

Dear friends,

As December begins, so also the new liturgical year with the beginning of the Advent season, the time to prepare for the celebration of Christmas. But this season will be bereft of its meaning if we rob it of its real significance. I know we are flooded with so many things to keep us preoccupied with the long list of gifts to be bought and wrapped and parties we intend to attend. And yet, this season is deliberately placed before Christmas, knowing well that **we are called to pause**. Advent is a time for watching, waiting, and preparing our hearts to receive the Child Jesus. **It is, therefore, a sacred time—a quiet invitation to slow down, listen, and prepare our hearts in silence so that it might stretch us beyond our imagination.** During this time, we stay open to God Himself to pitch His tent among us.

This Advent, **I request that you make use of the many resources available to prepare your hearts.** You don't have to go too far to look for them. Our parish provides so many opportunities: daily Morning Prayer at 7:40 a.m., daily Mass, Stations of the Crib on Tuesday, 2 December at 7 p.m., our Advent Mission from Sunday through Tuesday, December 7 - 9 at 7 p.m. each evening, Advent Reconciliation on 16 December at 7 p.m., and a special Evening Prayer on Tuesday, 23 December 23 at 7 p.m.

You can also spend a little time each day as you pray around the Advent wreath and light the appropriate candles using the Advent Reflection Blue Book. You can begin to set up the **Nativity scene (Creche)** in your home with joyful anticipation for the birth of the Baby Jesus as you pray: **“Come, Lord Jesus!”** This time of waiting is not futile or empty; it is pregnant with joyful hope. If God is making you wait, then be prepared to receive so much more than what you asked for. Because of who He is, and what He has in store for you, it is always worth the wait. This waiting is necessary for helping us stretch our hearts to make room for Him.

Let us live Advent consciously this year and be Advent as we become a channel, a path or a conduit through which God can come into the lives of others as well.

Echoing the words of Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA, I say: “During these holy seasons, **I pray that you and I will experience a new Advent of the Lord with a new burning desire to love Him and make Him loved.**” So, let us make this Advent count and let it make a difference in our lives.

And then it will be time for Christmas itself. For those of us who have made this Advent meaningful, there will most certainly be moments of great joy and peace when it is finally time to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ on Christmas Day. If you have leaned onto the hope that the waiting period offered, then you will also be open to God’s miraculous ways of showing HIMSELF in your life.

Please do not forget that we will have a number of Masses for Christmas as noted below in the program. Please come with your family and neighbors. Please invite a friend to share in this joyful time of worship.

On behalf of Fr. Martin, the deacons, and the staff, I wish you and yours a very joyful, peaceful, and love-filled Christmas! All I want for Christmas for you is PEACE and LOVE to rule in your hearts and in those of your families. May you have a truly Merry Christmas!

I am beyond grateful for all of you as we celebrate the Silver Jubilee of our parish, for all that you have done to make this a loving, caring, and a joyful community. We wouldn’t be the same without you. I will hold each of you close in my heart at every Mass that will be celebrated on Christmas. Thank you for inspiring and motivating me to do my best every day.

The Jubilee Year of Hope initiated by Pope Francis began on December 24, 2024 with the opening of the Holy Doors at the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome. Pope Leo will begin closing the three Holy Doors on the Feast of the Holy Family, December 28, 2025, continuing through January 6, 2026 when he will close the Jubilee Door at the Basilica on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. **We thank God for this gift of the Jubilee Year which helped us keep the light of our Christian hope alive to illumine the heart of every man and woman with the message that God's love for us is still intact and undiminished.**

This year we will celebrate the Feast of St. John, our patron, on Saturday, 27 December with a special Mass at 10 a.m. During this Mass, we will also celebrate the 15th anniversary of Fr. Martin's ordination to the priesthood. We will celebrate his ministry among us with a dinner after the 4.30 p.m. Mass. Please mark it on your calendars.

When we end the month of December and this year of 2025, let us be a grateful people despite the many challenges we have faced as a family, as a community, as a nation, and as a world. Let us also continue to pray with audacious hope for a world of peace and love. May the Lord Jesus open the hearts of the leaders of the world to cooperate with the grace of Christ, the "Emmanuel" God, a God who is ever with us to bring about His peace and love.

With an immeasurable love, I remain committed to your service, Fr. John

As you well know, our calendar for December is much more than what I have described above. Please save the important dates.

Now let us turn our attention to the many wonderful events happening in our parish during the month of December 2025.

- 2 December** **STATIONS OF THE CRIB**—7:00 PM in the church.
- 6 December** **FIRST SATURDAY MASS**—9:00 am in the Church
Visit from St. Nicholas—outside the church after the Mass (kids' event)
Filipino Community Christmas Celebration—1:00 PM in the Fr. Patrick Room.
- 6/7 December** **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
Reform your lives and live in God's peace so that justice may flourish.
Outreach Sunday
Holy Cross Priests Retirement Collection
JOHNETTE WILLIAMS LUNCHEON—12:30 pm in Holy Cross Hall.
ADVENT MISSION BEGINS—7:00 pm in the church.
- 8 December** **SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**
Holy Day of Obligation
Masses at 8:00 am, 12.05 pm, and 6:00 pm.
DAY 2 OF ADVENT MISSION—7:00 pm in the church.
- 9 December** **DAY 3 OF ADVENT MISSION**—7:00 pm in the church.
- 11 December** **CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED COMMUNITY**—11:00 am-1:00 pm in Holy Cross Hall.
- 12 December** **OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE**
Mass at 8:00 am in the Church and Rosary at the Grotto at 5.30 pm.
Set Up for Children's Hunger Project Packing—8:00 am-3:00 pm.
- 13 December** **Children's Hunger Project Packing Event**—8:00 am-12:00 pm in Holy Cross Hall
- 13/14 December** **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Gaudete Sunday)**

In the person of Jesus, God has come to heal and save us. Patiently and joyfully, we await the fulfillment of his Advent.

Sensory friendly Mass – 1:00 pm in Holy Cross Hall.

16 December **Advent Reconciliation Service**—7:00 pm in the Church
Staff Christmas Luncheon: Noon to 2 p.m.

18 December **Day of Giving Back**—Aging Matters Packing Event
9:00 am-Noon in Holy Cross Hall

19 December **Day of Giving Back**- Distribution of Food to Aging Matters: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

23 December **Evening Prayer** (Liturgy of the Hours)—7:00 pm in Fr. Patrick Peyton Room

24 December **CHRISTMAS EVE**

God's covenant gloriously shines forth in the birth of Jesus, Son of David

Parish Office closes at Noon

Mass at 4:00 pm (Children's Mass)

Masses 6:00 pm, 8:00 pm, and Midnight

25 December **CHRISTMAS DAY**

God has spoken to us through his Son, the Word made flesh. Thus has salvation been revealed to all the nations.

Masses at 10:00 am and Noon

Parish Office closed.

26 December **Feast of Saint Stephen, The First Martyr**

Parish Office closed; reopens on 29 December

27 December **FEAST OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST**

Mass at 10:00 am in the Church

Celebration of Fr. Martin's 15th Ordination Anniversary with Dinner—After the 4.30 p.m. Mass in Holy Cross Hall.

31 December **NEW YEAR'S EVE**

Holy Hour in Thanksgiving for the Year 2025: 4:00 p.m. in the Church.

Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, The Mother of God at 5:00 pm.

**31 December/
January 1**

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

Holy Day of Obligation

Mass on Thursday, 1 January, 2026, at 10:00 am

HAVE A GLORIOUS, SPIRIT-FILLED CHRISTMAS



AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR