

John's Joyful Preaching

Why go into the desert and cry out? The voice in the desert is lonesome, heard only by those who go there to listen. Let's leave our routines, go into the spiritual deserts of our hearts, and listen today.

The words of preparation John preaches are joyful. Why? First, to be told you are on the wrong path is good news. Have you ever followed your GPS to the wrong place because of an address typo? *"It would have been nice to know this before I traveled across town to the wrong place,"* you thought.

Second, it is joyful to be told what makes your beloved happy, because you then know what will please him or her.

Good news! John's preaching points us to our destination in Jesus and to what makes him happy. The rose vestments worn by our priests today symbolize that joy. Notice in the painting of Isaiah, he is wearing that color, too.

Another interesting detail is that Isaiah is holding his finger in the book while looking back at a young cherub, who in turn points to his neighbor. Isaiah's finger is in the Gospels, where he is the most quoted prophet of the Old Testament. Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah, and John the Baptist quotes Isaiah's prophesy about "the voice crying out in the desert."

Perhaps the cherub behind Isaiah is John the Baptist. And perhaps the barely visible baby to whom the little John the Baptist is pointing represents Christ, the reason for our joy.

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC



Piece: *Prophet Isaiah*, 1508-1512

Artist: Michelangelo

Location: Sistine Chapel

For Reflection

What makes you joyful? Would those same things make Jesus joyful, too? Do I point people toward the true source of joy with my words and example?

I will rejoice heartily in the LORD, my being exults in my God.
(Isaiah 61:10)

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

905 Chestnut Street, Douglassville, PA 19518 secretary@icbvm.org ccd@icbvm.org bulletin@icbvm.org

Rev. Msgr. John B. McCann Pastor
 Rev. Leo S. Stajkowski.....In Residence
 Deacon Paul J. Hiryak, Deacon James A. Bardi,
 Deacon Charles A. Giordano
 Parish Office610 582-2411
 Parish Religious Education/CCD ..610 582-3880
 Parish Preschool610 404-8645
 Parish Website.....www.icbvm.org

Immaculate Conception Academy.....610 404-8645.....www.icaberks.org
 Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator:
 Wendy S. Krisak, M.A. NC, LPC
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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – DECEMBER 17, 2017

*The Sanctuary Lamp Burns In Memory of Josie & Gus Fredriksen
 In Memory of Herb Fecera – 6th Anniversary*

★ ★ MASS INTENTIONS ★ ★

SAT	5:15 PM	Elizabeth Russoniello	FRI	7:30 AM	Josephine, Peter & John Bogus
SUN	7:30 AM	Marie & Edward Schleifenheimer		9:00 AM	ICA Mass – Herb & Tessie Fecera
	9:00 AM	Living & Deceased Parishioners	SAT	5:15 PM	Josie & Gus Fredriksen
	11:00 AM	Father Francis Straka	SUN	7:30 AM	Dec'd Members of Evans Family
MON	7:30 AM	Reverend David Karns		9:00 AM	Living & Deceased Parishioners
TUES	7:00 PM	Mary Ehrgood		11:00 AM	Rita F. Kline
WED	7:30 AM	Helen & Frank Janiszewski		4:00 PM	Christmas Envelope Intentions
THURS	7:00 PM	Anthony Volpicini		7:00 PM	Christmas Envelope Intentions
				MIDNIGHT	Living & Deceased Parishioners

NEXT WEEK AT A GLANCE

There will be no SCRIP sales on December 23/24. 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	5:15PM	Joe Bailey	Jennifer Stuart	Caitlyn Bailey, Rachel and Sarah Forkin
SUN	7:30AM	Dan Sweeney	Sean Werner	Mason and Morgan Cambria, Samantha Reitnour
	9:00AM	Kevin Creamer	Stephanie Myers	Adam, Carlina and Marielle Davis
	11:00AM	Bob Newman	Barbara Romig	Eliana and Simon Crew, Michael DiScala

Second Collection Next Week is for Debt Reduction

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 Dear Parishioners,
 During 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 4:00-5:00pm.
 Our Advent Parish Penance Service will be held on Monday, December 18th 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, Margaret Kakas, Delores Woy, Alice Arantowicz, Yolanda Marino, Ann Schlott, Joseph & Susan McCorristin, Mary & Phil Morici, Dan Casciano, Jake Maccarone, Madge Butto, Joan Cronin, Rose Osorio, Steve Mammarella, Dominic Strock, Bob Hocker, Mike DiScala, Anthony Mattassa Sr, Deb Petras, Ronald Kryman, Anna Swiezak, Margarie & Walter Hansen, Rita Dougherty, Lou Franco, Lucy Doney, Virginia Marks, Ken Rumler, Mark Vignone, Justine Mattassa, Harry Wood, Tony Guilliams, Fannie Hunter, John LeFosse, Robert Thomas, Theresa Lynch, Mark McDonald, Dante Stetina, Roseann Malcolm, Nancy Iezzi, Charles Reppert, Helen McDonald, Curt Miller, Anna DiGuglielmo, Frank Desiderio
 Pray for the departed: Jennie Manegold
 HOSPITAL VISITATIONS: Monsignor McCann, Deacon Hiryak, Deacon Bardi and Deacon Giordano visit our parishioners who are hospitalized, in nursing homes or homebound regularly. If you or a member of your family is hospitalized, please call the parish office at 610-582-2411.

THIS WEEK AT ICC:

Mon	12/18	2pm Bereavement Support Group 7pm Advent Penance Service 7:30pm RCIA
Tues	12/19	7:30pm Bell Choir
Thurs	12/21	7:30pm Adult Choir
Sat	12/23	4-5pm Confessions

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Our parish office will be closed Friday, December 22nd through Tuesday, January 2nd in observance of Christmas and the New Year.

Discover/Rediscover Catholicism - Join us on Monday evenings for a better understanding of our Catholic Faith. The topic for December 18th is "The Blessed Trinity" with Deacon Paul Hiryak. In observance of the Christmas Season, RCIA classes will resume January 8, 2018 when Msgr. McCann will discuss the "Liturgical Prayer of the Church." Classes begin at 7:30pm in the office building lower level meeting room. All are welcome. Contact the office with questions at 610-582-2411. The RCIA team wishes everyone and their families a Happy and Blessed Christmas Holiday.

You May Be Wondering...

Question: This year, the 4th Sunday of Advent (December 23/24) comes right before Christmas. Do we have to come to Mass twice?

Answer: Yes. This is on Jesus' gift list this year.

Question: How can we fulfill our Holy Day obligations?

Answer: We have four options. Come to Mass: (1) Saturday PM & Sunday PM (Christmas Eve) (2) Saturday PM & Monday AM (Christmas Day) (3) Sunday AM & Sunday PM (4) Sunday AM & Monday AM

Question: Will the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God also be a Holy Day of Obligation?

Answer: No. New Year's Day is not a Holy Day of Obligation.

TOYS FOR TOTS – The mission of the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program is to collect new, unwrapped toys and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in our community.

Immaculate Conception Academy is a drop off location and will be collecting **toys through December 20th**. Items can be dropped off at ICA, Monday through Friday, 8am-3:30pm. There is also a box in the narthex for Sunday donations. Organized by ICA Mission Representatives. Call 610-404-8645 with questions.

ICA is partnering with Burlington Coat Factory's **WARM HEARTS & WARM COATS**. We are collecting gently used coats **through January 5th** which will be distributed locally to families in need. Coats can be dropped off at ICA, Monday through Friday, 8am-3:30pm.

Bereavement Support Group will meet on **December 18th at 2pm** (note afternoon time change) in the lower level (rear) of the parish office. We welcome anyone grieving the loss of a loved one. For information call Pat at 610-775-1892.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE 2017

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

PENANCE SERVICE

Monday, December 18 - 7:00pm

CHRISTMAS MASSES

CHRISTMAS EVE

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

CHRISTMAS DAY

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

NEW YEAR'S MASSES

NEW YEAR'S DAY – SOLEMNITY OF MARY

Monday, January 1 - 9:00am

A Special Christmas Gift for You. The parish Esto Vir Men's group is presenting each family with a copy of Matthew Kelly's book, "Perfectly Yourself." We hope it will encourage everyone in their 2018 faith journey and help folks discover the incredible dream God has for each of us. Books may be found at the ends of the pews. Please take one copy to share with your family. Merry Christmas!

The Women's Society thanks all the bakers, as well as all those who supported us by purchasing the delicious and beautifully wrapped Christmas cookies, last weekend. It was a great success with all profits going to the church. We wish everyone a merry and blessed Christmas and New Year.

Also, if anyone would like **Christmas note cards** (featuring pictures of our church) or hometown collectibles of our church, please call Marsha at 610-385-6319.

OPLAKTY, Blessed Christmas Wafers, are available in the church narthex. This custom is many centuries old and finds its origins in the countries of Eastern Europe. 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.

Coach Bingo - February 10th, 6pm – Social Hall. Doors open 5pm. You must be 21 to attend and it is BYOB and BYOS. Tickets: \$25 each or \$200 a table. Tickets can be purchased at <https://icahsoknights.wixsite.com/store/coach-bingo>

"I warmly welcome all Catholics 'home for Christmas.' No matter how long since your last visit, your spiritual home is ready and waiting to welcome you home! I invite all of my brother priests, deacons, religious, and practicing Catholics, through their example of holiness, perseverance, and joy, to be a source of encouragement to their brothers and sisters away from their spiritual home, and to invite one inactive Catholic back home for Christmas. Please know of my prayers for a blessed and Merry Christmas to you and your families!"

- Bishop Alfred A. Schlert

Calendar

Monday

December 18
Advent Weekday
Jer 23:5-8
Mt 1:18-25

Tuesday

December 19
Advent Weekday
Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a
Luke 1:5-25

Wednesday

December 20
Advent Weekday
Is 7:10-14
Lk 1:26-38

Thursday

December 21
Advent Weekday
Sg 2:8-14
Lk 1:39-45

Friday

December 22
Advent Weekday
1 Sm 1:24-28
1 Lk 1:46-56

Saturday

December 23
Advent Weekday
Mal 3:1-4, 23-24
Lk 1:57-66

Sunday

December 24
Fourth Sunday of Advent
2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12,
14a, 16
Rom 16:25-27
Lk 1:26-38

Dear Padre,

Once again I feel overwhelmed by the commercial hype of Christmas. Any suggestions for keeping a Christ-centered Christmas amid the shopping and gift expectations?

It's our Advent task to make Christ, Emmanuel, present in our lives. We do this by centering on the love and peace that is within us and offering that to others. By staying centered and at peace, we'll find the Christ Child even in the midst of the mania!



SHUTTERSTOCK: YUGANOV KONSTANTIN

- **Take time to pray.** In Advent, church decorations accent the sense of longing during this season. Make it a part of your schedule to stop in daily for quiet time and prayer.
- **Spend less money.** Buy fewer gifts, ones that you really enjoy buying. Let your family know that you intend to spend less money and want to enjoy your purchasing experience. Ask them to help you select gifts that have meaning.
- **Be inspiring.** Give gifts that focus more on Christ and Christmas. They could be inspirational books, a Christian music CD, or tickets to a Christmas play or concert.
- **Start a tradition.** Make it a point to find a new Christmas tradition from a different culture and adopt that tradition for this season.
- **Volunteer.** Give someone a gift of unexpected kindness, compassion, and unconditional love. Visit the sick, help in a soup kitchen, buy and wrap presents that will be given to the poor.

Source: *Dear Padre: Questions Catholics Ask*, © 2003 Liguori Publications, Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org



A Word From Pope Francis

To celebrate Christmas in a fruitful manner, we are called to pause in "places" of astonishment....The first place is the other, in whom we recognize a brother or sister, because since the birth of Jesus occurred, every face is marked with a semblance to the Son of God. Above all when it is the face of the poor, because God entered the world poor, and it was to the poor, in the first place, that he allowed himself to draw near.

—Angelus, December 20, 2015

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