

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE VIRGIN SHALL
CONCEIVE.

MATTHEW 1:23

Weekly Prayer

Sunday's Readings

First Reading:

Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign:
the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,
and shall name him Emmanuel. (Isa 7:14)

Psalm:

Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory. (Ps 24)

Second Reading:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 1:7)

Gospel:

"Joseph, son of David,
do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.
For it is through the Holy Spirit
that this child has been conceived in her.
She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus,
because he will save his people from their sins." (Mt 1:20-21)

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Live The Liturgy Inspiration of the Week

Sometimes we want God's instructions to be clear and precise — like the angel in Joseph's dream. But Joseph's understanding was only as strong as his devotion to God's will. If we give our lives to God as Joseph did, we will know what he asks of us.

Observances for the week of December 21, 2025

- Sunday:** 4th Sunday of Advent
Tuesday: St. John of Kanty, Priest
Wednesday: Christmas Eve
Thursday: The Nativity of the Lord
Friday: St. Stephen, First Martyr
Saturday: St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
Next Sunday: The Holy Family



Devotions, *Explained!*

Las Posadas is a Mexican tradition which recreates the Holy Family's search for lodging in Bethlehem. This nine-day devotion anticipates the birth of Jesus Christ, who seeks refuge in the heart of every man and woman.

Prayer for Advent - Miracles

Dear God,
You are in the miracle business.
I still believe that You can move
mountains and separate seas.
Break into every unknown and
astound us with Your goodness
and grace.
Amen.

Readings for the week of December 21, 2025

Sunday:

Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 (7c, 10b)/
Rom 1:1-7/Mt 1:18-24

Monday:

1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd/
Lk 1:46-56

Tuesday:

Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and
14/Lk 1:57-66

Wednesday:

Morning: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps
89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29/Lk 1:67-79

Thursday:

Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29
(2a)/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or
1:18-25

Night: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13
(Lk 2:11)/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14

Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/
Lk 2:15-20

Day: Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 (3c)/
Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Friday:

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and
8ab, 16bc and 17/Mt 10:17-22

Saturday:

1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Next Sunday:

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 (see 1)/
Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17/Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

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Gospel Meditation

Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

A priest friend recently told me a remarkable story. One of his cousins reported having a vivid dream in which an angel told him the family needed to exhume their grandmother's body from a cemetery in New York and return it to her birthplace in Romania. She had been dead nearly ten years. As you might expect, the family thought it was, well, crazy. But astonishingly they exhumed her body. It was incorrupt, showing no signs of decomposition. That experience sparked healing, faith, and reconciliation throughout the family.

In this Sunday's Gospel, Joseph also receives a dream. He's confused, afraid. But in the quiet of sleep, God speaks: **"Do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home" (Matthew 1:20).** When he wakes, Joseph acts. He doesn't overanalyze or dismiss the message. He trusts, and acts.

God still speaks — not necessarily through literal dreams but through those deeper intuitions of the heart. St. Ignatius of Loyola taught that God's voice draws us into peace, courage, and love. But we have to listen to it. Advent is a time for stillness. As we prepare for Christ's coming, we're invited to enter that quiet space where God's voice can be heard.

When and how do you become most receptive to God? Is it in silence? In prayer? In nature? At Mass? This week, go there. Be still. Listen. And like Joseph, have the courage to act on what God shows you.

— *Father John Muir*

(PRACTICING) CATHOLIC

Mini Reflection: Advent is drawing quickly to a close, and Christmas is coming soon. The change is upon us. Do we rise to accept it, or do we fall on our faces in fear?

The First Transfiguration

I imagine Joseph waking up the morning after the dream, blinking in the dim half-light of the dawn.

One day, decades from now, the baby his wife carries will stand on a mountaintop. His face will shine like the sun, and those who look upon him will fall down upon their own faces in fear.

We call this the transfiguration, and Joseph won't be there to see it. But that doesn't matter. What those men will learn on the mountaintop, Joseph already knows. He learned it last night.

Today, he shrugs off the remnants of slumber and stands up.

"Rise, and do not be afraid." This is what the baby — a baby no longer, but a man now, one in the last days of his life — will say to his companions on the mountain a few decades from now. They will look up to see him standing there the same as he always was, and they will realize that he did not change at all. They did.

"Do not be afraid." This is what the angel said last night as he revealed to Joseph the will of God: that Joseph take Mary and the Child as his own, despite having so many reasons not to do so. And today Joseph wakes up and the world is the same as it always was: Mary is pregnant, and the Child does not belong to him.

No, the world has not changed. Joseph has.

He rises, and goes to Mary.

Advent is drawing quickly to a close, and Christmas is coming soon. The change is upon us. Do we rise to accept it, or do we fall on our faces in fear?

— Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Why do we do that?

Catholic Life Explained

Question:

What is the difference between tithing and stewardship?

Answer:

Both tithing and stewardship are part of a spiritual way of life that calls us to use all of our resources for the service of the Gospel. Everything we are and everything we have comes from God. Offering back to God what He has given us is part of how we worship and give thanks to God.

Tithing is the practice of giving back 10 percent of what we earn. It comes from the Old English word for "ten." The first Scriptural example of tithing came from Abraham who gave a tenth of his possessions to the priest Melchizedek. He did so as an act of thanksgiving to God.

Stewardship as a way of life calls us to use well all that we have and all that we are, placing all things in service of others and God. Stewardship helps us see the good we can accomplish by making God and our spiritual life the most important values in our life. Whatever we accumulate in this life stays here. We can't take it with us! Both tithing and stewardship help us remember that nothing is mine or even ours ... all belongs to God.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. - Mt 1:23-24

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Questions of the Week

Invite Parishioners to Reflect and Respond to Scripture

First Reading:

Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, Isaiah prophesies to King Ahaz that a virgin would bear a son and name him, Emmanuel ("God is with us"). When have you felt close to God this Advent season?

Second Reading:

Paul instructs the Roman Christians that they are "called to be holy." What do you see as some of the steps toward growing in holiness?

Gospel:

We hear how Joseph struggled initially with the news of Mary's pregnancy. How do you discern making difficult decisions?



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Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” - Mt 1:20-21

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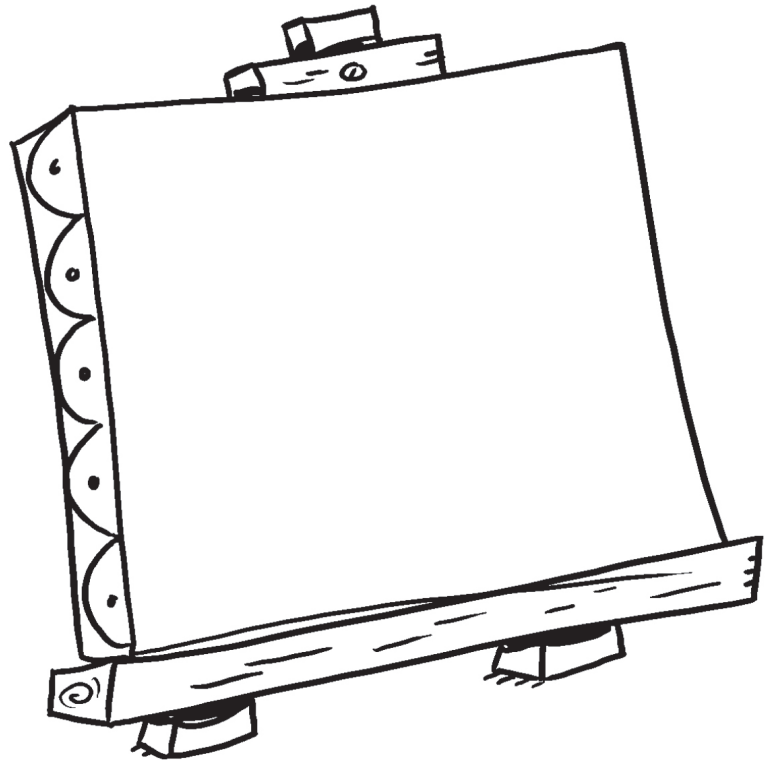
Prayer

I am proud that I am your child, Father God.

Mission for the Week

I will thank my parents for having me and taking good care of me.

Draw a picture of yourself when you were a baby.



Sharing the Gospel

An angel told Joseph to marry Mary because her baby was through the Holy Spirit of God. They would name the baby Jesus because he would save his people from their sins. God called you by name, too. Before you were born, he could tell you how many hairs would be on your head. He knew how long your feet would be. He knew all the good things you would do for his people.

**Now color
the picture!**

