

Church of the Incarnation

240 Main Street, Mantua, NJ 08051

Parish Office 856-468-1314 * PREP Office 856-468-7566

Visit us at www.incarnation-church.org



Second Sunday of Advent * December 7, 2025

We come together as a Christian community to minister the Gospel of Christ

PARISH STAFF

Reverend Stephen J Rapposelli
Pastor

Reverend Shaji Muttathottil
Parochial Vicar

Thomas F. O'Brien
Deacon

Peter Traum
Deacon

Phil Curran
Deacon

Mr. & Mrs. Casey Corigliano
Directors of Music

Mr. Gerald Voltura
Director of Faith Formation

Mrs. Patricia Houwen
Business Manager

PARISH MEMBERSHIP

Welcome!

Please register at the parish office or online by visiting our website at www.incarnation-church.org.

MASS SCHEDULE

Monday - Friday.....7 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

(No 7 a.m. Mass from Memorial Day through early September)

Saturday.....8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Vigil Mass)

Sunday.....7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m..

Holy Days.....5 p.m. (Vigil Mass)

7 a.m., 8:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Holy Day

Eucharistic Adoration.....Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

BAPTISM

Baptisms are held every Sunday and some Saturdays at 1:00 pm. Baptism Preparation Sessions are held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month via Zoom. Please call the office for an appointment.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Confessions are heard Monday through Saturday following the 8:30 A.M. Mass and on Saturdays from 4:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. in church or by appointment.

CARE OF SICK

Arrangements should be made through the parish office for home visits with the Eucharist for the sick and elderly. The office should be contacted for the Sacrament of the Sick.

SACRAMENTAL SPONSORSHIP

Sponsors for Baptism or Confirmation must:

Be a registered member of a Catholic parish

Be at least 16 years of age

Received Sacraments of Initiation:

Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation

If married, according to the laws of the Catholic Church

Sunday, December 7 Second Sunday of Advent

Matthew 3:1-12

John the Baptizer prepares the way for Jesus. Clothed in a garment of camel's hair, he baptizes the people in the Jordan River but warns the Pharisees in ringing tones that they must give evidence that they mean to reform.

Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 6 – St. Nicholas

8:30am Anna Marie Bonder r/b Hallahan Family

5:00pm George Drechen r/b his Wife & Family

Sunday, December 7 – Second Sunday of Advent

7:30am Doris & Lloyd Kramer

r/b Bob & Laurie Kramer

9:30am Michael DiNovi r/b his Family

Elisha Galli r/b Richard & Eileen Barca

Anna Louis r/b Diane

Catherine Sullivan r/b Kenny Hanna

Michael Petro r/b Gloster & Novakis Families

Purgatorial Society

11:30am Deceased Members of the Vigilante Family

Monday, December 8 - The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

7:00am Living & Deceased Members of the Parish

8:30am In Thanksgiving r/b St. Vincent dePaul Society

7:00pm For the Intentions of the Priests & Deacons
of the Parish

Tuesday, December 9 – St. Juan Diego

7:00am Lucille Arnold r/b sister Carol Ann

8:30am Ron Raffa r/b Trish & Karla Raffa

Wednesday, December 10 – Our Lady of Loreto

7:00am Edward Flores r/b Richard & Eileen Barca

8:30am Gilda Curcio r/b Lucille & Paul Jones Jr.

Thursday, December 11 – St. Damasus

7:00am William Reilly

8:30am Dolores & Jack Beck r/b daughter Sharon

Friday, December 12 – Our Lady of Guadalupe

7:00am William Hallahan r/b his Wife

8:30am In Thanksgiving r/b St. Vincent dePaul Society

Saturday, December 13 – St. Lucy

8:30am Theresa & Bill Hagan r/b Marie McGuirl

5:00pm Tina Daily r/b daughter Christina

Sunday, December 14 - Third Sunday of Advent

7:30am Martha Rastelli r/b Rastelli Family

9:30am Nick Brandemarti r/b Brandemarti Family

11:30am Angelo Grima r/b Christina McNasby

Joseph Lewandowski r/b Peg Wilson & Family

Catherine Sullivan r/b Mary Brooks

Bill Vankat r/b Jacqueline & Paul Reilly

Richard J. Wileczek r/b Eileen & Richard Barca

Robert Obodzinsky r/b Stephen & Nicole Gallagher

Readings for the Week

Monday, December 8

Gn 3:9-15, 20; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38

Tuesday, December 9

Is 40:1-11; Mt 18:12-14

Wednesday, December 10

Is 40:25-31; Mt 11:28-30

Thursday, December 11

Is 41:13-20; Mt 11:11-15

Friday, December 12

Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a, 12:1-6a, 10ab; Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47

Saturday, December 13

Sir 48:1-4, 9-11; Mt 17:9a, 10-13

Prayer for Religious Vocations

Priest: Let us pray for vocations

All: O God, we earnestly beseech you to bless the Church with many priests, deacons, seminarians and religious who will love you with their whole strength, be faithful to their vocation and gladly spend their entire lives to teach your truths, serve your Church and make you known and loved.

Priest: Bless our families, bless our children.

All: Choose from our homes those who are needed for your work.

Priest: O Mary, Queen of the clergy,

All: Pray for us. Pray for our priests, deacons, seminarians and religious. Obtain for us many more.

All: Amen.

Reading 1 - Isaiah 11:1-10

On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD, and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice and decide aright for the land's afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. The cow and the bear shall be neighbors, together their young shall rest; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the cobra's den, and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair. There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD, as water covers the sea. On that day, the root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, the Gentiles shall seek out, for his dwelling shall be glorious.

Responsorial Psalm - Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17

Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

Reading 2 - Romans 15:4-9

Brothers and sisters: Whatever was written previously was written for our instruction, that by endurance and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I say that Christ became a minister of the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, to confirm the promises to the patriarchs, but so that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written: Therefore, I will praise you among the Gentiles and sing praises to your name.

Gospel - Matthew 3:1-12

John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said: A voice of one crying out in the desert, Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. John wore clothing made of camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

St. Michael Prayer – bottom of page 6



**To everything there is a season and a time
for every purpose under heaven.**

Ecclesiastes 3:1

“...a time to be born...”

Mallory Kelly Ward

“...a time to welcome...”

“a time to be married...”

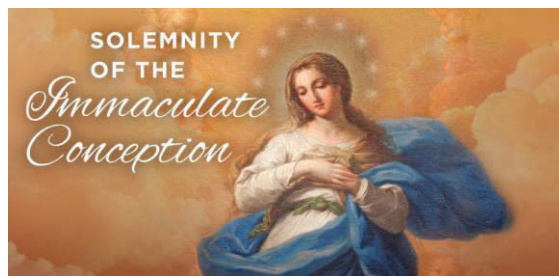
...a time to be healed...”

Ann Marie Agar, Sam Amaradio, Bernadette Andrews, George Austin, Verna Bisconte, Edward Boyd, Joseph Brickley, Rita Bruno, Charli Burke, Carla Carelli, Christine Cassell, Colleen, Lynn Collins, Krista Collings, Jerrolyn Covely, Bob D'Alessio, Roxanne Day, Robert Deegan, Alberta DiFabio, Lucyna Dinces, Barbara & Vincent DiTullio, Michael Donahue, Mirinda Donnian, Rich Donofrio, Ellie & Les Edwards, Jack Ewen, Francis Ferry, Anna Forsman, Marylou Furfari, Linda Gerwatoski, Jay Gigante, John Gilmore, Margaret Giordano, Dave Griffith, Michael Groody, Donovan & John Gura, John & Joseph Hart, Kathy Heisinger, Karol Hennessey, Nat Hollandb, Jason, Adalynne Johnson, Susan Kane, Karen, Carol Taylor-Kearney, Caroline Keenan, Marilyn Angelotti-Kelly, Fred Krumm, Steffanie Lerch, Richard Maloumian, Richard Marcantonio, Michelle Marhefka, Barbara Marker, Elwood Martz III, Maryellen McAteer, John McDevitt, Dorothy McKeever, Anne McMenamin, Barbara & Ira McManus, Christina McNasby, Tim McSorley, Hannah McStay, Joan Morlachetta, Katie Mutek, Peter Myers, Frank Nowak, Nicole P., William Pappernek, Lee Peters, Giovanni Poloney, Helen Powell, Rose Quigley, Janet Rainier, Teri Reed, Joan Reilly, Mary Reilly, George Rein, Pete Richman, Patti Roberts, Jim Roche, Karen Rucci, Ivey Caruso Rupert, Denise Sacco, Marguerite Sadler, Caterina & Santi Saya, Loretta Scardino, Nicholas Simeo, Sr., Linda Sesko, Eda Shannon, Jason Shipman, Frank Smith, Chris Stalker, Nick Stansbury, Janie Talemal, Jason Tallarida, Ernie Tolentino, Evelyne & Tom Tull, Lou Underwood, Rosemarie Villari, William Walsh, John Werner, Mary White, Nancy Taylor-Williams, Dianne Williamson, Richard Wilson, Theresa Woods, Lois Worthington, Lori Wotypka, Lois Wunsch, Maria Wyzykowski, Catherine Zabrodski, Francesco Zarzycki, their caregivers, all others in need of our prayers.

“...a time to die...”

Christina Leadbeater

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel – Church of the Incarnation, Mantua



The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is Monday, December 8 and is a Holy Day of Obligation. Masses will be celebrated at 7:00 AM, 8:30 AM and 7:00 PM. There is no vigil Mass on December 7.

The Parish and PREP Offices will be closed on December 8 for the Holy Day.

FRUITFUL STEWARDSHIP

***“Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit
will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”***

-MATTHEW 3:10

Do you bear good fruit for Jesus? Do you spend time in prayer or do you waste it with mindless activity? Do you use your talent to help others or are you too busy? Do you use your treasure to support the Church or do you buy more things that go unused? Our Stewardship time, talent, and treasure are gifts from God. What we do with these gifts is our gift back to Him. What gifts are you planning to give to the Lord during this upcoming Christmas season?

November 25 through December 1 - \$21,106.30

FORGOT YOUR ENVELOPES?

If you forgot your envelopes, are new to the parish or are visiting the parish and would like to make a donation. You can do so here. **Be sure to select one-time gift – as recurring is default.**



STEPHEN MINISTRY

“I Will Be with You”

What a comfort it can be to have a concerned person willing to stay with you through trouble. A Stephen Minister can be that person. To request a Stephen Minister or to talk to a Stephen Leader, please call 856-468-5536.



GIVING TREE GIFTS

All gifts for the Giving Tree should be returned by this Sunday, December 7 to the church gathering space. Please ensure the tag is attached to the outside of the gift. Thank you for your generosity this Christmas Season.

SOUP AND SCRIPTURE

Join us for Soup and Scripture the four Mondays of Advent – This year's theme will be Bishop Barron's Catholicism. Soup and bread will be served at 5:30 PM and the talk will begin at 6:15 PM. This Monday, December 1 is the first session so take time out from the hustle and bustle and delve deeper into our faith.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Our altar will again be beautifully adorned for Christmas. If you would like to donate in memory of a loved one or in honor of a loved one, please use the flower envelope found in your Christmas mailing. Extra Christmas Flower envelopes are available in the gathering space and at the parish office.

BLESSING OF BABY JESUS

At Masses for the Third Sunday of Advent the Baby Jesus from your family creche will be blessed. Please remember to bring Baby Jesus with you to Mass on December 14.

THE LEGION OF MARY

Are you looking for a way to serve God, your parish and the larger Church? The Legion of Mary performs the corporal works of mercy: visiting the sick and homebound, visiting the prisons, providing transportation to church for those without transportation, religious instruction, praying for the deceased and evangelization. Its primary purpose is to develop personal holiness. Active Members meet weekly for prayers, planning and discussion. They devote two to four hours per week working to save souls. There is also Auxiliary Membership which provides prayer support for Active Members. Please join us Thursday morning after the 8:30 AM Mass in the St. Joseph Room. All are welcome.

Like us on Facebook – Incarnation, Mantua



CHRISTMAS 2025

Confessions

Wednesday, December 17

4:00 PM to 5:00 PM

7:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Christmas Decorating

Sunday, December 21

1:30 PM

Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 24

4:00 PM, 6:00 PM

8:00 PM and 10:00 PM

Christmas Day

Thursday, December 25

9:30 AM and 11:30 AM

Solemnity of the

Blessed Virgin Mary

Wednesday, December 31

5:00 PM

Thursday, January 1

8:30 AM

KNIGHTS' KNEWS

Save the date, this year's March for Life Pilgrimage will be on Friday, January 23, in Washington D.C. Join the Knights of Columbus as we march to promote the sanctity of life. Sponsored by Incarnation Council #6364 Inc.

The next hoagie sale will be Sunday, December 22 after all morning Masses. Take a break from cooking this busy holiday season and pick up one or more!

Visit us at www.incarnation-church.org



DONATE YOUR RECIPES!!

Incarnation's Leadership Team is putting together a parish cookbook that celebrates the diversity, love of food and fellowship of our parish community. Please share a treasured family recipe, a holiday treat, a busy night go-to or your favorite comfort dish. Recipes should include Family Name, Recipe Name, Ingredients and Instructions and a short note about the dish's significance (optional). Please email to recipes4goodness@gmail.com or bring a hard copy to the parish office. All proceeds will benefit our parish pantry and those in need in our community.

LIVING AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

In today's Gospel passage, we are introduced to the person of John the Baptist and his ministry of preparing the way for Jesus (Matthew 3:1-12). The physical description of John the Baptist is interesting as we are told he wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt. This description correlates to the Prophet Elijah in 2 Kings 1:8 and suggests that John was clearly presenting himself as the new Elijah. That presentation was an important announcement because in Malachi 2:1, 4-5 we are told that Elijah would return to prepare for the Messiah. We are also told that John ate locusts and wild honey, which signifies much more than simply an odd diet. It is actually a statement that John was preserving himself in ritual purity even in the desert and was trusting in divine providence for his daily life. This description of John the Baptist may seem strange to us, but when we understand the statement he was making by appearance and lifestyle then we better understand the message he was sending. As a disciple, John understood his responsibility to draw others to Christ with missionary outreach. John knew that attracting others to Jesus meant that he had to get their attention in a way that raised their curiosity. It was John's lifestyle and not just his words that attracted people to him and raised their awareness of the coming Messiah. Sometimes we, as disciples, don't like to stand out from the crowd in order to avoid being different from the rest. It is important to remember that our missionary outreach sometimes requires that we find ways to raise the curiosity of others. For John, this action involved his dress and diet. Regardless of the means the challenge is the same. There should be something different about the way disciples live and that difference should intrigue and attract others to learn more about us. It is that curiosity that becomes the open door through which we can share with others the faith that guides and sustains our lives. As Saint Peter wrote in 1 Peter 3:15, "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." John attracted a crowd and John did not hesitate to inform that crowd of the reason for his hope – The Lord Jesus Christ.

Think about it: What do I do as a distinctive and overt expression of my discipleship so that others can be drawn to Jesus through me?

CHRISTMAS EVE: LIVE NATIVITY PAGEANT

Children will perform the story of Jesus' birth on Christmas Eve prior to the 4:00 PM Mass. The roles will consist of Mary, Joseph, Innkeeper, Wise Men, Shepherds, Angels, and animals. The roles will be based on the age/grade of the child. Any child from Incarnation K through 8 can participate. Practices will be held on: December 11 at 6:00 PM and December 20 at 10:00 AM. Please contact Heather Wilkie at hwilkie@incarnation-church.org to register. Students may receive service hours for both practices and the Live Nativity.

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.



Dashing through the holidays with healthy eating

Holiday gatherings often mean time with friends and family. It also means being faced with calorie-rich meals, extra portions, alcoholic beverages and tempting desserts! If you're trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle, you may be wondering what foods you should prepare, eat or serve. A healthy holiday makeover doesn't require drastic changes to have a healthy impact. Here are six tips for savoring a healthier holiday season.

Portions matter

It may be too challenging to pass up your favorite foods. If you decide to indulge, take bite-size servings. This will still give you the flavor but not all the calories. Your body needs time to feel full, so give yourself 20 minutes before you reach for more.

Try a new side recipe

You are probably not the only one of your friends or family trying to maintain their healthy eating goals. Why not try a healthier recipe like the ones below?

Traditional sides versus healthier sides:

Mashed potatoes with gravy Serving: 1 cup potatoes, 1/4 cup gravy 443 calories, 25 grams fat, 45 grams carbohydrates	Roasted potatoes with garlic and herbs Serving: 2/3 cup 104 calories, 2 grams fat, 15 grams carbohydrates
Apple pie Serving: 1 piece of a 9-inch pie 227 calories, 13 grams fat, 40 grams carbohydrates	Apple dumplings Serving: 1 dumpling 178 calories, 2.5 grams fat, 36 grams carbohydrates
Green bean casserole Serving: 1 cup 165 calories, 12 grams fat, 12 grams carbohydrates	Tangy green beans Serving: 1/3 cup 39 calories, 2 grams fat, 5 grams carbohydrates

Include some healthy options

A platter of enticing raw veggies or fruit with a low-fat dip can be a colorful and healthier than sliced cheese, deli meat and crackers. Or you can replace the high calorie munchies with a bowl of cold shrimp with cocktail sauce. A serving of 15 large shrimp contains about 100 calories.

Be active after a big meal

Not only does activity help you burn off some calories, but you may also feel more energized. Go for a brisk walk around the neighborhood or play outdoors with the kids. If it's too cold to go outside, turn on the tunes and dance.

Limit alcoholic beverages

Extra calories in alcoholic drinks can add up fast. If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation. For healthy adults, that means up to one drink a day for women and up to two drinks a day for men. It's important to note that one drink equals one 12 oz. beer, 5 oz. glass of wine or 1.5 oz. distilled spirits.

Be Mindful

By adding some of these ideas, you can create healthy traditions for your kids. As these traditions are passed down from one generation to the next, your family will learn that it's possible to make positive lifestyle choices while still enjoying the holiday season.

Other eating tips...

- **Eat a light snack beforehand:** Have a light snack like fruit, yogurt, or nuts to prevent overeating at the event.
- **Move away from the food:** Socialize away from the buffet or appetizer table to resist constant grazing.
- **Eat slowly:** Take your time and check in with your fullness while eating.
- **Be prepared:** Bring a healthy dish to share, like a vegetable platter, to increase options for yourself and others.

If our Health Ministry can ever be of service, please contact the parish office at 856-468-1314. Also, if you have a prayer request ask for the Novena Nursing at un4nurses@gmail.coml.

Information Source: <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/6-tips-for-a-healthy-holiday-makeover>



HOPE & HELP: DONATION DRIVE FOR DISASTER VICTIMS



Hi everyone! We're reaching out to ask for your help. We are collecting gently used clothing and basic toiletries for families in Cebu and other provinces recently affected by the earthquake and typhoon that struck the Philippines. Many are still struggling and even the smallest contribution can make a big difference. ❤️

How You Can Help:

✦ Accepted Donations:

- 👕 Clean, gently used clothes (all ages)
- 🧼 Soap, shampoo, toothpaste, c toothbrushes
- 🧴 Lotion, deodorant, sanitary products
- 🧦 Socks, undergarments (new only)

Collection dates:

November 28–December 14

Drop off place:

Church of Incarnation - lobby

Get in touch:

Confe Tee - 732-678-6935

Heidi Italia - 856-725-1147

Your generosity can bring comfort and hope to those who need it most. If you'd like to donate or have any questions, please send us a message.
Thank you so much for your kindness and support! ❤️

REMINDER to SAVE THE DATE

REBOOT with Chris Stefanik will be Wednesday, March 18, 2026 from 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel – Church of the Incarnation, Mantua



Discovering **hope** and **joy** in the Catholic faith.

December 2025

Church of the Incarnation, Mantua, NJ

Rev. Stephen J. Rapposelli, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Lucy

St. Lucy was born into 4th century pagan Syracuse, Sicily, and is one of the most famous martyrs of the early Church. Her family arranged for her to marry a pagan, but since she had consecrated her virginity to Christ, St. Lucy refused him. Offended, he betrayed her to the authorities for her Faith. She was questioned and tortured, but all attempts to discourage her failed. She was finally executed. She is the patron saint against eye problems.

The three comings of Christ

This season of Advent, we celebrate the three comings of Christ: in glory at the end of time, in time when He was born in Bethlehem, and His coming in our own lives and hearts. Advent is a time of "busy stillness," of preparing and waiting, like Mary certainly did, for the arrival of the Savior. This Christmas, let's renew our "Yes" to God's request to dwell in our hearts and be "born" in the daily living of our lives.

"The King comes as a helpless infant, born of insignificant parents in a small town of a distant outpost of the Roman Empire. He will conquer through the finally irresistible power of love, the same power with which he made the universe." Most Reverend Robert E. Barron

Find peace before Christmas by slowing down

The busyness leading up to Christmas can be exhausting, but the Advent season holds a better path. It's a time to breathe, reset, and prepare our hearts for the coming of the King. Advent is a built-in gift, a chance to slow the pace and lift our eyes to what matters most.

Renew a sense of the holy: Advent is a chance to wake up the soul. When we lean into our Faith with intention, the season stops feeling rushed and starts feeling radiant. Light the Advent Wreath and let its glow steady your heart. Go to Confession and feel the weight lift as mercy takes over. Spend a few quiet minutes before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and let His presence ground you. Pray the Joyful Mysteries, the "Christmas mysteries" that still speak powerfully to our lives today.

Tune out the noise: Advent becomes richer when we clear space for God to speak. The world buzzes with distractions, but your soul needs room to breathe. Build small pockets of

silence into your day and let stillness sharpen your awareness of God's presence. Reach for a spiritual book instead of a scroll through your feed. Cut back on the constant stream of news that crowds the mind. When the noise quiets, the Holy Spirit has space

"Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

to guide, steady, and renew you.

Streamline and prioritize: Choose what draws you closer to Christ. When your heart is ordered toward what matters, even the cooking, decorating, singing, and gift-giving gain a deeper beauty. You may decide to attend fewer events, keep the décor simple, or choose more modest gifts. Far from taking away joy, this clears space for it. You move through the season with more peace, more purpose, and a heart in step with Jesus.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Every Christmas, we remember that Jesus, the Son of God, took on our humanity without losing His divinity. It is a mystery, yet we hold it with confidence because God, who is Truth, has revealed it.

During His earthly life, Jesus spoke and acted with divine authority. He

Why do Catholics believe Jesus is God?

said, *"The Father and I are one"* (John 10:30). He forgave sins, clarified the Law, and worked miracles. His Resurrection stands as the clearest confirmation of His identity, showing that His claim to be God was real. As man, He could suffer and die. As God, He rose and conquered death.

The most meaningful gifts of Christmas aren't wrapped

We know that the most valuable gifts are often the ones we cannot wrap. Alongside whatever you give your loved ones this year, do not let Christmas pass without offering these gifts as well:

Your time: Being present with the people we love is one of the simplest and strongest ways to show care. A short visit, an unhurried coffee, or an evening without phones can mean more than any item we put under a tree. When we give someone our attention, we affirm their worth.

Your forgiveness: Forgiveness does not excuse the hurt. It frees you from the weight of anger and resentment. It

also gives the other person room to grow and seek healing. Letting go is often the first step toward real peace. In many ways, forgiveness is a gift you give yourself.

Your gratitude: Giving thanks to God at Christmas is more than a warm sentiment. It is a heartfelt response to the depth of His love.

Look at the Crucifix, the Nativity, or the Eucharist and consider the humility behind such a gift. Our gratitude matters to God (see Luke 17:17-18). So after attending Mass on Christmas Day, take a moment to say, "Thank you." It is a small act that carries real meaning.

from Scripture

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23, Obedience is trust in action

By the time Mary gave birth to Jesus, Saint Joseph had already formed a habit of steady obedience to God. So when the angel spoke to him in a dream and instructed him to flee to Egypt, Joseph acted without delay. He trusted that God would care for him and for the family entrusted to him.

This trust is even more striking when we consider the circumstances of Jesus' birth. Mary and Joseph had traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem during the final stages of her pregnancy. Whether by foot or by donkey, the trip would have been long, uncomfortable, and

exhausting. When they finally arrived, they found no suitable place to stay and settled among animals. Soon after, they faced the threat against Jesus' life and fled to Egypt, living for years in a foreign land without the support of relatives or friends. Through every hardship, Joseph relied on God to protect his family.

The Holy Family was perfect in love, yet not spared from difficulty. Mary and Joseph met each challenge with faith and allowed God's Word to guide them. We can follow the same path.

Q & A

Why is it said that Mass brings us closer to God than anything else?

At every Mass, Jesus is really and truly present in the Eucharist in His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1374). In this moment, the Sacrifice of Christ is made present to us in a mysterious but real way. His self-giving is the greatest act of love, and our participation at Mass is our strongest response, our way of saying, "I love you, too."

Worshipping together also strengthens our faith in the God who is everywhere yet unseen. Faith grows in community. It grows through the physical actions of the Mass as well. When we sit, stand, bow, and kneel, we express with our bodies what we believe in our hearts.

Finally, the Real Presence of Jesus on the altar draws us into a closeness to God that we cannot find anywhere else in this life. Nowhere do we meet Him more directly than when He feeds us with His very life. In the Eucharist, He is as present to us as He was to Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem and to His apostles in the Upper Room.

Feasts & Celebrations

December 6 – St. Nicholas of Myra (4th century). St. Nicholas had a very generous heart and always gave to the poor. He is credited with saving three girls from being sold to pay their father's debt. St. Nicholas is also the patron saint of children.

December 8 – Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We commemorate that Mary was conceived in St. Anne's womb without original sin, preparing Mary to be the Mother of God. Though given to Mary, this special grace was for our sake. Pope Pius IX declared this doctrine in 1854. This year, it's considered a holy day of obligation.

December 9 – St. Juan Diego (1548). St. Juan Diego was visited by Our Lady at Tepeyac Hill, Mexico. She requested a chapel be built and sent him with roses to the bishop as a sign. When St. Juan emptied the roses before the bishop, his cloak retained the image of the Blessed Mother.

December 29 – St. Thomas Becket (1170). Thomas enjoyed power and riches as a close friend of England's King Henry II, who appointed him chancellor of England. In 1162, King Henry had St. Thomas named Archbishop of Canterbury. St. Thomas refused to allow the King to regulate Church matters and was exiled. He fled to France for safety. Thomas returned to England and was martyred.

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