washington DC 20017-1194  
Make check payable to Retirement Fund for Religious.

[retiredreligious.org](http://retiredreligious.org)

Visit [retiredreligious.org/2024photos](http://retiredreligious.org/2024photos) to meet the religious pictured.  
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## Questions Catholics Ask How are we to understand Jesus as both divine and human?

Great minds have struggled to get this right, so it's no wonder you and I have to wrestle awhile with the concept of incarnation. Theologians quite descriptively call it "the scandal of the particular": why would the Eternal choose to be time-bound, the limitless One to assume shape in space? As writer Annie Dillard points out, you and I are up to our necks in this particular scandal. How reassuring that God chooses to be here too.

Jesus is *Emmanuel* or God-with-us. In Jesus, God surrenders divine presence into human form in an act of self-emptying called *kenosis*. This doesn't mean God loses divinity in the moment of incarnation; only that the prerogatives of divinity are freely suspended.

We see how this works in Jesus' temptation in the desert. Hungry after weeks of fasting, it was possible for him to command stones to become bread. But the divine privileges that would preserve his life are precisely those that would nullify his humanity and render it a farce. Similarly, to be angelically protected from harm, or to exercise control over the nations, were things a God-man certainly could do. Jesus refrains from such indulgences not only in the desert that day, but more significantly in Jerusalem in his final days. Instead of turning stones into bread in Jerusalem, Jesus turns bread into his own self-sacrificing body. Instead of preserving his life and enthroning himself in Jerusalem, he allows his life to be seized and his body to be enthroned on a cross.

Every way to get this idea wrong has been tried and promoted in history. The Arians declared Jesus a created being inferior to the Father. Docetists taught that the humanity of Jesus was basically a mirage. Adoptionists viewed Jesus as a Spirit-filled person whom God "adopted" as a divine son. The Monophysites insisted Jesus had only one nature after his birth. The Apollinarians imagined Jesus as without a human soul. Nestorians believed Jesus wasn't one person but strangely two: one human, one divine. Incarnation embraces Jesus as the Eternal Word, the true and everlasting God. It also celebrates that Jesus shares fully and unequivocally in the reality of mortals, knowing family and friendship, weariness, rejection, pain, and death. Jesus is the meeting ground of heaven and earth, the reconciliation of every division. This is a precious understanding not to be compromised.

Scriptures: John 1:1-5, 14-18; 8:52-58; 1 Corinthians 1:21-24; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 5:32; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20; 2:2-3, 9-10; 1 Timothy 3:16



In Jesus, God surrenders divine presence into human form in an act of self-emptying called *kenosis*.

### 2024 Retirement Fund for Religious

[retiredreligious.org](http://retiredreligious.org)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the coming weeks, our parishes will take up the annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious. This campaign is crucial, benefiting more than 24,000 elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests who have been faithful servants within the Church, devoting their lives to service.

As I reflect on their ministry, I am grateful for the impact these women and men religious have had on our faith journeys. Their devoted service has impacted our (arch)diocese, inspiring and guiding us as we grow in faith.

Most senior religious worked many years for little pay, leaving their religious communities with a shortage of retirement savings. Rising healthcare costs and decreased income compound the challenge to meet day-to-day needs for medications, nursing assistance, and other necessities.

Your contributions to the Retirement Fund for Religious play a vital role in providing necessary financial support. This support enables religious communities to care for their aging members while ensuring that the younger generation can carry forward the invaluable work of their elders.

Please consider contributing when asked and giving what you are able. Above all, I ask for your prayers for God's continued blessings on all our women and men religious, who keep you in their prayers as well.

Together, let us support the many religious women and men who have made enormous contributions to our Church and to the world.

As I remain –

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Ronald A. Hicks  
Bishop of Joliet



The Vatican announced that Pope Francis had appointed Rev. Dennis E. Spies as our new Auxiliary Bishop of the Joliet Diocese.



December 1, 2024

## First Sunday of Advent

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

Jer 33:14-16 | 1 Thes 3:12-4:2 | Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

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

Are you one of those people who flips to the end of the book to find out what happens or maybe you roam the internet for spoilers of your favorite show? We have all been tempted to know what is going to happen before whatever it is unfolds, especially in tension-filled situations. Knowing the ending changes the way we experience the angst of the present moment, especially if it's a great ending! Like today: even as we anticipate and know the comfort and joy of the Advent season, we certainly do not begin there with our Gospel reading from Luke. In it, Jesus describes the coming of the Son of Man: this time will include moments of dismay, tribulation, assault, fright, and death. Contemplating this time of justice can be fearsome, but it is also a source of joy, because Christ is coming! We know that through Christ we have been redeemed - and that, if we remain faithful to him, we have the hope of eternal life. As Luke tells us, we can stand with our heads held high because redemption is at hand. Our Advent does not start with comfort and joy, but it sure ends there. Knowing this ending helps us have confidence and hope in God.

### **GO EVANGELIZE**

#### **PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT**

We are encouraged and challenged by the Word and our Advent traditions this first week to *remember how it ends!* In our first reading, the prophet Jeremiah relays consolation to the nation in crisis when God tells them the days are coming when the Lord will "fulfill the promise." This will bring them much-hoped-for safety and security. In Luke's Gospel, Christ's coming will be with "power and great glory" and although it sounds somewhat frightening, it will usher in redemption. Those are some spoilers providing great confidence and hope. In addition to our readings, the lighting of our first candle this Advent season is a visual reminder of the culmination of our salvation story! The Light who has come into the world has and will dispel the darkness. We can stand erect and raise our heads together to glimpse this light of Advent and fill our hearts again with hope that God surely is the one who keeps his promises. That is the best spoiler of all.

### **SING**

*O come, divine Messiah!  
The world in silence waits the day  
When hope shall sing its triumph  
And sadness flee away*



## 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

**December 1, 2024:** Jer 33:14-16 | Ps 25:4-5,8-10, 14 (1b) | 1 Thes 3:12 – 4:2 | Lk 21:25-28,34-36

Today's world needs Christians who truly understand that faith gives us hope and victory in the midst of any and all difficulties.

Taking this even further, today's world needs Catholics who truly understand that going to Mass means having faith in miracles – especially the miraculous transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Are you changed by the presence of Christ in the Eucharist? If so, then after you exit the church, others see evidence of this faith – right?

There's a difference between "knowing" the truths of our faith and authentically living these truths.

What prayer requests have you made in which you're still waiting for God to provide his help? When you offer them to Jesus during the prayers of Mass, do you feel the hopefulness that comes from faith?

During the consecration of the Eucharist, if we do not have faith in God's ability to change bread and wine into Christ – an ability that does not rely on how holy the priest is – we won't have faith to recognize that Jesus is ministering to us in the Eucharist.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus speaks of his Second Coming, but we can also relate it to our

daily lives today. We all have new tribulations looming in the future, unknown and unpredictable. That's life on earth! And Jesus wants to help us through them. Faith in this gives us hope and victory.



However, when our focus is on our troubles instead of on Christ, we are not living in faith. Jesus warned us about our hearts becoming spiritually drowsy. This is when we lose faith. We forget to remain centered in Christ. We neglect to listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

But when we ask Jesus to restore us to a life of faith, we become vigilant, expectant, and aware that we can rely on God to help us in whatever comes our way.

Our tribulations makes us fearful. Faith gives us reasons to hope in Jesus and to live in joy instead of fear. It's not easy! It takes conscious effort. But spiritual drowsiness is a miserable way to live.

### Reflect & Discuss:

- † What are you waiting for from Jesus?
- † How will you use the Season of Advent to grow in faith by noticing the loving, generous, merciful activities of God?
- † What are your favorite ways to prepare for Christmas?
- † How do you make Advent a season of hope and a time of growing in faith?



# ADVENT

## SAYING "YES" TO GOD

The will of God is to make each of us "full of grace," just like Mary. A wonderfully appropriate Scripture passage for Advent, the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38) is a main part of the Christmas story.

Christ became human because Mary was willing to yield to "the power of the Most High." Without Mary's assent at the Annunciation, God's plan for the Incarnation would have had to unfold another way. Mary's cooperation was essential, for God does not force his creatures to bend to his will. Rather, we are invited to cooperate with grace.

Mary serves as a model for each of us who have also been invited to cooperate with God's transforming presence. Christ can only be born in us if we, like Mary, are willing to say "Yes" to God's invitation and open ourselves to the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. Like Mary, we are all called to nurture and give birth to Jesus so that he may be born anew in our hearts and in our world.

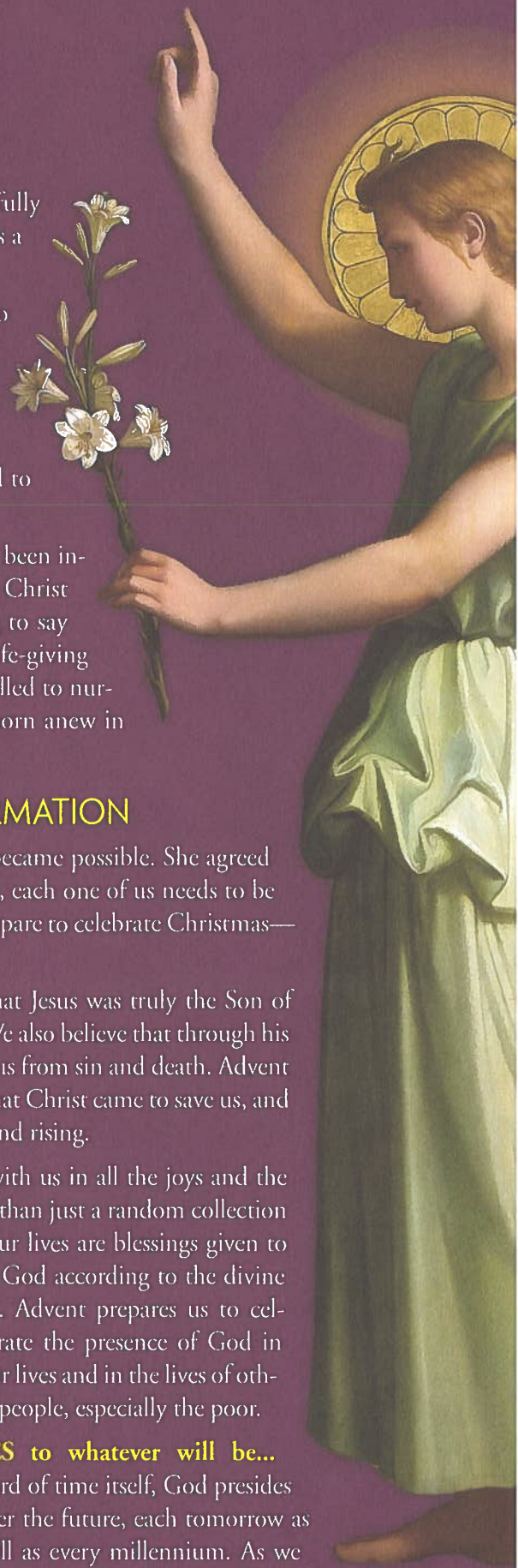
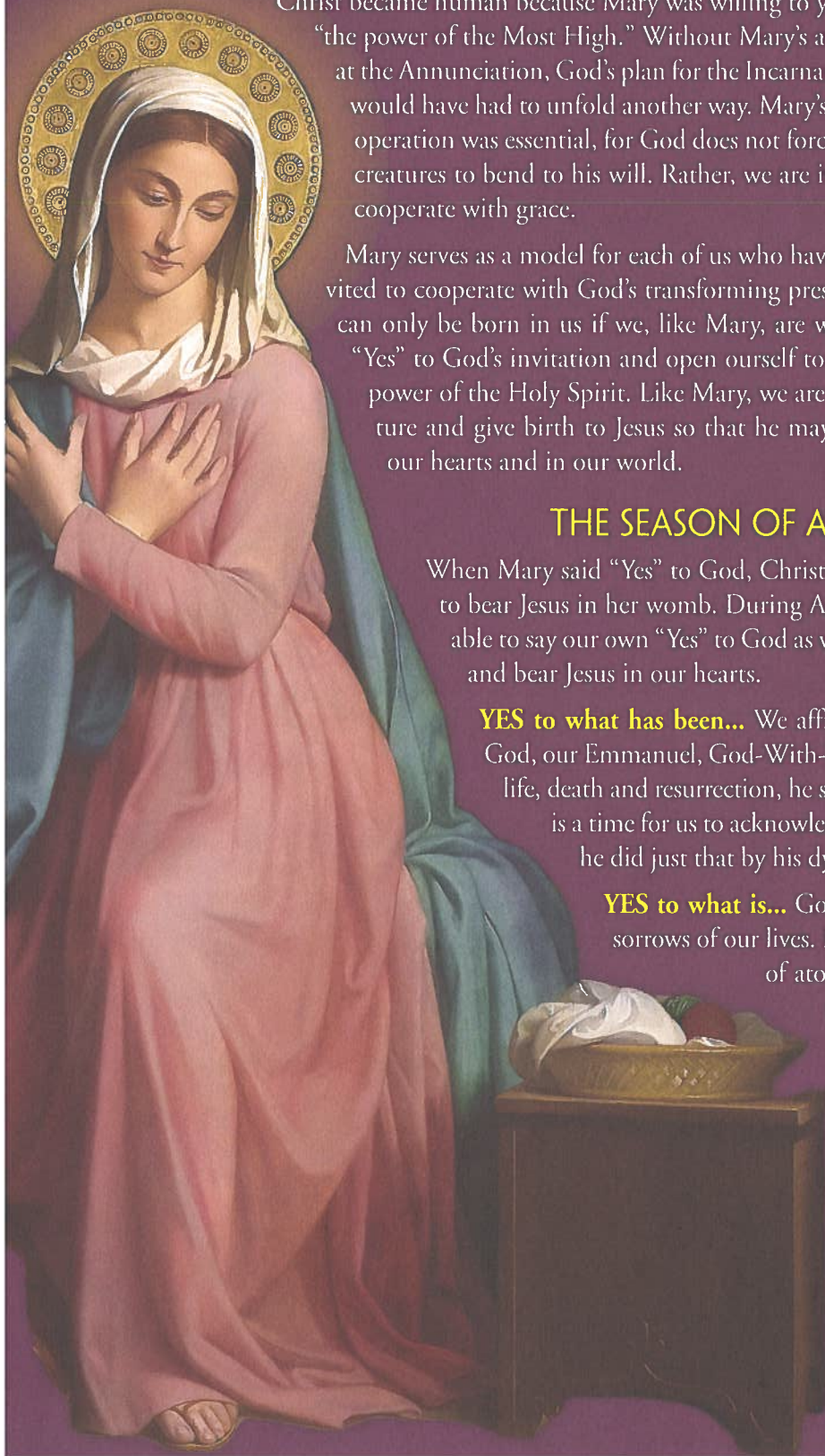
## THE SEASON OF AFFIRMATION

When Mary said "Yes" to God, Christmas became possible. She agreed to bear Jesus in her womb. During Advent, each one of us needs to be able to say our own "Yes" to God as we prepare to celebrate Christmas—and bear Jesus in our hearts.

**YES to what has been...** We affirm that Jesus was truly the Son of God, our Emmanuel, God-With-Us. We also believe that through his life, death and resurrection, he saved us from sin and death. Advent is a time for us to acknowledge that Christ came to save us, and he did just that by his dying and rising.

**YES to what is...** God is with us in all the joys and the sorrows of our lives. More than just a random collection of atoms, our lives are blessings given to us by God according to the divine plan. Advent prepares us to celebrate the presence of God in our lives and in the lives of other people, especially the poor.

**YES to whatever will be...** Lord of time itself, God presides over the future, each tomorrow as well as every millennium. As we yearn for the full coming of the kingdom of God, our desire for the coming of Christ gets renewed in Advent.



## THE “O ANTIPHONS”

The **O Antiphons** refer to the seven verses that are recited (or chanted) preceding the *Magnificat* during Vespers of the Liturgy of the Hours. They cover the special period of Advent preparation known as the Octave before Christmas, December 17-23. These antiphons form the basis of the Advent hymn, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” put to music in 15th century France.

**December 17**—*O Wisdom*, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care. Come and show your people the way to salvation.

**December 18**—*O Sacred Lord* of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free.

**December 19**—*O Flower of Jesse’s Stem*, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.

**December 20**—*O Key of David*, O royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of heaven: come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom.

**December 21**—*O Radiant Dawn*, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice, come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

**December 22**—*O King* of all the nations, the only joy of every human heart, O Keystone of the mighty arch of humanity, come and save the creature you fashioned from the dust.

**December 23**—*O Emmanuel*, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God.

## THE SYMBOLS OF ADVENT

The **Advent Wreath** and the **Colors of Advent** are probably the most popular symbols of the season. The Advent wreath is a circular garland of evergreen branches where four candles (and often a fifth, in the center) are arranged. During Advent one candle on the wreath is lit each week representing the coming of the Lord. The first, second and fourth weeks’ candles are **violet**, the primary color of Advent, symbolizing royalty as we await the birth of Jesus Christ our King. The **rose** colored candle used during the third week represents joy as Christmas draws nearer. If used, **white** is the color of the center candle, representing the purity of Christ.

Another symbol, **The Jesse Tree** represents the family tree of Christ as a member of the royal family of King David, whose father was Jesse. Through this family history (see Mt 1:6-16), the story of God’s salvation plan is recalled in the royal line from Jesse to the coming of the Messiah. Each day of Advent a homemade ornament is added to the Jesse Tree, a small tree made of evergreen branches. These symbolic ornaments each represent a family member, event or prophecy that moves God’s plan to fulfillment in Jesus.

Other symbols include a **Nativity Scene (Crèche)** representing the birth of Jesus, and often including figures of Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, shepherds, angels, and animals. **Angels**, which are significant in the Advent season as messengers of God’s announcement of Jesus’ birth to Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. **Evergreens**, plants like holly, ivy, and pine represent eternal life and God’s everlasting love.

## FEASTS OF MARY DURING ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

**Immaculate Conception** December 8 (December 9th this year). Mary, conceived through an act of love by her mother and father, was born free of original sin and its effects from the first moment of her existence. This special privilege was conferred on her through God’s grace in anticipation of the Redemption.

**Our Lady of Guadalupe** December 12. This feast celebrates the apparition of Mary to Juan Diego in the hills near Mexico City in 1531. Diego’s cloak bore the image of Mary and has become Mexico’s most popular religious symbol. This appearance encouraged native peoples to embrace Christianity.

**Mary, Mother of God** January 1. The Council of Ephesus (431), one of the earliest councils of the Church, declared that Christ was divine as well as human and that Mary, therefore, could be called not only as “the Mother of Jesus,” but also as “the Mother of God.”



### MASS READINGS FOR ADVENT 2024

**1st Sunday** Jeremiah 33:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:12—4:2; Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

**2nd Sunday** Baruch 5:1-9; Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11; Luke 3:1-6

**3rd Sunday** Zephaniah 3:14-18; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:10-18

**4th Sunday** Micah 5:1-4; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45