



ST. ELIZABETH

CATHOLIC CHURCH



Advent Reflections 2025

Advent and Christmas Holy Days and Masses

Feast of the Immaculate Conception
Monday, December 8 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24
3:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 8:00 p.m.

Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25 10:00 a.m.

Mary, Mother of God, Wednesday, December 31 5:30 p.m. Vigil
Thursday, January 1 10:00 a.m.



Dear Parishioners,

During the season of Advent, we find ourselves in the mystery of ALREADY and NOT YET. Jesus already came to us over 2000 years ago in Bethlehem. He already lived and died on the cross and rose on the third day, over 2000 years ago. He already has shown us the face of God, and taught us of the great Love God has for us. And yet, we still await the celebration of His birth with great hope and anticipation. We still prepare ourselves each Advent season for Christ to be born more deeply into our lives. This is the great mystery of the Advent Season.

Christ's presence in our world and in our lives is not just something that happened a long time ago, but is something happening each and every day of our lives. Christ promised us that He would be with us until the end of time. He is alive, not dead. He journeys with us each day of our lives. He continues to fill our lives with faith, hope, joy, and love. We invite Him more deeply into our hearts every year during the Advent Season. Jesus fills the emptiness that is within us with His love. That is what Advent and Christmas is all about.

So do not get too wrapped up, pun intended, into the commercialism of the season. Focus on the importance of family. Do good works of mercy for those who have so little. Grow excited about the possibilities of Jesus entering more deeply into your lives. Fill your hearts with peace, joy, and love. Prepare to celebrate well the Birth of Jesus.

Fr. Bob Stone, Pastor

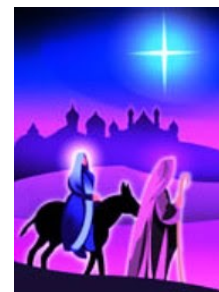
Sunday of the First Week of Advent November 30, 2025

When ever I have reflected on Christmas, I have rightfully focused on our Savior being born into the world and on the Holy Mother, who made it possible by saying yes to God through all the fear and confusion. What I have wrongly neglected is Saint Joseph.

As a father now, I imagine being away from home when my wife says, "he's coming now." I imagine thinking "Now?! Of course it could not be next week when we are back home. What am I going to do? I need to find somewhere for her."

Often I see Saint Joseph quietly in the background. The least of the trio of the Holy Family. But he had the most important duty a father has ever had. He had to protect the infant Messiah. After the ordeal of his birth in Bethlehem, Joseph was told that the king wanted to kill his baby. I could not imagine the unease and worry he felt bringing his family to a foreign land to raise them. But Saint Joseph provided. He came through and made everything possible. Although he never speaks in the Gospels, Saint Joseph has a strong message for us.

John Mahoney



Tuesday of the First Week of Advent December 2, 2025

Monday of the First Week of Advent December 1, 2025

Advent and Missing the People We Have Lost

Advent is usually seen as a happy time — getting ready for Christmas, full of hope and excitement. But for people who have lost someone they love, this season can evoke different feelings of loss. While others are celebrating, some are quietly hurting.

The candles we light during Advent might remind us of people who are not here anymore — people who used to share our joys, laughed with us at dinner, or gave us the gift of their friendship. Missing them during a season of joy can make the loss feel even heavier.

However, Advent should be inspirational for times like this. It is about waiting in the dark for the light to come. It does not ignore pain — it promises that pain will not last forever. God is not far away from our sadness. He comes right into it, bringing comfort and hope.

Losing someone we love reminds us how short and meaningful life is. It makes us think about bigger things — like what happens after this life. Advent gives us space to feel those feelings, to sit with our grief, but also to believe that love does not end with death.

So, we light the candles — not because everything is fine, but because we cherish hope. We light them for the people we miss, and for our sadness, but also for the belief that Jesus brings healing, peace, and one day, a joyful reunion.

Kevin Bundy



As Advent is approaching, I think about New Year Day 2025. Where have the months gone?

January, February, March went by in a burst of cold wind. I remember thinking if Spring was on the way. April, May, June, hoping God is listening to me. Yes He is, because I can feel the warmth, and everything is sprouting green. July, August, September, everything is in full bloom.

I am Thanking God for His Blessings as the year moves along. October, November, and finally December is here!... A year of waiting, praying, and looking for signs that a miracle is about to happen....The birth and coming of the Baby Jesus.

My heart is full of thankfulness to God.

I can see Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus with the beautiful Star of Bethlehem shining down for all to see.

I bow my head and give thanks for all the seasons of this year and all the years to come.



Peace on Earth and Good Will to Man.

Have a Blessed Holiday Season

Jessie Granger

Wednesday of the First Week of Advent December 3, 2025

Christmas is a celebration of God's love made manifest in the birth of Jesus. It is a chance to recognize that this divine act was not just for humanity, but for all of creation. This perspective is rooted in Pope Francis's encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, which calls us to an "integral ecology" where the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor are interconnected.

When thought of in this way, instead of a season of consumption, Christmas becomes an invitation to live simply and intentionally. It is about seeing the world as God's first gift—a sacred home to be protected, not a resource to be plundered.

The simplicity of the manger scene reminds us that true joy is found in humility and in caring for the most vulnerable, including our shared planet. The act of giving is transformed from a materialistic exchange to one that honors God, our family and neighbors, and the Earth.

George Hage



Thursday of the First Week of Advent December 4, 2025

I am writing this meditation on the feast day of Saint Francis of Assisi. The life of Saint Francis has always inspired me, and I came across a reflection from Father Richard Rohr, a Franciscan who founded the Center for Action and Contemplation, that I believe is particularly fitting for the Advent season. My most vivid memory of Saint Francis is when, years before Eleanor Roosevelt advised us to do so, he "Did the thing he was most afraid to do." He had an extreme fear of lepers, as did most people during his time on earth. He saw a leper begging, and walked to the man and hugged him. They both had tears in their eyes, as this was the first time anyone had recognized the leper as another human, and showed him compassion. This story leads into Father Richard's reflection.

“For Saint Francis of Assisi, ‘penance’ was not simply avoiding worldly pleasures or practicing harsh asceticism, but a deliberate, voluntary step toward embracing the challenges. It is the same kind of freedom we see in Jesus when He says, “You are not taking my life from me; I am laying it down freely” in John 10:18. In the opening words of his Testament, Francis clearly states:

The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. And afterwards I delayed a little and then left the world.

Francis' phrase, "left the world," did not mean abandoning creation. It meant stepping away from what we might call the "system." Francis rejected the usual way of life and chose an alternative path, which at that time was called "a life of penance" or leaving the system. He decided to focus on helping others and easing their suffering instead of pursuing self-interest."

During Advent, we are called to embrace these values of Saint Francis. Giving to help others is a form of penance—an active one. We are "leaving the world" for a short time. For most of the year, our attention is on ourselves—our lives, our problems, and supporting our families. But during Advent and Christmas, our focus shifts to others. Perhaps our penance for the rest of the year is to carry that spirit into our daily routines—by noticing the homeless person, being less judgmental, offering a smile, and saying hello. Show support and comfort to the frightened asylum seeker or refugee. My work for the new year will be to focus less on my own issues, and strive to improve the lives of others.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

Steve Williamson

Friday of the First Week of Advent December 5, 2025

I was having trouble getting started writing anything this year, and I so I said a short prayer before going to sleep and turning it over to God.

Then the following day's Mass readings and daily reflection talked about using our God given talents to serve our brothers and sisters to store up treasure in heaven. I had reread my 2023 Advent reflection, and realized that I had not made any progress on my resolve to be less critical of my fellow residents when I realized that I was being just like them. Old and crotchety.

I am working on removing the wooden beam from my eye so I can see clearly to be a more loving servant to my neighbors.

May the Peace of Christ be with each of you this Advent!

John Harris



Saturday of the First Week of Advent December 6, 2025

To tell you the truth, it is very important that we celebrate Advent. It is a unique moment in our year where for once we stop looking down at our feet, thinking about how much we toil and worry---like little children stumbling about in the dark.

Advent makes us, instead, break our trance and glimpse up to the horizon. And we see something that makes everything else so small, so immaterial, and insignificant. We see the morning sunrise of our saving Christmas. And with it, gifted light, as was promised to us.

Noah Lavy



Happy Saint Nicholas Day.

Please remember to hang your stocking.

Sunday of the Second Week of Advent December 7, 2025

I believe music plays a big role in making the Advent and Christmas seasons joyful ones. So many of our carols embody hope and love that seem to resonate with people of all backgrounds. With the hustle and bustle of the season, Christmas songs can help create a sense of unity, and they offer a message of peace for all.

Here are a few Christmas songs whose lyrics fill me with peace and a sense of connection to a world that is yearning for it:

Silent Night

Do You Hear What I Hear

Some Children See Him (Jesus is for everyone)



And one of my favorites:

Still, Still, Still

Still, still, still
One can hear the falling snow
For all is hushed
The world is sleeping
Holy Star its vigil keeping
Still, still, still
One can hear the falling snow

Sleep, sleep, sleep
'Tis the eve of our Saviour's birth
The night is peaceful all around you
Close your eyes
Let sleep surround you
Sleep, sleep, sleep
'Tis the eve of our Saviour's birth

Dream, dream, dream
Of the joyous day to come
While guardian angels without number
Watch you as you sweetly slumber
Dream, dream, dream
Of the joyous day to come.

Terri Hage

I had this random idea about Mary delivering Jesus, the ship *Santa Maria* delivering Christopher Columbus to the Americas, and Our Lady of Guadalupe's appearance in 1531. I did some research and found the following article on a web page produced on December 7, 2016 by The Catholic Company titled *America and the Immaculate Conception*:

“The United States Bishops, in the year 1846, chose the Blessed Virgin Mary under her title of the Immaculate Conception as the patroness of the United States of America. This is why we have the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

...On Dec. 8, 1854, eight years after the American bishops chose Mary Immaculate as their patroness, Pope Pius IX solemnly declared the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary to be an article of faith in his Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*.

Even more interestingly, the flagship of Christopher Columbus' expedition to the New World, the *Santa Maria*, had a full name of *Santa Maria de la Inmaculada Concepcion*, Holy Mary of the Immaculate Conception. The other ships, the *Niña*, little girl, and the *Pinta*, painted one, foreshadows Our Lady of Guadalupe, the first Marian apparition in the New World ...

Tuesday of the Second Week of Advent December 9, 2025

The day that Columbus claimed the Americas for the Spanish crown, October 12, 1492, Columbus Day, was a major Marian feast day in Spain—Our Lady of the Pillar. This title of Our Lady corresponds to the first-ever Marian apparition, which took place in Spain in 40 A.D., as well as the first-ever church dedicated to Our Lady.”

Our Lady at Lourdes acknowledged her Immaculate Conception in 1858. Our local Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception is downtown. During Advent, we celebrate Mary’s Immaculate Conception on December 8 and her Mexico apparition on December 12. As God says in Isaiah 55:9: “For as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Paul Kies



We all have that special recipe for the holidays. In my family, it is my Grandmother’s Applesauce Cake. Growing up, I remember helping my Mom make this cake for the Christmas season, and although I have never had my Grandmother make it for me, as we did not live near my Mom’s family, my Mom tells me stories of growing up with this special cake. I did not realize the significance of this applesauce cake until I posted the finished cake to social media one year. I had Aunts and Uncles reaching out to me asking how I made something that looks, and according to my Mom tastes, just like my Grandmother’s. I tell them my trick is that I talk to my Grandmother while I make it. My Grandmother passed away while I was in college, so I see this as a connection I have to her. I am sure one day I will find out her opinion of my making her special cake.

Advent is like a special recipe. We all have our own traditions to prepare for the coming of Jesus: praying as a family, going to Mass together, decorating the house, service to others, gift giving, baking together, etc. Every year we look forward to these special traditions that only come once a year. It is a time to set aside the world and open our hearts to Jesus. These yearly traditions make the season more special as we remember Advents and Christmases from the past. Each year, the season becomes more special with continued and added traditions. The one constant through it all is the celebration of Jesus’ birth. Embrace your traditions!

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

Amy Wantz



Wednesday of the Second Week of Advent December 10, 2025

Many years ago, a family was on hard times – money was tight and the family was financially stressed and stretched. The Father scolded his four-year-old daughter for wasting a roll of gold wrapping paper which she was using to wrap a box.

The little girl brought the gift to her Father the next morning on his birthday and said, "This is for you, Daddy." He was embarrassed by his earlier overreaction, but his anger flared again when he found the box was empty. He yelled at her, "Don't you know that when you give someone a present, there's supposed to be something inside it?"

The little girl looked up at him with tears in her eyes and said, "Oh, Daddy, it's not empty, it is full of kisses that I blew into the box – all for you, Daddy." The Father was crushed. He put his arms around his little girl, and he begged for her forgiveness.

When the Father died, his family found the now tattered gold wrapped box that he kept by his bed for all those years. Whenever he was discouraged, he would take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us has been given a gold container filled with unconditional love and kisses; from our spouse, our children, our friends, and our God. There is no more precious possession anyone could hope for. May we each feel that love this Christmas.



Jim Hart

Thursday of the Second Week of Advent December 11, 2025

I am writing this in October, and I just experienced my first cinnamon scented air of the season. As I walked out of my front door early this morning in the frosty air, that beautiful scent filled me with happiness, and I said "Oh Mom, it is the first cinnamon scent of the season!" Thank You God for allowing me the grace to notice this. Thank You for all the beautiful times I shared with my beautiful Mom.



Yes, I miss her. Gosh darn it, I miss her, I miss Dickens, and sometimes I just cry for missing them. And yet, I know how truly blessed I am just to have shared a few precious years with these two Angels of God.

I know You still have work for me to do here, God. And I am thankful to be alive this day in Your beautiful world, with this beautiful husband, this beautiful family, this beautiful life. So, as I wait hopefully for the birth of our Savior, please help me to be a grateful servant. And to notice and celebrate every blessing You bestow on me.

Happy Birthday, Mom.



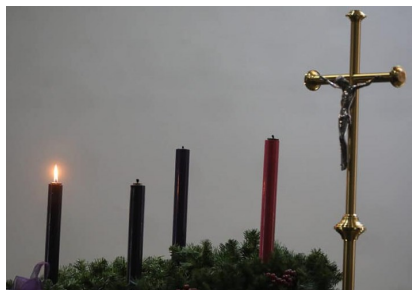
Mary Cary

Friday of the Second Week of Advent December 12, 2025

Advent is a sacred pause, a gentle invitation from the Catholic Church to step out of the rush of daily life and into a season of intentional preparation. In a world that moves quickly and demands our attention from every direction, Advent calls us to slow down, breathe deeply and make room in our hearts for Jesus Christ.

Through additional prayer, participation in the Liturgy, and small acts of quiet devotion, we turn our hearts back to the miracle at the center of our faith: the nativity of Jesus Christ. What could be more important than preparing for the moment when God chose to dwell among us? The Church gives us this holy season to refocus, reset, and rejoice.

As Catholics, we also hold in our hearts a deeper mystery of the season: we prepare not only to celebrate Christ's birth, but also to welcome Him into our lives today and to await His coming again in glory. Advent encourages us to look for His presence in the ordinary moments of our days, in the people around us, and in the quiet stirrings of our own spirit. When we make space for Him, He transforms our waiting into hope, our preparation into peace, and our hearts into a dwelling place for His love. May this Advent be a blessing – a time of renewal, gentle joy, and deepened faith as we ready ourselves once again for the gift of Emmanuel.



Jana Belzer

Saturday of the Second Week of Advent December 13, 2025

Dear STE Family,

Advent is such a joyous time of year. The anticipation of our Lord coming and the Christmas Holiday. What are my memories? Presents, dinners, wrapping gifts, decorations, fighting for parking spaces at the mall, my dancing HoHo Santa Clause, my "beige" sweater from mom and dad every year for Christmas, our STE Junior High adopting families from Operation Breakthrough, Christmas tree stars, Ms. Susie's children's choir at Mass, Fr. Gregory, Deacon Don, Fr. Bruce, Fr. Greg, Fr. Bob, my family, my STE family, and the list goes on.

What does the season really mean? God is coming to Earth, and there is no greater gift. So enjoy your traditions, hug those whom you love, give some love to those that need it, and have a wonderful Advent and Christmas season.

God Bless,

Jason Flood



Sunday of the Third Week of Advent December 14, 2025

As teachers at Saint Elizabeth, Christmastime usually means a busy time of finishing crafts, practicing for the annual ECC Christmas Program, pajama days, celebrating Saint Nicholas, and learning the story of Advent. December seems to fly by in a blur, yet it is always our favorite time to be teachers, and not just because of the upcoming Winter Break!

The story of Advent is one of my favorite subjects to teach because, to me, it is a story about families. It is about Fathers, and how they will travel anywhere to protect the family they love. It is about Mothers, and how they will sacrifice physical, emotional, and spiritual needs for their family. It is also about children, and how they have the potential to grow into something or someone great, all with the love and support from their families.

Families come in all different shapes and sizes, with traditions old and new celebrated during this time of year. As Russell and I begin our parenting journey with our new baby, we are overjoyed to begin our own special traditions as a new family of three, as well as celebrate ones from our childhoods. And even though December tends to be a blur, we still take time to reflect on Christmases past, family members who are no longer with us, and what a special time it is with our new little one. Much like the First Christmas, we feel eternally grateful for our journey here to our baby, and the love and support from our families.

Russell, Kaitlin, and Tre Hynes



Russell and I both love the Angel as our favorite Christmas symbol. It is my family's traditional Christmas tree topper. Our family angel has been passed down from my great grandparents, and I look forward to seeing her on top of my parents' tree every year. For Russell, the angel represents divine intervention and protection, which he believes are his family members watching over him.

Monday of the Third Week of Advent December 15, 2025

This year, being in OCIA has really changed how I see Advent and Christmas.

Advent feels like a time for me to slow down and make space for God in the middle of everything else going on. I have been learning to wait with hope and to trust that God is working in my life, even when I do not see it yet.

When Christmas comes, I think it will mean more to me than ever before — celebrating not just that Jesus was born, but that He is becoming more real in my own heart.

I feel grateful to be part of this journey, and to share it with such a welcoming Saint Elizabeth Church community.



Rhonda Burke

Tuesday of the Third Week of Advent December 16, 2025

The theme of the 2025-2026 school year is

“Let your light shine” Matthew 5:16

I have prayed throughout this school year that the light of our Saint Elizabeth School community shine brightly in our ministry of Catholic education. One of the things I love most about the Advent season is that as we prepare for Christmas, it is a chance to slow down and be still. As I quiet my mind and body in the busyness of the school year, I reflect on how I can bring a little more light into the world this Advent.

Our students do this as well through our weekly Advent Prayer Services to start our weeks. Praying together reminds us what the Christmas season is truly about; it is a time of hopeful waiting to prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

Each week of Advent brings a new light. The candles on the wreath remind us of the gifts God offers all of us: hope, peace, joy, and love. Beautiful things that all of us deserve because God has made us in His image and likeness to do good, and be good.

So, each of us is called during the Advent season to reflect, prepare joyfully, and deepen our prayer lives to be a light for one another, so that we can welcome baby Jesus, our King, with open hearts, ready to joyfully share His light with all we encounter.

I wish you and all of our families a very holy and blessed Advent.

Mike Riley

Wednesday of the Third Week of Advent December 17, 2025

For our family, the Advent season is a time to slow down and truly be present with one another. Amid the busyness of December, we make it a point to gather each Sunday for a special dinner—one that is planned by a different family member every week. From favorite comfort foods to new recipes, those meals become more than just dinner; they are moments of laughter, connection, and reflection on what it means to wait in hope and joy.

Advent reminds us that preparing our hearts for Christmas is not just about decorations or gifts. It is about making space for love, togetherness, and gratitude in the waiting.

The Jeffries Family

Mike, Amanda, Bertie Mae, Augie, and Rory



Artwork by Bertie Mae



Thursday of the Third Week of Advent December 18, 2025

Luke 2:11

“For today in the city of David a Savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.”

Jesus is the most precious Christmas gift that anyone can receive, as it is given by God with pure love. No other gift is greater than Jesus Christ our Lord.

Leslie Kies



Friday of the Third Week of Advent December 19, 2025
Advent Anticipation

I often give my students the task of reading a passage or poem, and then ask them to select one word that encapsulates what the reading is about. When I think about what the Advent season means to me, I always come back to the word *anticipation*.

When I was a child, I anticipated the Christmas lights, the songs, the presents under the tree. As I grew older, the anticipation was more about the time I would get to spend with extended family, and that feeling of the Christmas spirit that descends upon people.

For many years, I did not really stop to consider what Mary and Joseph were anticipating as they journeyed to Bethlehem, as they awaited the birth of Jesus. That changed in the Advent season of 2011. My husband and I, married for six years, had just moved to Kansas City. We had been on an unsuccessful, and often painful, fertility journey, and had recently completed the steps to officially join the long list of couples waiting to adopt.

The phone call came three days before Thanksgiving. We had been selected by a birthmother. We were having a baby girl. We had seven weeks to prepare for her birth...
Talk about anticipation!

The journey to parenthood that Advent season changed me in ways I could not put into words, blessed us in ways I could never dream of. I know our experience is vastly different than that of Mary and Joseph, but now I can connect to it in ways I was not able to before.

I anticipate this will be another beautiful Advent season!

Mrs. Ali Saucier



Saturday of the Third Week of Advent December 20, 2025

May I be open, Lord, to receive You,
and may I give back what I receive.

He is standing on the median by the left hand turn lane that
I have to enter.

His bent up cardboard sign proclaiming "Any little bit will help,
God Bless." As I roll up to that stoplight, our eyes meet and I
sincerely shrug my shoulders with hands raised and sadly smile.

My wallet is empty. I have nothing to give. He smiles back as if
to say, "That's okay." I look straight ahead waiting impatiently
for my green arrow so I can drive off and my uneasiness can
disappear.

I see movement in the corner of my eye. He wants my attention.
I look and he points to his chest and then to mine. He sees my
cross necklace I put on every morning as I say a little prayer to
God. He smiles and gives me a thumbs up as he tilts back his
head telling me of his solidarity in Christ.

I smile back and in that moment we smile together.

His hardly noticeable shaking arms on this sultry day speaks of his need for a drink.

I turn my head looking forward, wondering why this light is taking so long to turn. I see from the corner of my eye his waving hand, again, for my attention. He wants to tell me more. What now, I wonder as I turn my head toward him. He points to the front wheel of my car and smiles, giving me another thumbs up, mag wheels. I give him another smile and nod. With that, our moment was over as the light changed and I drove away.

It turns out, I did have something to give, a brief moment of my time, a smile, a shared faith in Christ, and a similar taste in car wheels. I gave him my smile instead of ignoring his existence, and he wiped away my ignorance in realizing that we are not so different after all.

Anne Ira



Pondering with Mary Through Advent

I often try to imagine what Mary was thinking and feeling during her nine month journey to the birth of Christ. She had to have wondered about her existence. She did not know what was ahead of her. She did know the Word of God spoken through Angels, and she acquiesced to the Will of God through the Holy Spirit. She had to have felt the Grace of God with her.

Mary be our Advent companion, help us see life through the lens of God's will, help us have a faith as deep as yours, help us love more, trust more, serve more, and bring us to a deeper union with Christ.

Kathy Todd



Monday of the Fourth Week of Advent December 22, 2025

Joy to the World! The Lord is Come!

This time of year, it is especially good to reflect on the joy in your life as we follow Jesus to love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself.

I see joy in the beauty of nature from majestic mountains, vast oceans, autumn leaves, tiny flowers and in all of God's creation.

I feel joy in having twinkling lights greeting me when I come home on a cold, dark evening, and carols playing on the radio.

I hear joy in snuggling a cooing baby, nonsensical laughter of a toddler, and the thrill of kids rushing up at Mass to give Father a donation.



BLESSED WINTER



Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Advent December 23, 2025

I find joy in seeing overflowing baskets of food donations and trees emptied of the Christmas stars.

I feel joy in finishing all the shopping, cooking and baking, cleaning, wrapping, and decorating done to celebrate the birth of Jesus with family and friends.

I see joy in those who share with their neighbors at soup kitchens, bath days, serving food and gifts to the less fortunate.

And I find joy at Christmas Mass with the beautiful decorations, chatter of the many visitors and members, songs and carols, special liturgy, excitement of the children, and the visits to the manger scene.

Joy to the World! The Lord is Come!

Toni Sheffer



As Creation gives the final explosion of color in celebration of a beautiful growing season, I am struck by soft parallels.

As the leaves fall, they are creating a blanket, that over the Winter prepares the soil for the arrival of new life.

Pollinators hibernate.

Soil microbes rejuvenate.

All of Creation prepares to fulfill the promise of abundant life.



Our Father's design is perfect, and He reveals his Love to us in even the smallest ways.

Chris Oursler
OCIA Class of 2026

Midnight Mass Memory

One of the very special holiday memories that really sticks with me was when Dad and Mom took all eight of us kids to Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. Twelve years separated oldest to youngest. I am not sure how they accomplished it. There was no way they were going to be able to corral all eight of us to go to Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve without a lot of kicking, screaming, and crying. I am sure it would have been like herding cats. So instead of having us stay up late that evening for Mass, they had us go to bed early and lay out our Church clothes before getting into bed. I know we were all excited because the next day was Christmas, but somehow we all fell asleep. I am guessing we were in bed between 8:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. at the latest. Then about 11:00 p.m., they woke us up and had us put on our Church clothes. Surprisingly, without too much whining, we all cooperated.

When we arrived at Church just before midnight, Dad and Mom ushered us in, and we followed them to the pew where we always sat. Sitting in that pew, I remembered looking all around at the decorations and the Christmas trees. I am sure I was wide-eyed. I remember the choir singing Christmas hymns. I do not know if it was the holiday decorations, the music, or just the fact it was Christmas Eve and we were in Church; I just remember feeling very much at peace that night. I used to get embarrassed when all ten of us walked into Church together, but that night it did not bother me. I was glad we were all there together. Many years later, I realized that the peaceful feeling I experienced that evening is what Christmas is all about... Being together with family, and being thankful for the many graces God has given us all.



Frank Medina

Christmas Eve December 24, 2025

Faith = Patience. Patience = Faith.

On each of our roads of life, there are many bumps. And potholes. An inspiring priest once told me that “all roads lead to Jerusalem.” We certainly know that to be true for Jesus’ life road.

A friend once asked me “tell me, how do you keep your eyes on the Lord during the smooth part of the road?” He said “it is easy to turn to God when you are struggling.” I am sure you understand this, as well. When you are facing a life crisis, losing a loved one, or forced to make decisions that make you sad, you turn to the Father and ask for help, for peace, for guidance.

During these times, I often ask God for a sign. A sign that He is there, a sign that everything will be ok, a sign that reminds me that people are more important than things. A sign that the real end of this life journey is joy beyond our imagination.

*For we have seen His star and
have come to pay Him homage.*



Many priests, Christians, and spiritual guides have reminded me over and over that you have to keep praying. Sometimes it takes longer for God to hear you, or maybe you have to understand that He answers prayers in His own way and in His own time.

One of my night prayers includes “Lord, into Your hands, I commend my spirit.” At first, this was difficult for me to say. Those were the words Jesus used when He died. I was afraid that if I said them, I would go to sleep and die. Over time, I have come to understand that it means surrendering to God’s will for me.

Slowly this has dawned on me. Having faith means having patience in God to show you His path for you. That is what I believe Jesus came to Earth to do. He showed us the path to His Father by His example of surrendering to God’s will for Him. We are kind of lucky we do not have to live by the 614 laws of Judaism. He made it simple: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul, and love your neighbor as yourself.

God bless us all this holiday season.

Beth Bazin



Beth Bazin’s parents were married on Christmas Eve while her Dad was waiting to be deployed in World War II. This family photo is of them waiting for orders.

Christmas Day December 25, 2025

When Mary and Joseph went into Bethlehem, they gave us a great example. We are all trying to follow their example, when we raise the money to make our new building so special, just like Bethlehem was.

I know when my cousin committed suicide, I served his funeral Mass, and we always say ‘why?’ It is hard to say; Jesus is the only one who knows. We always wear watches or cell phones to look at the time, yet it will be in God’s time when He takes us into the new Jerusalem.

How excited for this Christmas are we, with an American Pope, Pope Leo XIV. We had a Liturgist who retired, so she could go visit her grandsons, and we have this 25 year old who is taking over her place, and learning how to do things like the Christ Child wants her to learn.

When I think about the most Holy Rosary, we ought to pray it a lot like the Knights of Columbus do, because Mary is our Heavenly Mother, and is very special, and she is always at the foot of the cross, and how hard it was for her, and not on us.

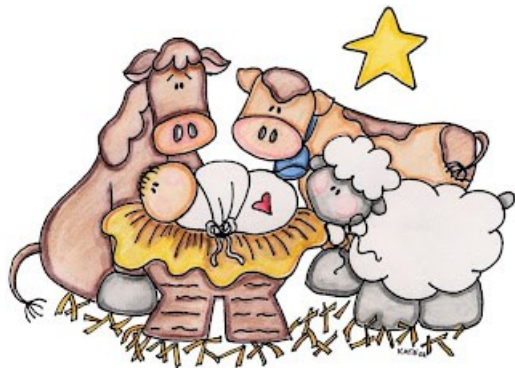
We always celebrate May Crowning, and the eighth graders receive a crown of flowers and place it on Mary, and she looks very beautiful, and we know we have to take it down afterwards, yet we are still celebrating the Risen Christ.

When Deacon Mike and Fr. Bob go to the manger, it is very special to spend time with the Baby Jesus. We all ought to honor our kids, just like Mary and Joseph honor their dearly beloved Son.

We welcome the catechumens who come in at the Rite of Welcome during Advent, so they could join us at the Easter Vigil to come into the Church fully for the first time.

Father Bob wears the special vestments; we look at these beautiful things, and the animals God made, that is the way God created them, and that is the way God created us.

Jimmy Campbell



ST. ELIZABETH
CATHOLIC CHURCH