

God's Family

This isn't a typical Christmas image, but stick with me! There is a renewed interest in genealogy as many seek to understand who and where they came from. These days, websites and genetic services make it easier than ever to track down our ancestry and examine our roots.

In tribal African art, one's ancestors have always been revered. In this piece from the Vatican Museums' missionary collection, we find the figure of a tribal leader, sculpted to resemble the trunk of an olive tree. The tree's veins are smaller individuals, each one united to another, representing the generations that have come before him and formed his bloodline. They are his "tree of life" that reaches back into the soil of history.

Judeo-Christian culture also values ancestors and highlights the roots of Jesus' heritage. The Messiah was to come from the line of David, which reaches back to Abraham, our father in faith. Behind each name there is a story, a family, God's action mingled with the person's hopes and failures. Each life flows and unites into one strong tree. And God watches over each and every one, preparing for the person of his Son. Today we celebrate the culmination of this plan. Jesus Christ,

For Reflection

Are you letting God work in you and your family so he can continue these blessings?

our Savior, is born today!

This protracted lineage invites us to look back and up: back on the events that have filled the tapestry of our personal and family

history and up to see that God has brought us to know him and to accept his salvation. His providence works in and through it all.

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Piece: *The Tree of Life*

Artist and date unknown

Location: Vatican Ethnological Museum



*"Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary.
Of her was born Jesus who is called the Messiah (Matthew 1:16)."*

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

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NATIVITY OF THE LORD - DECEMBER 25, 2016

*The Sanctuary Lamp Burns In Memory of Annette Brennan
 Also In Memory of Herbert Fecera - 5th Anniversary*

☆☆ MASS INTENTIONS ☆☆

SAT 4:00 PM CHRISTMAS ENVELOPE INTENTIONS
 7:00 PM CHRISTMAS ENVELOPE INTENTIONS
 SUN MIDNIGHT LIVING & DECEASED PARISHIONERS
 7:30 AM **No Mass**
 9:00 AM CHRISTMAS ENVELOPE INTENTIONS
 11:00 AM CHRISTMAS ENVELOPE INTENTIONS
 MON **No Mass**
 TUES 7:00 PM THE HARBACH FAMILY

WED 7:30 AM MICHAEL BASCELLI
 THURS 7:00 PM CATHERINE TRUCKLEY
 FRI 7:30 AM ROBERT MULDOWNNEY
 SAT 5:15 PM ANNETTE BRENNAN
 SUN 7:30 AM CATHERINE ALDERMAN
 9:00 AM THEONA KOZAK
 11:00 AM LIVING & DECEASED PARISHIONERS

NEXT WEEK AT A GLANCE

SCRIP: There will be no SCRIP sales on December 31/January 1. We acknowledge with gratitude all of our volunteers who assist with the sale of SCRIP. Thank you for your kindness.

DAY	MASS	LECTOR	COMMENTATOR	ALTAR SERVERS
SAT	5:15 PM	Jason Marino	Jennifer Stuart	Alex, Jason and Mark Carvalho
SUN	7:30 AM	Michelle Marley	Sean Werner	Amanda Marley, Anna and Daniel Schlegel
	9:00 AM	Isabelita Santos	Stephanie Myers	Taylor Moyer, Diego and Hannah Santos
	11:00 AM	Bob Newman	Susan DiGuglielmo	Rachel Barnes, Adam and Carlina Davis

Second collection next week is the Solemnity of Mary Collection

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

Remember in your prayers the sick of our parish: Marco Fiato, Bryan Fiato, John & Margaret Kakas, Maryanne Prentice, Delores Woy, Alice Arantowicz, Yolanda Marino, Ann Schlott, Kathy Patrick, Joseph & Susan McCorristin, Mary & Phil Morici, Margaret Maccarone, Dan Casciano, Jake Maccarone, William Janda, Madge Butto, Roseann Malcom, Doris Slater, Joan Cronin, Rita Conrad, Rose Osorio, Tony Guilliams, Dolores McCullough, Steve Mammarella, Gloria Richards, Jane Falcone, Fannie Hunter, Andrew Martin, Mary Okuniewski, Paul Bringenberg, Kenneth Barth, Dominic Strock, Bob Hocker, Mike DiScala, Keith Kienle, Norma Nanni, Ralph Gullo, Nancy Iezzi, Sonny Motta, Joseph Shevenock, Jr., Mildred Mattassa, Deb Petras, Paul Milshaw, John Geisewite, Ronald Kryman, Anthony Neishloss, Anna Swiezak, Margarie & Walter Hansen, Arlene Shirley, Mark McDonald and Louis Tamburro
 Pray for the recently deceased: Dr. Jerome Buzas
 Welcome our new parishioners: Ms. Judy Rinda and Mr. & Mrs. Scott Bishop
 Pray for the recently baptized: Joshua Patrick Tulish, Owen Michael Viteo, Braxton Rocco Robert Darr and their families

THIS WEEK AT ICC:

Sat 12/31 4-5pm Confession

WHAT'S HAPPENING

PARISH OFFICE NOTICE

Our parish office will be closed throughout the week in observance of Christmas and the New Year. The parish office will reopen on Tuesday, January 3, 2017.

MARCH FOR LIFE - On Friday, January 27, 2017 our parish family of the Immaculate Conception is sponsoring a bus to the March for Life to be held in Washington D.C. The bus will depart the ICC parking lot at 8am arriving in Washington D.C. for the noon rally and 1pm March for Life. It is anticipated that the bus will return at approximately 9pm. The cost is \$30 per person. For additional information or to reserve a seat, please contact Angela Peterson at 610-582-6993 or by e-mail at arpeterson@windsteam.net.

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS – Any 8th grade student in Catholic, public or private school who is registered in a parish of the Diocese of Allentown is eligible to apply for a one-year partial scholarship of \$1,000 to be applied to tuition at Berks Catholic High School. Scholarships are awarded on the basis of participation in activities, service to school and community, special honors, leadership positions, academic achievement and the recommendation of the pastor. For an application please contact Immaculate Conception Academy Principal, Mrs. Patricia Tarquinio at 610-404-8645 or Mrs. Dawn O'Donnell, Director of Religious Education at 610-582-3880. Application Deadline is Friday, January 20, 2017.

Immaculate Conception Academy Aftercare is looking for someone willing to work several hours per week from 3pm to 6pm. Must have completed "Protecting God's Children" and obtain required background checks and clearances. Call Laura DeFalco at 610-463-8157.

Saints Shoot Out and Cheerleading Clinic - December 28, 9am-noon. Boys and Girls Grades K-8. For more information and a registration form visit www.berkscatholic.org

During the Christmas season, 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.

Berks Catholic Open House, January 29, 2017 2-4pm

A terrific opportunity to meet faculty, administration and current students. Our clubs and activities are on display to give you a glimpse into what we are about. Open House is an exciting experience seeing our community together.

Bulletin Deadline – Wednesday at Noon
bulletin@icbvm.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.

SCRIP FACTS - Do you realize that you can reduce your child's tuition at Immaculate Conception Academy, Berks Catholic High School or CCD just by buying **SCRIP** to use at stores and restaurants that you go to anyway?

It's as easy as...

1. Bring a check/cash to any weekend Mass or parish office during business hours to buy **SCRIP**.
2. Choose the **SCRIP** you need; basically you are buying a gift certificate. You have just credited yourself 2.5% of the **SCRIP** purchase price toward school tuition or CCD tuition and made a donation to ICC. And it didn't cost you a penny more than what you would have spent anyway! You'll be surprised at how quickly this will add up! You could literally save hundreds of dollars off your tuition!
3. Use the **SCRIP** at the store or restaurant for your purchase. Pay your Kohl's bill or Boscov's bill (at the East store only) with **SCRIP**. **SCRIP** also makes a great gift at holidays, birthdays or anytime!!
4. Meanwhile, ICC keeps a tab on how much credit you have earned. The credit year for school tuition is June 1 through May 31 and is deducted from tuition for the following school year. For CCD, the credit year is March 1 through the end of February for the following year.
5. Feel free to choose any family to receive your credit! If no family is chosen, the church receives the credit.

SCRIP is available for Boyer's Family Market, Boscov's, Redner's, Applebee's, Giant, Red Lobster/Olive Garden/Bahama Breeze/LongHorn Steak House/ Seasons 52, Kohl's and Flynn & O'Hara in many different denominations. **SCRIP** is available at the parish office or at each weekend Mass. For info, call Rita at 610-582-2411.

*Please save cancelled stamps for the MSC Sisters.
Place in the basket on the SCRIP Table.*

Redner's Save-A-Tape – In order for ICC to receive the 1% credit 1) you must use your Pump Perks card 2) please submit the entire receipt and 3) do not use a highlighter on the totals as this erases the number.

MOVING OUT OF THE AREA?

Please call 610-582-2411 so we can say goodbye and update our records.

Calendar

Monday

December 26

St. Stephen,
the First Martyr

Acts 6:8–10; 7:54–59

Mt 10:17–22

Tuesday

December 27

St. John,
Apostle and Evangelist

1 Jn 1:1–4

Jn 20:1a, 2–8

Wednesday

December 28

The Holy Innocents,
Martyrs

1 Jn 1:5–2:2

Mt 2:13–18

Thursday

December 29

Fifth Day in the
Octave of Christmas

1 Jn 2:3–11

Lk 2:22–35

Friday

December 30

The Holy Family of
Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Sir 3:2–6, 12–14 or

Col 3:12–21 or 3:12–17

Mt 2:13–15, 19–23

Saturday

December 31

Seventh Day in the
Octave of Christmas

1 Jn 2:18–21

Jn 1:1–18

Sunday

January 1

Solemnity of Mary,
the Holy Mother of God

Nm 6:22–27

Gal 4:4–7

Lk 2:16–21

Dear Padre,

Should a Catholic school teach both evolution and creation?

A Catholic school should teach in a style that conveys Catholic Tradition. It also cannot ignore the insights and questions or the disagreements and misunderstandings that occur when the arts and sciences rub shoulders with Catholic teachings and perspectives. Our belief in God's creation of humanity and the scientific understanding of evolution are not fundamentally at odds with one another, as long as our Catholic vision of life is preserved. However, "faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God" (*Humani Generis*, 36).

Science is the careful study of details and theories that leads to the development of generalized statements (or hypotheses). If so many scientists, many of whom are people of faith, can intellectually justify the creation of humans through an evolutionary process, this itself shows the application of thought and discovery to deepen an understanding of our world and ourselves.

We need our faith to harmonize with other branches of knowledge, and this means respecting their proper domain of research and methods. It would seem prudent for a Catholic school to teach evolution in science class and the stories of creation in religion class. A calm, reasoned discussion that respects the limits of each discipline and espouses a unified search for God's revealed truths would be best. The attitude should be that evolution and creation are not mutually exclusive but complementary explanations for our human origins that arise from different perspectives.

From *Dear Padre: Questions People Ask*, Liguori, 2003
sundaybulletin@liguori.org



A Word From Pope Francis

"History has always been accompanied by the Lord!...In him was revealed the grace, the mercy, and the tender love of the Father....He has pitched his tent in our midst."

—Homily, December 24, 2013 (Midnight Mass)

Immaculate Conception Academy and Early Education Program is now enrolling students for the 2017-18 school year!

Immaculate Conception Academy provides a 21st century education for students of all faiths in preschool through 8th grade. Our dedicated faculty and staff strive to prepare and inspire our students to be the future leaders of our ever changing world.



ICA offers a challenging academic curriculum which features S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education as well as art, music, and physical education. Students in grades 5-8 have access to Chromebooks to enhance their classroom learning and research throughout the school day.

ICA's Early Education Program offers our youngest students an academically enriched curriculum aimed at preparing them emotionally, cognitively, spiritually and socially for elementary school and beyond. ICA offers extended and full day programs for preschool and pre-K, as well as a full day kindergarten program.



Open House Dates

Sunday, January 29 1pm-3pm

Wednesday, April 12 9am-Noon

"Be an ICA student for a Day"

April 25,26,27 9am-1pm

To RSVP for an event, or to schedule an

individual tour, please contact

Adele Reilly, Advancement Director

610-404-8645 or

adele.reilly@icaknights.org

Visit us at www.icaberks.org