



# Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 100 \* New Melle, MO 63365

Website: [www.ihm-newmelle.org](http://www.ihm-newmelle.org)

Office Phone: 636-398-5270

Deliveries only address: 8 West Highway D, New Melle, MO 63365

## Schedule of Holy Mass

Saturday: 8:00am, 4:00pm Vigil Mass for Sunday  
 Sunday: 7:30am, 9:30am  
 Weekdays: 8:00am, in church

## Weekly Devotions and Prayers

### Eucharistic Adoration:

Monday 8:30am until Friday, 11:00am

### Rosary:

Prior to Saturday evening 4pm Mass

### Perpetual Help Devotions:

Tuesdays following 8am Mass

### Respect Life Prayers:

Thursday following 8am Mass

### First Saturday of the Month Devotions

8am Mass, Rosary, 15 minutes of meditation

## Sacraments

### Reconciliation:

Wednesday in church, 7pm  
 Saturday following 8am Mass

### Marriage:

Contact the parish office  
 at least six months prior to the wedding

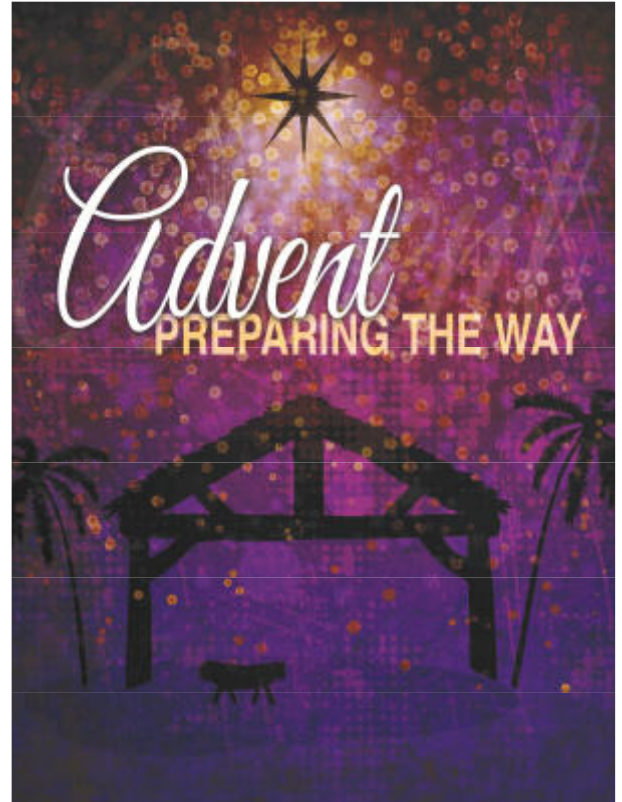
### Baptism:

Contact the parish office  
 to register for class and to arrange date

### Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults:

Contact Shawn Mueller in the parish office

# December 13, 2020



## Deeper Understanding of Scripture

In Blaise Pascal's work, *Pensees*, he says: "What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself."

We have a difficult time accepting that fulfillment and happiness are not achieved by our own merits but through a relationship with God. We are hard-wired for this relationship and it is in our DNA. The simple fact is that we come from God and are designed to return to

God. If our beginning and our end define who we are, why would we not want to seek the One who can truly satisfy? The world does not realize that it is waiting. It is waiting for the birth of God in time, within one's soul and in eternity. We get so confused by seeking other momentary satisfactions that we misinterpret the hunger within. We crave God.

The union of God and humanity, revealed in Jesus Christ, is precisely what sets us on a straight path, orders our relationships, establishes proper focus and goals and tells us whose kingdom we really are meant to serve. We are so lost. God is with us. The prophet Nathan told this to King David, the angel said this to Mary and the birth of Christ brings this Good News to us. We do not

need to be busily looking for more things but must learn to find contentment and blessing in the One Presence. This is the beautiful simple message of Advent!

If you are feeling unsettled, anxious, angry, disgruntled, disconnected, unhappy, worried, fearful, off center, becoming overly self-indulgent, unable to spend time alone and without distraction, then there's a good chance you are lost. Now is the time to allow God to find you! Ponder the holy simplicity of Mary's call to be the Mother of God. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." When we are helpless and at home with our emptiness, God will fill us. Our Savior has come.

# Welcome to Immaculate Heart of Mary: *Informed—Hospitable—Missionary*

## Parish Staff

Parish Office: 636-398-5270

Fr. Tom Miller, Pastor *askpadre@aol.com*  
(for emergencies only: 314-303-2428)

Deacon Chris Ast *chrisast@archstl.org*  
Deacon Tony Falbo *tony.2011@centurylink.net*  
Laura Orf, Business Manager *lorf@ihm-newmelle.org*  
Peggy Dupree, Secretary *secretary@ihm-newmelle.org*  
Bryan Beams, Director of Music and Liturgy  
*bryanbeams@ihm-newmelle.org*  
Janet Hespen, Youth Leader *janethspn@outlook.com*  
Karen Wappelhorst, Child Safety Coordinator  
*childsafety@ihm-newmelle.org*

## Religious Education

Shawn Mueller, Director

636-398-5270, *smueller@ihm-newmelle.org*

Parish School of Religion  
Grades 1 thru 8, September thru May, 6-7:30pm, Wednesdays  
Confirmation Preparation  
8th Grade—September thru May, 6-7:30pm, Wednesdays  
Children's Liturgy of the Word  
September thru May, during the 9:30am Sunday Mass  
Adult Education  
Wednesdays at 8:45am and 6:10pm, September thru May  
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults—contact Shawn for schedule

## Quick Contacts Directory

### Weddings, Receptions, Events

Pat Gentry, Hall Rental 636-398-5270  
Kelly Meyer, Wedding Coordinator 636-828-4994  
Jean Hitt, Wedding Coordinator 636-987-2131  
Joan Marren-Slaughter, Event Coordinator 636-398-5270  
Mary Keune, Event Coordinator 636-398-5270

### Prayer and Devotion

Eucharistic Adoration  
Shawn Mueller 636-398-5270  
Legion of Mary  
Maria Romine-Kantor 314-614-0857  
Prayer Chain  
Brenda Hutchcraft 636-248-8493  
Prayer Intercession/Jonah Team  
Debbie Gillespie 636-398-4971  
Prayer Shawl Ministry  
Julia Kettler 314-616-0096

### Liturgical Ministries

Extraordinary Ministers  
Irene Caldwell 636-398-4311  
Lectors  
Joe Willis 636-398-2106  
Gift Bearers  
Peggy Dupree 636-398-5270  
Ushers  
Gary Struckhoff 636-828-6067  
Altar Servers  
Deacon Tony Falbo *tony.2011@centurylink.net*  
Altar Society  
Pam DeBold 636-482-4765  
Art & Environment  
Mary Karll 636-433-5049  
Music Ministry  
Bryan Beams 636-398-5270  
Adult Choir  
Mary Sweeten 314-324-3249  
Children's Choir  
Elizabeth Jaeckle 636-828-4811  
Contemporary Music Group  
Debbie Gillespie 636-398-4971  
Praise & Worship Band  
Steve Farber 636-751-3567

### Parish Organizations

Budget & Finance  
Larry Graves 314-799-9804  
Cemetery Committee  
Mark Keune 314-220-7075  
Dinner Committee  
Jeff Comotto 314-570-6972  
Funeral Lunches  
Carol Grady 314-662-2281  
Ruth Neske 636-398-5699  
Vicki Grunz 636-497-5230  
Helping Hearts  
John Grady 314-662-2138  
Mary Fischer 636-561-7747  
Bob Hutchcraft 636-346-3471  
Maria Romine-Kantor 314-614-0857  
Knights of Columbus  
Bob Hutchcraft 636-346-3471  
Marian Council  
Barb Pope 773-383-8602  
Meal Train  
Kelly Meyer *meyer5853@qmcinc.org*, 636-828-4994  
Meals on Wheels  
Jean Bammann 636-798-2718  
Pro Life  
Bill Winters 636-828-4133  
Quilters  
Vanita Joerling 636-544-0416  
Ruth Willis 636-398-4597  
Scouting  
Chuck Hinkle 636-544-6639  
Cub Scouts: Adam McCarthy 636-634-7622  
Boy Scouts: Chad Peters 314-807-7177  
St. Vincent de Paul  
Joe Willis 636-398-2106  
Welcoming Committee  
Teresa Berfanger 636-398-5565

### Youth and Young Adults

High School Youth Leader  
Janet Hespen 314-369-6521  
Young Adults  
Julie Lassiter 636-357-0121

## *Merry Christmas!*

Dear Parishioners,

2020 has been a most unusual and demanding year. None of us imagined how things would change because of virus. Something invisible has threatened our life and altered our normal habits of living. Something invisible changed the way we looked at ordinary activities and interactions. Something invisible brought about unexpected and unanticipated consequences. The invisible had and continues to have a great impact upon our life.

Nearly 2000 years ago the invisible was made visible and it changed the world! The Hidden God of Israel, who forbid the creation of statues or images to symbolize His presence, manifested Himself to Israel and the world through His Son. Jesus is the Word made flesh, the Incarnate God, begotten before time and incarnated in time through the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Infancy Gospels of Sts. Matthew and Luke remind us of this mystery and the Gospel of St. John points us beyond time to the mysterious and eternal realm of God. The timeless enters time, the invisible reveals His presence to the world.

Alone among the religions of the world we Christians celebrate the profound intimacy of our God who became like us in all things but sin. We celebrate our faith in one God who is a community of Persons, overflowing with abundant creative life and love. Our creation is the fruit of that abundant creative love. No necessity, no hidden desire or motive, no need “caused” creation other than the overflowing mystery of Trinitarian love. God creates us to share in His life, and gives us revelation and faith to form that life. It’s hard to grasp or even begin to appreciate a love like that because all of our “loves” bear some weight of need and necessity. In God’s love there is no need or necessity but only desire for the beloved. Ever so slowly we pray that such love will transform us humbly and subtly into the likeness of the One who loves us.

On behalf of all of the staff I wish you and your families a very Blessed and Merry Christmas! Our prayers are for all of you this Christmas and the blessing that you are in our lives. Our most intimate connection with the invisible and with each other is through prayer. We don’t pray as a last resort or a final plea, but rather as a first response to the experiences of life. We pray because it is the best expression of our desire and longing for communion, with God. Our prayers for one another connect us even when the trials and demands of life separate us.

Peace and prayers,

*F. Tum* and the Staff of IHM

## *Fourth Sunday of Advent—Year B*

*The angel Gabriel was sent from God, to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin.....  
[who] shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus. Luke 1:26-38*

Isaiah 7:14 is a fascinating prophecy. “A virgin shall conceive and bear a son—and his name shall be called Emmanuel.” God would give a sign. He would be “God with us”. The house of David from the time of Ahaz on would be waiting for this son. A virgin birth? When the Hebrew term was translated into Greek and Aramaic, the word specifically chosen meant “virgin”. This was to be the sign as high as the heavens. This was the Jewish understanding of the Scripture through the centuries. It even gives the name...Emmanuel, God is with us. No one else made a claim to fulfill this prophecy, until Jesus.

*Many have appeared throughout history, declaring that they were from God, messengers to be heard. What are the certain tests or standards of these claimants? Test One. Has any one of the claimants been pre-announced or foretold?*



## Ministry Schedule

December 19—4:00pm

EM: Josh Deters, Karen Wilson, Bob Brossette, Chris Warren  
Lec: Pat Barnard, Yvonne Brossette  
Serv: Zara Panus  
Music: Bryan & cantor  
Ush: Tim Wilson, Mike Rieker, Andy Pope

December 20—7:30am

EM: Josh Deters, Deacon Chris, Jan Kardasz,  
John Fiacco  
Lec: Bob Leeker, Chuck Kettler  
Serv: Sydney Jaeckle  
Music: Verdi & Elizabeth  
Ush: Tom Meczowski, Brenda Hutchcraft,  
Frank Kardasz

December 20—9:30am

EM: Deacon Chris, Laura Orf, Don & Susan Hladky  
Lec: Mary Busby-Simpson, Pat Gentry  
Serv: Janie Becker  
Music: Bryan & cantor  
Ush: Ron Simpson, Bill Winters, Gary Struckhoff

## Christmas Ministry Schedule

December 24—4:00pm

EM: Deacon Chris, Josh Deters, Pat Roche,  
Janet Hespen, Kathy Lalonde, Maureen Blondin  
Lec: Karen Wilson, Emily Jaeckle  
Serv: Sydney and Natalie Jaeckle  
Music: Bryan and Elizabeth  
Ush: Tim Wilson, Andy Pope, Mike Rieker,  
Ron Jacob, Alan Raymond

December 24—Midnight

EM: Deacon Chris, Josh Deters, Michelle Greiwe,  
Chris or Kat Menne  
Lec: Kris Jenkins, Pat Gentry  
Serv: Thomas Kokker  
Music: Bryan, Betsy & Mary  
Ush: Gary Struckhoff, Brian Nelson, 1 more volunteers

December 25—10:00am

EM: Josh Deters, Patrice Riley, Mary Hardesty,  
Bob Brossette  
Lec: Dave London, Joe Willis  
Serv: Izzy Scheer  
Music: Bryan & Maya  
Ush: Bill Riley, Bill Winters, Larry Smith

## Heavenly Duster Schedule

Christmas Break the next two weeks

## Purificators

Month of December: June Spiess

## Ministry Schedule

December 26—4:00pm

EM: Deacon Chris, Bryan Potter, Pat Roche,  
Chris Warren  
Lec: Jerry Knott, Sharon Hagan  
Serv: Zoey Panus  
Music: Bryan & cantor  
Ush: Wally & Jan Karase, Larry Graves

December 27—7:30am

EM: Deacon Chris, Josh Deters, Becky Wilson,  
Betty Tuepker  
Lec: Kris Jenkins, Mary Hardesty  
Serv: Janie Becker  
Music: Verdi & Brooke  
Ush: Larry Smith, Mike Hardesty, Gary Potter

December 27—9:30am

EM: Deacon Chris, Josh Deters, Janet Hespen,  
Chris Richter  
Lec: Bill Winters, Jackie Dunn  
Serv: Izzy Czuchna  
Music: Bryan & cantor  
Ush: Alan Raymond, Gary Struckhoff, Joe Weber

## Please pray for all the sick and suffering:

Phyllis Zerr, Sandy Knott, Mike & Pat Ryan, Fran Bussen,  
Nancy Hollenstein, Deacon Tony, Walt Reel, Amy Robbins,  
Betty Boyd, Don Schmidt, Janie Roth, Betty Heppermann,  
Joyce Brakensiek, Carl Wolff, Gary Potter, Pete Schepis,  
Terry Hagen

Lisa Debold (daughter of Dave & Pam DeBolt), Leon Burkem-  
per (son of Carol Rabbitt),  
Doris Eisenbath (mother of Judy Molitor), Janet Piel (sister of  
Joni Marren-Slaughter),  
John Stringer (friend of Larry & Rita Bendel) Loren & Evelyn  
Brandon (parents of Marty & Peggy Dupree),  
Audrey Molitor (sister of Flo Joerling), Pat Finan (daughter of  
Fran Bussen), Marlene Hegemeier (sister of Pat Roche)  
Steve Wengerski (family friend of Mandy Daub), Sophia Harts-  
field (granddaughter of Ed & Marcia Etzkorn),  
Keith Langford (son of Rita & brother of Valerie Langford),  
Red Brockmeyer (cousin of Kay & Ray Cherry), Karla Sitzes  
(daughter of Sophia Bax),  
Karen Windler (sister of John Wappelhorst), Michael Speir  
(son-in-law of Jackie & Steve Dunn)

**Hospitalization:** If you are hospitalized, please let us  
know. Please call the office or ask a friend to call for you if  
necessary.

**Communion Calls:** If you would like to receive Commu-  
nion but are unable to get to Mass because of illness or disa-  
bility, please contact the parish office: 636-398-5270.

**Prayer Requests:** Brenda Hutchcraft at 636-248-8493 or

*Attendance at Christmas Masses by reservation only!  
Please sign up on our parish website, or call the parish office.*

## Mass Intentions

Monday, December 21  
8:00am Vickie Brink +  
Tuesday, December 22  
8:00am in thanksgiving for a baby boy  
Wednesday, December 23  
8:00am David Flavan +  
Thursday, December 24  
8:00am Bob Cova +  
4:00pm Stan Nikonowicz +  
Midnight Fr. Tom Miller Family  
Friday, December 25  
10:00am Andrew & Pauline Chabak +  
Saturday, December 26  
8:00am Jennifer Ristich +  
4:00pm People of the Parish  
Sonny Molitor +  
Sunday, December 27  
7:30am Jean Reel +  
Jolene Molitor +  
9:30am Ann Seper +  
Gary Maher +

## This Week at Home

*social distancing recommended at all events*

Sunday, December 20  
Anointings after both Masses.  
Decorate church about 10:30  
Monday, December 21  
Scouts, Founders Hall, 6:30pm  
St. Vincent de Paul, Grand Hall, 7pm  
Reconciliation, 7pm  
Tuesday, December 22  
Fitness, Grand Hall, 9am  
Reconciliation, 7pm  
Wednesday, December 23  
Reconciliation, 7pm  
Thursday, December 24  
Christmas Eve Masses at 4pm and Midnight  
Friday, December 25  
Mass on Christmas Day at 10am  
Saturday, December 26  
Reconciliation, 8:45am



## Contributions, Dec. 12/13

Will be reported next week

*"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!"*  
Luke 1:28

After Jesus, we look to Mary as an ideal steward. Her entire life was lived in obedience to God's call. Mary teaches us to live with joy for all we have been given. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, Mary reflects the light of Christ. Like Mary, we are called to reflect Christ's light to the world through our gratitude and generosity.

We pray ... that like Mary, our lives, too, reflect Christ's light to the world through our gratitude and generosity.

## Needed at the Pantry



Vegetable soup, fruit juices, sugar, hot chocolate, men's deodorant, razors, toothbrushes, tea bags, coffee, canned fruit, gravy packets, oil, jelly, bisquick, dish soap, laundry detergent, all purpose cleaner, snacks for kids lunches.

**Please hold your plastic bags—we have plenty!!**

Imagine how Mary felt at the birth of Jesus: excited, awed, frightened. Deep faith was her light in the darkness, for Jesus was born during the night of the year when darkness is the longest.

Your gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul brought light into the darkness surrounding the heart of those living in poverty bringing them the real, lasting, and deep joy of Christmas.

## ✠ Rest in Peace ✠

Jennifer Ristich  
former parishioner, wife of Bruce Ristich  
May they and all the faithful departed  
rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

Pope's Intentions for December:  
For a Life of Prayer

We pray that our personal relationship  
with Jesus Christ be nourished by the  
Word of God and a life of prayer.



## What's Your Catholic Catechism IQ?

"The Catechism of the Catholic Church is a statement of the Church's faith and of Catholic doctrine, attested to or illumined by Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition and the Church's Magisterium. I declare it to be a sure norm for teaching the faith." (Pope St. John Paul II)

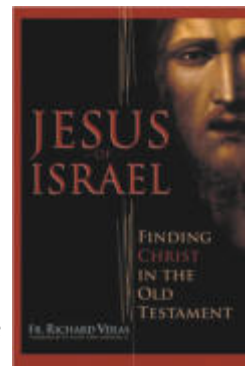
- Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their \_\_\_\_\_ is a crime against God and man.
  - inhabitants
  - food supply
  - animals
  - water supply
- Creating the human race in His own image, God inscribed in the humanity of man and women the capacity and \_\_\_\_\_ of love and communion.
  - responsibility
  - comfort
  - reward
  - control
- Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and \_\_\_\_\_ are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life.
  - complementarity
  - language
  - upbringing
  - divisions
- Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with \_\_\_\_\_ dignity though in a different way.
  - unequal
  - equal
  - incoherent
  - separate
- In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus interprets God's plan strictly. "I say to you that every one who \_\_\_\_\_ at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."
  - shouts
  - calls
  - whispers
  - looks
- The tradition of the Church has understood the Sixth Commandment as encompassing the whole of human \_\_\_\_\_.
  - experience
  - dysfunction
  - sexuality
  - perversion
- Chastity means the successful integration of \_\_\_\_\_ within the person and thus the inner unity of man is his bodily and spiritual being.
  - passions
  - desires
  - sexuality
  - lusts
- Chastity ensures the unity of the person; it is opposed to any \_\_\_\_\_ that would impair it. It tolerates neither a double life nor duplicity in speech.
  - person
  - behavior
  - thing
  - place
- Chastity includes an apprenticeship is self-\_\_\_\_\_ which is a training in human freedom.
  - worship
  - mastery
  - love
  - rejection
- Either man governs his passions and finds peace, or he lets himself be \_\_\_\_\_ by them and becomes unhappy.
  - dominated
  - discovered
  - dignified
  - deluded

Answer Key: 1. a (2314) 2. a (2331) 3. a (2333) 4. B (2335) 5. d (2336) 6. c (2336) 7. c (2337) 8. b (2338) 9. b (2339) 10. a (2339)

### PSR Corner

#### Jesse Tree and Typology?

What is the Jesse Tree? The Jesse Tree is a unique Advent tree that can be very useful for devotional learning about salvation history and characters, (types-typology) prophecies of the Old Testament. The Jesse Tree represents the family tree, or genealogy of Jesus Christ. It tells the story of God's salvation plan, beginning with creation and continuing through the Old Testament, to the coming of the Messiah. The name comes from Isaiah 11:1, "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse (father of David), and a branch from his roots will bear fruit." Each day of Advent a homemade ornament is added to the Jesse Tree, a small tree made of evergreen branches. (Some use their undecorated Christmas tree or some other tree to hang their ornaments.) These symbolic ornaments can each represent a person, place or thing from the Old Testament foretelling of the Christian era.



Compared to the four and one-half billion years of the earth's existence, our life spans are but a wink of time. This could make us feel very insignificant. But the life of Jesus, our contemporary Savior, has given us a sacred dignity. The God of the universe has come into the realm of time and has called us friends.



*We will decorate church about 10:30 Sunday morning.  
Please help us make our parish home beautiful.*

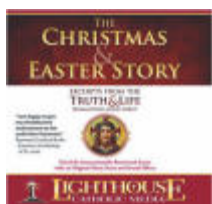
## St. Paul Library / Lighthouse CD Resources

(Note: With close to 4000 items, the Parish Library is located in the Grand Hall past the restrooms. It is open during the week-normal business hours -and works on an honor system. Items from the Lighthouse CD rack are located and available in the Narthex

*Listen to the Bible on FORMED.org.*

*Go to [www.ihm-newmelle.formed.org](http://www.ihm-newmelle.formed.org)*

Experience these beautiful excerpts from the Truth & Life Dramatized Audio Bible New Testament. Endorsed with an Imprimatur and voiced by internationally-renowned actors, this dramatized audio content is enhanced with sound effects and music that make the Christmas and Easter narratives come alive.



This is a nice intro for the Truth & Life audio bible that focuses on the Christmas and Easter Stories, but since the full version of the Truth & Life audio bible is also on FORMED you can listen to the entire New Testament now!

## *From the Lighthouse CD/ Pamphlet Rack—Narthex*

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen's books, tapes, homilies, retreats, and television series have inspired countless souls all over the world. This digitally-mastered presentation combines classic recordings of his timeless reflections on the meaning of the Incarnation of Jesus, mixed with Gregorian Chant and seasonal music. It is sure to become a family favorite!



*I did thoroughly enjoy the relevancy of the presentation. Archbishop Fulton Sheen had a unique way of discussing spiritual matters in a way that entertains and educates at the same time. Will - Montgomery, OH*



Janet Hespen, Youth Minister,  
314-369-6521

- Dec. 25: Have a blessed Christmas
- Jan. 1: Mary, Mother of God, Holy Day Mass 10am
- Jan. 7: **New Beginnings:** Begin Luke 18 planning
- Jan 21: Building Discipleship
- Jan. 28: Luke 18 planning and practice skit. Practice stocks 1 through 4.
- Feb. 4: Luke 18 discussions and practice talks 5 thru 8
- Feb. 11: Luke 18 final preparations
- Feb. 12: Luke 18 setup
- Feb. 13: Luke 18 lock-in Retreat for all IHM 8th graders. Check in at 9am. Ends after Mass on Feb. 14



Many thanks for a successful collection of coats, sweaters, blankets, etc. Someone is warmer because of your giving spirit.  
A blessed Christmas to you all!

## READINGS FOR THE WEEK

- Sun: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:/Rom 16:25-27/  
Lk 1:26-38
- Mon: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Ps 33/Lk 1:39-45
- Tue: 1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd/Lk 1:46-56
- Wed: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25/Lk 1:57-66
- Thu: *Morning:* 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:/Lk 1:67-79
- Fri: *Vigil:* Is 62:1-5/Ps 89/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25  
*Night:* Is 9:1-6/Ps 96/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14.  
*Day:* Is 52:7-10/Ps 98/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18
- Sat: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31/Mt 10:17-22



**Registration Now Open ...** MISSOURI LIFE CARAVAN is now accepting registrations for our bus trip to the annual March for Life in Washington D.C. **Thursday thru Saturday, January 28-30, 2021.** Until all life is protected, we will travel to D.C. to meet with our representatives and peacefully protest against the Supreme Court's decision to legalize abortion. This trip is open to anyone ages 7 and up (chaperones not provided). We depart from several locations in the St. Louis area and we do not stay in hotels as we sleep on the buses. Seats are limited because of COVID-19. The cost is \$230. For more information, to register or to sponsor a rider go to [www.missourilifecaravan.org](http://www.missourilifecaravan.org). Contact us at [mrl.eastern@yahoo.com](mailto:mrl.eastern@yahoo.com) or 314-434-4900.

## The Season of Advent

Last week we mentioned about reading the Bible, particularly the Gospels. If we want to know who God is, we need to know who Christ is. To get to know who Christ is we need to know the Gospels. If we want to know the Gospels, we need to know what preceded them. What preceded them is known as the Old Testament.

The Old Testament has a value of wisdom and insight in and of itself, yet it was primarily intended to prepare for the momentous event of God coming to earth. As the Catechism states in # 522, "The coming of God's Son to earth is an event of such immensity that God willed to prepare for it over centuries. He makes everything converge on Christ: all the rituals and sacrifices, figures and symbols of the "First Covenant".

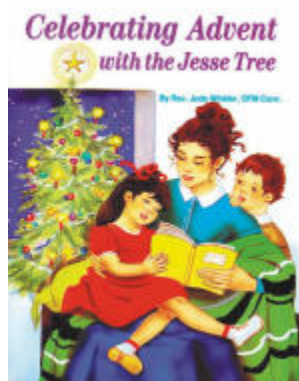
A practical, devotional way of reading about this preparation and understanding all the amazing prophecies and foreshadowings is through the custom known as the **Jesse Tree**. While offered as an Advent devotion, this is something that should permeate all our reading of the Old Testament. This is in fact one of the reasons why we have the Old Testament read each Sunday at Mass, as the Old Testament reading often parallels the Gospel. Consider Jesus as the "new Adam, new Moses, new Joshua, new David, new Solomon, new Jeremiah," etc.



The Jesse Tree is a unique Advent tree that can be very useful for devotional learning about salvation history and characters, prophecies of the Old Testament. The Jesse Tree represents the family tree, or genealogy of Jesus Christ. It tells the story of God's salvation plan, beginning with creation and continuing through the Old Testament, 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. (Some use their undecorated Christmas tree or some other tree to hang their ornaments.) These symbolic ornaments can each represent a person, place or thing from the Old Testament foretelling of the Christian era. Google "Jesse Tree" to find images and patterns.



## 4th Annual Hunt for Hunger

Bring your field dressed deer to Josephville Meat Market, 1363 Josephville Road, Wentzville, for FREE processing as you donate it to Share the Harvest/Hunt for Hunger. Or, ask your local processor if they are participating in the program. Non-hunters can also contribute by donating some ground beef to the program. Contact David or Cathy at 636-299-3291 or cathyneier@aol.com.





## *Blessing of a Christmas Tree*

Christmas is almost here! Have you blessed your Christmas tree yet?

According to custom, the Christmas tree is set up just before Christmas and may remain in place until the Solemnity of Epiphany. The lights of the tree are illuminated after the prayer of blessing.

In the home the Christmas tree may be blessed by a parent or another family member, in connection with the evening meal on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time on Christmas Day.

*When all have gathered, a suitable song may be sung.*

The leader makes the sign of the cross, and all reply "Amen."

The leader may greet those present in the following words:

Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.

Reply: *Amen.*

In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:

My brothers and sisters, amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: His birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.,

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example: Titus 3:4-7 or Ezekiel 17: 22-24.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Reply: *Thanks be to God.*

The intercessions are then said. The leader says:

Let us ask God to send His blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.

Reply: *Lord, give light to our hearts.*

That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Reply...

That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord...

Reply...

That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord...

Reply...

After the intercessions the leader invites all present to say the Lord's Prayer.



The leader then says the prayer with hands joined:

Lord our God,

We praise You for the light of creation:  
the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.

We praise You for the light of Israel:  
the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.

We praise You for Jesus Christ, Your Son: He is Emmanuel,  
God-with-us, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the  
wonder of Your love.

Lord God,

Let Your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree.

May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills  
our hearts.

May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge  
and joy of salvation.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Reply: *Amen.*

The lights of the tree are then illuminated. The leader concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy,  
now and forever.

Reply: *Amen.*

The blessing concludes with a verse from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":

*O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
and death's dark shadow put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee,  
O Israel.*

—from *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*

## Why true obedience is anything but distasteful

*The obedience of Jesus perfectly reflected the religious atmosphere of the family whose head was Joseph. Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." —Luke 1:38*

The Gospels do not relate a single word spoken by Joseph, the husband of Mary. He is a silent, protecting figure standing in the shadows during the Season of Advent, coming into view only in the final days of this season of watching and waiting. And, while we do hear from Mary in the gospels of Luke and John, few of her words have come down to us.

Despite the fact that we hear so little from the parents of Jesus, we can nevertheless recognize one particular virtue that both shared: obedience.

"Obedience" isn't a particularly popular word in our culture, including within the Church. Sadly, too many people have come to associate obedience with some sort of blind submission. Instead, if we look at the history of the word, we see that it comes from two Latin words: *ob* and *audire*, and our English word "obedience" means *to listen* or *to hear*.

This sense of listening doesn't mean that we simply take in and then follow the commands of another person. Obedience like that shown by St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin is a deeper sort of awareness and intentionality. Joseph and Mary listened, yes, but *with their heart*. This is the kind of obedience that we Christians are called to in our relationship with God and with one another.

To say it another way, to be obedient as a Christian is to say, "I love you so much and am so in tune with your needs and desires that words are unnecessary." To get a sense of this, think of married couples who have been together for several years and who can anticipate each other's needs, or a parent who knows what their child is feeling without any words ever having been spoken.



Obedience, in its truest sense, isn't about submission to the will of another. Obedience is about relationships.

As we have journeyed through the Season of Advent, we've heard promises from prophets and priests, we have received admonitions from Saint Paul, urging us to be patient and to hope. More than that, Jesus has reminded that he will come again in judgment and power in the fullness of time to bring about the full realization of Reign of God. These have been days of hope, expectation, waiting, perseverance, and, yes, obedience. Because, like Joseph and Mary who said "yes" to what was asked of them, God has also been asking something of us in these Advent days. And what is it God is asking? For obedience in faith (see Romans 1:5).

In a 1966 Advent reflection, Dorothy Day wrote:

*Faith is required when we speak of obedience. Faith in a God who created us, a God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Faith in a God to whom we owe obedience for the very reason that we have been endowed with freedom to obey or disobey. Love, Beauty, Truth, all the attributes of God which we see reflected about us in creatures, in the very works of man himself whether it is bridges or*

*symphonies wrought by his hands, fill our hearts with such wonder and gratitude that we cannot help but obey and worship.*

Ultimately, our Advent journey has been a time of discipleship. We are being asked to trust that God has kept—and continues to keep—the promises made to our spiritual ancestors so many centuries ago. And part of this trust is our awareness of how Christ is present and active among us today.

As Christmas approaches, ask St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin to help you cultivate a spirit of humble obedience so that you are able to discern what it is God is asking of you in these holy days. Offer a prayer of thanks for the ways that you experience the presence and power of Emmanuel—God-With-Us.

*What gifts have you received during this days of watching and waiting? What gifts have you given to others to help them grow in faith in this Advent season? How can you take on obedience as a way of life beyond the days of Advent and Christmas?*

Words of Wisdom: "What was the influence of Joseph's—and Mary's—obedience on the formation of the child Jesus? Did they, in the child's presence, speak about the 'angel of the Lord' who visited Joseph three times? ... The obedience of Jesus perfectly reflected the religious atmosphere of the family whose head was Joseph. Concerning his obedience to the heavenly Father, Jesus would declare later on, 'I always do what is pleasing to him' (John 8:29)."

Lucien Deiss, C.Ss.P.,  
*Joseph, Mary, Jesus*

Brother Silas Henderson, SDS



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