

Extreme Makeover: Home Edition

King David wants to build God a home! He had first built his own palace and afterward realized that he hadn't built a space for God—a place of worship and family communion.

It is admirable that David wants to give back, but do we have to take care of God or, rather, is it God who cares for us? Obviously, God doesn't need David to build him a house. The whole world is his. Didn't God build up David all along, bringing him to a place where he might consider offering God something in return? It is like children who want to give their parents a gift. First they ask a parent for money or a gift idea. On their own, they cannot give.

God turns the tables on David, saying that God

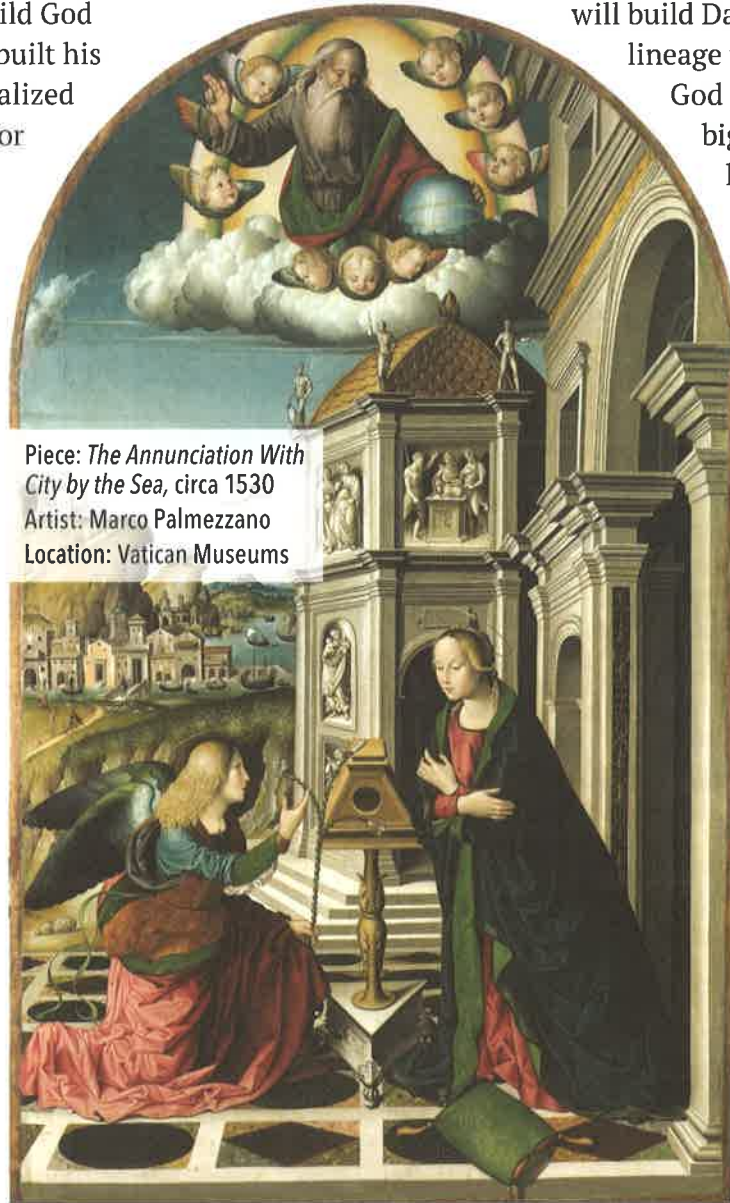
will build David a house—an everlasting lineage to rule over the people.

God will build something much bigger than anything David had ever dreamt of. He will build David a kingdom that will become a nation and give birth to a worldwide universal Church.

In the painting, Mary stands in front of an ornate house. She stands like us, at the entrance, welcoming God's coming. It was her yes that allowed the master builder to enter into our world to begin building this house, which became a Church.

Like Mary, we await Jesus. With her, let us say yes to him, celebrating the one who has established that house where we celebrate today!

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC



Piece: *The Annunciation With City by the Sea*, circa 1530
Artist: Marco Palmezzano
Location: Vatican Museums

For Reflection God wants to give me more than I ever dreamed of. Is giving myself to him in prayer a way to let him accomplish that dream in me? How can I offer hospitality in my heart, my home, my work and my Church so that others can encounter God's love?

The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.
(2 Samuel 7:11)

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
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 Wendy S. Krisak, M.A. NC, LPC
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 Diocese of Allentown...www.allentowndiocese.org

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – DECEMBER 24, 2017

*The Sanctuary Lamp Burns In Memory of Mary & John Butler
 In Memory of Annette Brennan and God's Blessings on Elaine Thorpe*

★ ★ MASS INTENTIONS ★ ★

SAT	5:15 PM	Josie & Gus Fredriksen	TUES	No Mass	
SUN	7:30 AM	Dec'd Members of Evans Family	WED	7:30 AM	Michael Bascelli
	9:00 AM	Living & Deceased Parishioners	THURS	7:00 PM	Dolores McCullough
	11:00 AM	Rita F. Kline	FRI	7:30 AM	Annette Brennan
	4:00 PM	Christmas Envelope Intentions	SAT	5:15 PM	Bob Muldowney
	7:00 PM	Christmas Envelope Intentions	SUN	7:30 AM	Florence & Orlando LeBresco
MIDNIGHT		Living & Deceased Parishioners		9:00 AM	Living & Deceased Parishioners
MON	9:00 AM	Christmas Envelope Intentions		11:00 AM	Thomas F. Kirchner
	11:00 AM	Christmas Envelope Intentions			

NEXT WEEK AT A GLANCE

There will be no SCRIP sales on December 30/31. 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	Mary Schwendt	Jason Mariano	Bridget Ottinger, Mya Salaneck, Sidney Wolf
SUN	7:30AM	Amanda Marley	Dennis Piontek	Andrew Kurtas, Josh Piccarretta, Luke Voelker
	9:00AM	Pat Fessler	Josephine Hohl	Avery Kelly, Taylor Moyer, Hannah Santos
	11:00AM	Becky Shemanski	Jim Keaveney	John Babiec, Carson Endy, Sean Purretta

Second Collection Next Week is for Religious Ministries

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE 2017

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

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, Deb Petras, Ronald Kryman, Anna Swiezak, Margarie & Walter Hansen, Rita Dougherty, Lou Franco, Lucy Doney, Virginia Marks, Ken Rumler, Mark Vignone, 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, Frank Desiderio

Pray for the departed: Dominic Facenda, Deacon John Allison, Anthony Mattassa, Sr., Anna DiGuglielmo, Megan Alsdorf, Lucille Schiel, Carmela Assetto

Welcome our new parishioners: Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Silvestri, Ms. Dawn Iezzi

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:

Sat 12/30 4-5pm Confessions

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Our parish office will be closed through Monday, January 1st in observance of Christmas and the New Year.

"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

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.

ICA NEWS – The students of Immaculate Conception Academy would like to thank our school, parish and community families for their generous support of our Christmas Mission Initiatives. This past week, **Toys for Tots picked up 6 overflowing boxes of toys**, which will help bring Christmas to more than 3,000 children in our area. Our Cookie Walk raised over **\$1200 for parish families in need**. Your kindness makes an impact not only on those we help, but it inspires our students to continue living our school mission of Love, Learning and Leadership. **Thank you again and Merry Christmas!!!**

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.

For any youth group member (junior or senior high) looking for a fun activity during your Christmas break please join us for bowling at Jay Lanes, December 28th, 1-3pm. The cost is \$12 and includes bowling fees, pizza, and drinks. Please email Mrs. Stewart at thestewarts@dejazzd.com if you would like to join us.

JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP will meet Friday, January 5th, 7pm to 9pm in the lower level meeting room of the church office. All of the teenagers in our parish in grades 7 and 8 are welcome to attend for an evening of fun, food, games, prayer & praise. Bring a friend!

March for Life – January 19th – ICC is sponsoring a bus to the March for Life in Washington, DC. For information, call Angela at 610-582-6993.

Have you noticed the new sign at the top of our parish driveway on Chestnut Street (Route 345)? It highlights Immaculate Conception Academy and its mission of Love, Learning and Leadership. We are most grateful to the Healey Education Foundation which provided funding for the sign through its prestigious SAGE Award. The Healey Education Foundation was founded by entrepreneur and philanthropist Robert T. Healey, Sr. to advance Catholic Education. The Foundation uses its energy, resources and passion as a catalyst for change to ensure the future of Catholic schools. Catholic schools enrich students' lives and strengthen the communities in which they live. Thanks too, to our parishioners and friends who volunteered their time, talents, equipment and machinery to install and illuminate the sign. Registration for the 2018-2019 academic year is now underway at Immaculate Conception Academy including our full-day kindergarten program. For additional information, please contact Adele Reilly at adele.reilly@icaknights.org or 610-404-8645. You are always welcome to take a tour of Immaculate Conception Academy. Visit ICA virtually at www.icaberks.org. Follow us on Facebook at [Facebook/Immaculate Conception Academy](https://www.facebook.com/ImmaculateConceptionAcademy).

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. Christine Foley at 610-404-8645 or Mrs. Dawn O'Donnell, Director of Religious Education at 610-582-3880. **Application Deadline is February 16, 2018.**

Life Ad Campaign of 2018

Please demonstrate your support for the ***Life Ad 2018 Campaign*** sponsored by the Catholic Community of Berks County by signing your name to Immaculate Conception's list of supporters. This Life Ad will be published in the Reading Eagle on January 22nd, the anniversary of the legalization of abortion in the United States.

Your donations not only publish this Ad but also provide financial support to St. Mary's Shelter. Please consider giving us your signature support. It is important to raise the awareness that many people support the homeless pregnant women.

Thank you for taking a public stand against the tragedy of abortion.

Note: To participate in this endeavor please complete the form below and drop it in the collection basket by January 7, 2018. The suggested donation is \$6 per name. If making your donation by check, please make it payable to Immaculate Conception Church.

Please PRINT name clearly. We can only use the following examples: John Smith, John and Mary Smith or The Smith Family.

Name: _____

Donation: _____

Deadline: January 7, 2018

Calendar

Monday

December 25
Christmas

Is 52:7-10

Heb 1:1-6

Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Tuesday

December 26
St. Stephen,

The First Martyr

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59

Mt 10:17-22

Wednesday

December 27

St. John,

Apostle and Evangelist

1 Jn 1:1-4

Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Thursday

December 28

The Holy Innocents,
Martyrs

1 Jn 1:5-2:2

Mt 2:13-18

Friday

December 29

Fifth Day in the
Octave of Christmas

1 Jn 2:3-11

Lk 2:22-35

Saturday

December 30

Sixth Day in the
Octave of Christmas

1 Jn 2:12-17

Lk 2:36-40

Sunday

December 31

The Holy Family of
Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or

Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3

Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17

or Heb 11:8, 11-12,

17-19

Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40

Dear Padre,

An antiphon in the Christian breviary states, “The angel Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary, who was engaged to be married to Joseph” (December 20). Was she married or not when Jesus was conceived?

Much of the confusion is due to what constituted marriage at the time of Jesus.

Mary was betrothed to Joseph when she was found to be pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. During the usual betrothal period of a year, the woman remained with her family. However, the bond between the couple was already as permanent as marriage. That’s why Mary was legally known as Joseph’s wife, even though they didn’t yet live together or have all the rights belonging to a husband and wife. In fact, the arrangement during betrothal was so binding that it could only be terminated in divorce.

Moreover, in that patriarchal society, a betrothed woman who had sexual relations with anyone other than her husband was accused of adultery. Had Joseph ended this betrothal in disgrace, Mary would have been deprived of marriage for the rest of her life and dependent on her extended family upon her father’s death. But Joseph was an upright man who intended to divorce her quietly without publicly stating the reason, in order to spare Mary and her family’s reputation. That’s when an angel appeared to him in a dream and told him to have no fear about taking Mary as his wife, for the Child was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20).

Fr. Byron Miller, CSSR,
Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org



A Word From Pope Francis

[Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem]...were alone, in a strange land, just the three of them. Then, all of a sudden, people began to appear: shepherds, people just like them who had to leave their homes to find better opportunities for their families. Their lives were also affected by harsh weather, but by other kinds of hardship, too. When they heard that Jesus had been born, they went to see him. They became neighbors....they became a family to Mary and Joseph, the family of Jesus. This is what happens when Jesus comes into our lives....Faith brings us closer. It makes us neighbors.

—Address in Bañado Norte, a slum in Paraguay, July 12, 2015

Immaculate Conception Parish Men's Group
Esto Vir - Be a Man
Better Man, Better husband, Better Father



This month we explore how all men are called to holiness. We will look at our vocation as lay people and our duty to the apostolate (to strive to embody the teachings of the Church and to share the gift of the Catholic faith). To accomplish this we are called to educate ourselves to better evangelize the people we encounter in our lives.

We will discuss practical ways to best answer God's call to both holiness and evangelization.

On Saturday 1/6/2018 at 9 AM in the Immaculate Conception meeting room downstairs in the church office, listen to a stimulating presentation, by men of our parish, on their journey to understanding God's plan for their happiness. There will be a light breakfast starting at 8:30 AM.

Visit us on Facebook at
<http://fb.me/EstoVirCMG>

