

Preparing Ourselves

John the Baptist was the first prophet in Israel in more than 200 years. Some even thought he was the Messiah. He preached with authority, and people traveled from all over Judea to hear his words.

His message was to prepare the way. As any pope, king, or president announces his intentions in advance so preparations can be made, John was sent to announce the coming of the Son of God and to tell the people how to prepare.

Jesus comes to the world in three different ways: first, when he was born in Bethlehem and walked the earth; second, when he comes again at the end of time; and finally, when he comes to us constantly in the sacraments and liturgy. Preparing for his arrival is

For Reflection

How does John the Baptist's call to repentance challenge me? Where do I need to ask for God's mercy?

not a matter of fixing roads, painting houses, or organizing a parade. Our king desires a transformed spirit: "Not by appearance shall he judge..." John warns that we cannot

hide behind the faith of another; each one of us needs to show the fruits of our own faith. Yet we need not fear, for he who comes has every intention of saving us. He appears as Lord and invites us to accept his kingdom. He is also a teacher who shows us the way back to the Father. Above all he is a friend who forgives unconditionally and accepts our sincere yet feeble efforts.

This week, reflect on this image of John the Baptist, heed his words, and imitate him: Cry out for repentance, cleanse others from their sins, and prepare the way to God.

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC



Piece: *Saint John the Baptist*
Artist: Pietro Lorenzetti, circa 1329
Location: Vatican Pinacoteca, Room II

"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" (Matthew 3:9).

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

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SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – DECEMBER 4, 2016

The Sanctuary Lamp Burns In Memory of Ruth & Sal Monastero

★ ★ MASS INTENTIONS ★ ★

SAT 5:15 PM LIVING & DECEASED PARISHIONERS
 SUN 7:30 AM SR. JANINE TURZECKA
 9:00 AM MARIE & EDWARD SCHLEIFENHEIMER
 11:00 AM RITA KLANG
 MON No MASS
 TUE 7:00 PM HANNAH GOLGANSKI
 WED 7:30 AM SPECIAL INTENTION
 7:00 PM HENRY NEWMAN

THU 7:30 AM ELEANOR PAINTER
 9:00 AM ICA MASS – LIVING & DECEASED PARISHIONERS
 7:00 PM HENRY & MONICA KAPPES
 FRI 7:30 AM LUCY GAZZERRO
 SAT 5:15 PM LIVING & DECEASED PARISHIONERS
 SUN 7:30 AM MARY DOLAN
 9:00 AM CHARLES WAGNER
 11:00 AM ANTONIO BARLETTA

NEXT WEEK AT A GLANCE

SCRIP: Zubik 5:15pm Pisarek 7:30am Kasperowicz 9:00am Carvalho 11:00am Citrano

<u>DAY</u>	<u>MASS</u>	<u>LECTOR</u>	<u>COMMENTATOR</u>	<u>ALTAR SERVERS</u>
SAT	5:15pm	Mary Schwendt	Jason Marino	Meghan Grieco, Ronni McClelland, Sidney Wolf
SUN	7:30am	Jim Kaucher	Toni Kaucher	Lilia and Simon Crew, Matthew Lambert
	9:00am	Josephine Hohl	Isabelita Santos	Sarah Forkin, Ally and Jacob Santos
	11:00am	Mary Ann Cotter	Mary Gray	Nick Donnelly, Chris and Lyndsay Surkosky

Second collection next week is the Religious Retirement Fund

Dear Parishioners,
 As we begin the Holy season of Advent in preparation for Christmas, I invite you to set time aside to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Confessions are heard every Saturday from 4:00 to 5:00pm.
 Our Advent Parish Penance Service will be held on Monday, December 19th at 7:00pm. On that occasion, visiting priests will be available to hear confessions and impart God's pardon and peace. As always, be assured of my continued prayers for you and your family.

Monsignor John McCann

Remember in your prayers the sick of our parish: Marco Fiato, Bryan Fiato, John & Margaret Kakas, Maryanne Prentice, Tracy Seasholtz, Delores Woy, Alice Arantowicz, Yolanda Marino, Ann Schlott, Kathy Patrick, Joseph & Susan McCorristin, Mary & Phil Morici, Margaret Maccarone, Father Joseph Campion, Dan Casciano, Paisley Stout, Jake Maccarone, William Janda, Madge Butto, Roseann Malcom, Doris Slater, Joan Cronin, Rita Conrad, Rose Osorio, Tony Guilliams, Dolores McCullough, Steve Mammarella, Gloria Richards, Jennifer Pinti, Jane Falcone, Fannie Hunter, Mavrick Laxton, Andrew Martin, The Ravert Family, Harry Wood, Mary Okuniewski, Paul Bringenberg, Joseph Kolenda, Kenneth Barth, Dominic Strock, Bob Hocker, Mike DiScala, Keith Kienle, Tom Kirchner, Helen McDonald, Norma Nanni, Ralph Gullo, Sharon Egolf, Nancy Iezzi, Sonny Motta, John Geiswite, Maria Houck, Joseph Shevenock, Jr., Mildred Mattassa and Ronald Kryman

Congratulate the recently baptized: Agnes Louise Kieffer and her family

Pray for the recently deceased: Frank Bentz, Bianca Rose DiBuonno, Thomas DiCecco

THIS WEEK AT ICC:

Sun	12/04	Social Sunday
Mon	12/05	7:30pm RCIA
Tues	12/06	7:30pm Baptism Class 7:30pm Bell Choir
Thurs	12/08	7:30pm Adult Choir
Fri	12/09	6-9pm SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP
Sat	12/10	4-5pm Confession Women's Society Cookie Sale

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Please note there will be No Mass on Monday, December 5th.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, a Holy Day of Obligation and the Patronal Feast of our parish church is Thursday, December 8th. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered at 7:30am, at 9:00am with the children of Immaculate Conception Academy, and at 7:00pm. The Vigil Mass will be on Wednesday, December 7th at 7:00pm.

ICA HSO 12 Days of Christmas Raffle

December 5 - \$75 Target Gift Card

December 6 - \$100 WaWa Gift Card

December 7 - \$75 Giant & \$50 Redners Gift Cards

December 8 - \$150 Visa Gift Card

December 9 - \$175 Toys-R-Us Gift Card

December 12 - \$200 Amazon Gift Card

December 13 - \$225 Target Gift Card

December 14 - \$275 Visa & \$75 Texas Roadhouse Gift Cards

December 15-\$300 Amazon&\$75 Texas Roadhouse Gift Cards

December 16 - \$400 Visa & \$75 Texas Roadhouse Gift cards

Tickets \$5 each or \$20 for five.

Tickets are available at Social Sunday and in the school office. Winners are announced at www.ichso.org.

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP will meet Friday, December 9th, 6-9pm. All of the high school students of our parish are welcome to attend for an evening of service, prayer, food and fun. Please note the earlier start time of 6pm due to a service project we will be completing. The Youth Group will meet in the social hall. Bring a friend!

Women's Society Annual Christmas Cookie Sale is before and after all Masses December 10th/11th. If you enjoy baking cookies, we would love to include your favorites in our beautiful arrangements. We also accept cookies marked, packed and sold by the dozen. Please consider baking an extra batch or two to share with us. Cookies for assortments must be dropped in the social hall 9-11am on December 10th. We also accept donations before and after all Masses.

Bereavement Grief Support Group will meet December 13th, 7-8pm in the Parish Office Building, lower level. Please enter from the back across from the playground. Our group offers an opportunity to work through the grieving process with the help and support of others who have experienced this difficult journey. Info call Pat at 610-775-1892 or Toni at 610-404-1389.

Simbang Gabi Christmas Novena Masses:

Holy Rosary Church, 3rd & Franklin Sts., Reading - December 7-15 at 7pm - Bring your favorite dish to share for our party on the last night. **ALL ARE WELCOME!**

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE 2016

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

PENANCE SERVICE

Monday, December 19 - 7:00pm

CHRISTMAS MASSES

CHRISTMAS EVE

Saturday, December 24 - 4:00pm, 7:00pm, Midnight

CHRISTMAS DAY

Sunday, December 25 - 9:00am, 11:00am

NEW YEAR'S MASSES

NEW YEARS EVE

Saturday, December 31 - 5:15pm

NEW YEAR'S DAY - SOLEMNITY OF MARY

Sunday, January 1 - 7:30, 9:00am, 11:00am

OPLAKTY, Blessed Christmas Wafers, are now available in the church narthex. This custom is many centuries old and finds its origins in the countries of Eastern Europe, particularly Slovakia, Poland and Lithuania. The breaking and sharing of the Christmas wafer at the holy supper on Christmas Eve was a sign of friendship, love and forgiveness among family members and friends. At the holy supper an extra place setting was placed on the table symbolizing that Jesus Christ was the unseen Guest in the home. As you prepare to celebrate Christmas this year, be mindful of the many customs and traditions which remind us of the true meaning of Christmas - the birth of Jesus Christ, the Savior.

During the holy season of Advent, there will be a book drive donation box in the narthex. New and gently used children's books ranging from pre-school/early reader books through middle school reading levels will be accepted. The books will be donated to Commonwealth Catholic Charities and distributed to families with children who have been displaced from their homelands because of war, violence and terrorism. For more information or any questions, please contact Erin at efhannon33@gmail.com.

The Christmas in Birdsboro Planning Team is seeking volunteers to help park cars during the Christmas in Birdsboro event on December 10th, 3-8:30pm. Each volunteer will be paid \$50 for their time of service to our community. To sign up as a volunteer, contact the Borough Manager, Aaron Durso, by December 6th at 610-582-6030 or adurso@BirdsboroPA.org.

Emmanuel: An Eternal Gift for Us Today - Immaculate Conception will host a special Christmas concert on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 8th, 7pm. Join us as we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany with favorite carols and inspired readings for the whole family. This free concert will be performed by talented local musicians, including Sandy Bach on the organ and piano, the Bella Musica String Quartet, Pat DeWald on the flute, and Jaylynn Ritter on the trumpet. Refreshments will be served afterwards in the social hall. Come and enjoy some homemade wassail, egg nog, and other tasty treats. A free will offering will be taken up to benefit the Soup Kitchen at the Kennedy House in Reading.

Calendar

Monday

December 5
Advent Weekday
Is 35:1–10
Lk 5:17–26

Tuesday

December 6
Advent Weekday
Is 40:1–11
Mt 18:12–14

Wednesday

December 7
St. Ambrose, Bishop
and Doctor of the Church
Is 40:25–31
Mt 11:28–30

Thursday

December 8
The Immaculate
Conception of the
Blessed Virgin Mary
Gn 3:9–15, 20
Eph 1:3–6, 11–12
Lk 1:26–38

Friday

December 9
Advent Weekday
Is 48:17–19
Mt 11:16–19

Saturday

December 10
Advent Weekday
Sir 48:1–4, 9–11
Mt 17:9a, 10–13

Sunday

December 11
Third Sunday of Advent
Is 35:1–6a, 10
Jas 5:7–10
Mt 11:2–11

Dear Padre,

I have two questions about Christmas.

First, why do we use red and green during the season? Second, what does the word *Noël* mean?

The Church uses colors as symbols to mark the change of liturgical seasons and to remind ourselves of religious themes. White (or gold) is actually the liturgical color for the Christmas season, and violet (purple) for the weeks of Advent.

Red and green were associated with a wintertime feast that predates Christianity. However, since these colors have additional meanings for Christians that relate to this time of year, they are still in use and commonly associated with the holiday (holy) season. December 28 is the feast of the

Holy Innocents, the male children of Bethlehem who were slaughtered

by Herod's order. Its color is red, the color of martyrs. Poinsettia flowers and candy canes, popular Christmastime accents, also

prominently feature red. Green—most visibly found in evergreen trees and wreaths—is the color of life.

During Advent, it witnesses to the imminent birth of Jesus, which brings hope for new and eternal life to the world.

In response to your second question, *Noël* is an old French word meaning “Christmas,” “the Christmas season,” or “yuletide.” The French word comes from the Latin for “birth” or “birthday.” As we all know, Christmas is the time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus and the Incarnation of our Lord and Savior.

From *Liguorian*, December 2004
sundaybulletin@liguori.org



PHOTKA / SHUTTERSTOCK



A Word From Pope Francis

“When we contemplate the life of [John the Baptist], so great, so powerful...we discover a mystery....We are offered [a model of] a Church ever at the service of the Word.”

—Morning Meditation, June 24, 2013