



St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 22, 2019

Parish Mission

We are one Church: loving Jesus, serving Jesus, and sharing Jesus.

Parish Vision

We are a vibrant Catholic church serving a diverse community in a safe and welcoming environment where we care for all people along their faith journey.

Core Values

Discipleship • Hospitality
Serving • Worship

Weekend Masses

Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 7:30, 9:00, 10:45 a.m.,
3:00 p.m. (Spanish)

Weekday Masses

Monday - Friday 6:30 a.m.
Wednesday 5:15 p.m.
Thursday and Friday 8:00 a.m.

Confessions

Saturday 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.
or by appointment

Be With Us

Emmanuel, soon we will celebrate your birth,
the day God came crying and laughing, a child in our midst.

On this day we celebrate that you are with us,
you have always been with us, and you want all people to be with you.

Help us entrust our lives to you, to belong to you alone.

Be with us as we answer your call to be humble and holy.

Keep us as your brothers and sisters, as children of your Father,
no matter how often we step away from you.

Stay always by our side so that we will be with you forever in your kingdom.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Fulfillment

Today's Readings: Isaiah 7:10-14; Psalm 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 (7c, 10b); Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-24. When King Ahaz and the people of southern Israel were under attack, the king sought help from a foreign power. The prophet Isaiah told him to trust in God instead. Isaiah even offered proof of God's protection, but the king refused it. Ahaz probably suspected that if he trusted in God, his life would change in a way he would not like.

Like King Ahaz, Joseph found himself in what looked like an impossible situation. Even if he discreetly divorced Mary, everyone would find out why. Unlike King Ahaz, however, when Joseph is given the chance to entrust himself to God's plan, he takes it. He bravely brings his betrothed into his home. By doing so, Joseph fulfills two prophecies. He receives the sign promised to an ancient king, and he incorporates the unborn child of the virgin into his family line, the line of King David.

Although Ahaz failed to trust in his Lord, God vowed to remain with his people. God's enduring presence takes a startling turn in the house of Joseph, for the child is more than a son of David; he is also, as St. Paul writes, "Son of God in power." The child is Emmanuel, God living in the midst of his people as one of his people.

Yet this child belongs not only to Jews, but to everyone. And everyone belongs to him. In Jesus, God fulfills his plan of salvation. In Jesus, God calls us to entrust ourselves to him, to become holy, and to belong to him forever.

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1913 Ritter Drive • Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63701
573-335-7667 • Fax 573-335-0034 • www.svcape.com
Serving the Catholic Community since April 9, 1836

• Mass Intentions •

Monday, December 23 Saint John of Kanty
6:30 am Stella Prost ☩

Tuesday, December 24

6:30 am Living and Deceased Members
of the Stephen Arnzen Family
4:00 pm Lou Hannaford ☩
6:00 pm Ray and Geneva Viox ☩
11:00 pm Cantoni and VanGennip Families

Wednesday, December 25

The Nativity of the Lord

8:00 am Gail Seiler ☩
10:00 am Ola Mae Diebold ☩
12:00 pm St. Vincent de Paul Parish Family
(Bilingual)

Thursday, December 26 Saint Stephen

6:30 am Albert Heuring ☩

Friday, December 27 Saint John

6:30 am Harold Mitts ☩

Saturday, December 28

The Holy Innocents

6:30 am Frank Bucher ☩
5:00 pm Living and Deceased Members
of the McMeel and Davis Families

Sunday, December 29

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

7:30 am Living and Deceased Members
of the Jack Johnson Family
9:00 am Georgianna Ressel ☩
10:45 am St. Vincent de Paul Parish Family
3:00 pm Louie and Dorothy King ☩
(Bilingual)

Parish Office

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When he discovered that Mary was with child, Joseph resolved to end their engagement with as little disgrace as possible. But obedient to the voice of God, he changed those plans and became instead the protector of the child Jesus and his mother, Mary. God grant that I may be as open to the leading of the Holy Spirit!

Confessions before Christmas

“Prepare the Way of Lord” by making a Confession! This is the best gift you can give to yourself and to your family during these days leading up to Christmas. Confessions will be offered on the hour starting on Friday, December 20. (“On the hour” means that the priest will be in the confessional starting at the top of the hour and remain there for 10 minutes. If no one is there, the priest will leave and return at the next hour.) Below are the times for confessions.

Saturday, December 21, at 12:00, 3:00, 4:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 22, at 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00 p.m.

Monday, December 23, at 12:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00 p.m.

Christmas Decorating

Decorating the church for Christmas will take place this Sunday, December 22, after the 3:00 p.m. Spanish Mass. Individuals will be needed to carry trees from the basement as well as climbing ladders. Any help will be appreciated! For information, contact Diana Harold at 573-382-0281.

Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. • 6:00 p.m. • 11:00 p.m.

Christmas Day

8:00 a.m. • 10:00 a.m. • 12:00 noon (Bilingual)

Mary, Mother of God (Holy Day)

New Year's Eve, December 31

5:15 p.m.

New Year's Day, January 1

8:00 a.m. • 10:00 a.m. • 12:00 noon (Bilingual)

On Christmas, all parishes of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau will be conducting a collection to help fund the education of seminarians and help to meet the needs of retired priests. This is an opportunity to show gratitude for those who have and those who will serve the diocese. You are asked to use Faith Direct or the envelope in your envelope packet.



Christmas Gifts for Birthright

If you wish to share with a Birthright baby during this Christmas season, gifts will be collected in the gathering area at all Christmas Masses. Most items collected will be used in layettes given to mothers just before their babies are born. **There is an immediate need for new sleepers (sizes 0-3 and 3-6 months) and baby bottle brushes.** Birthright is also in need of new onesies, outfits, and pajamas (sizes 0-3 and 3-6 months), small fleece blankets, receiving blankets, baby quilts, baby afghans, bibs, burp cloths, diapers (size 3-6), baby lotion and wash (15 oz.), bottles (4 oz. slow flow), Enfamil formula, sippy cups, hooded towels, washcloths, baby hygiene items, small board books, small stuffed animals, teething toys, pacifiers, breastfeeding supplies, feminine hygiene pads, new or gently used maternity clothing (XL-XXXL), and nursing bras. Baby clothing should be for boys or girls. Your generosity is appreciated.

Christmas Cards for Priests, Sisters, Seminarians

As you write your Christmas cards this year, remember the priests, sisters, and seminarians who served St. Vincent Parish in the past.

Father Milton Ryan, CM

Holy Trinity Parish
3826 Gilbert Ave.
Dallas, TX 75219

Father Charles Prost, CM

Saint Catherine Laboure Parish
9740 Sappington Road
St. Louis, MO 63128

Father Derek Swanson, CM

St. Vincent de Paul Parish
621 W. Adams Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90007

Father David Hulshof

Our Lady of the Lake Parish
203 Vaughn Drive
Branson, MO 65616

Father Rahab Isidor

St. Lawrence Parish
503 7th Street
Monett, MO 65708

Father David Baunach

Immaculate Conception Parish
607 Davis Street
New Madrid, MO 63869

Father Bobby Manso

Congregation of the Mother of the Redeemer
1900 Grand Avenue
Carthage, MO 64836

Father Francisco "Paco" Gordillo

Sacred Heart Parish
P.O. Box 470
Webb City, MO 64870

Mr. Alexander Sutachan

Sacred Heart School of Theology
P.O. Box 429
Hales Corner, WI 53130

Mr. David Kiblinger, SJ

196A Foster Street
Boston, MA 02135

Sister Theresa Davey, OSU

P.O. Box 670
Springfield, IL 62705

Sister Marianne Mullen, OSU

300 Forby Road
Eureka, MO 63025

Sister Mary Ellen Neeves, OSU

801 Fairdale Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63119

Sister Susan Kienzler, OSU

801 Fairdale Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63119

• The Week Ahead •

Monday, December 23

12:00 pm / 5:00 pm / 6:00 pm Confession
7:00 pm / 8:00 pm Confession
7:00 pm Prayer Ministry

Tuesday, December 24

Wednesday, December 25

Merry Christmas!

Thursday, December 26

Friday, December 27

Saturday, December 28

7:00 am Men's Cursillo Group
3:30 pm Confession

Sunday, December 29

9:00 am Children's Liturgy of the Word

In observance of the Christmas and New Year holidays, the parish office will be closed Tuesday, December 24, Wednesday, December 25, Tuesday, December 31 (12:00 noon), and Wednesday, January 1.



Year-End Charitable Giving

More than half of all charitable giving is made during the last two months of the year. Why? It is the time of year when thanks is expressed for the many blessings received. It is the time to review finances and do tax planning.

As you consider your end-of-year tax planning, please consider a gift to St. Vincent de Paul Parish. Any donation received or postmarked by December 31 can reduce your income taxes and make a positive difference to the parish.

For information, contact the parish office at 573-335-7667.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Congratulations to Larry and Loretta Jansen as they celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on December 27!

Prayer Requests

Please remember the hospitalized, the homebound, the sick of the parish and those who care for them.

Readings

Christmas (Vigil)

Isaiah 62:1-5 • Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
Matthew 1:1-25

Christmas (Night)

Isaiah 9:1-6 • Titus 2:11-14 • Luke 2:1-14

Christmas (Dawn)

Isaiah 62:11-12 • Titus 3:4-7 • Luke 2:15-20

Christmas (Day)

Isaiah 52:7-10 • Hebrews 1:1-6 • John 1:1-18

December 29, 2018

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 • Colossians 3:12-21
Luke 2:13-15, 19-2

Collection - December 15, 2019

Collection	\$ 20,387.85
E-Tithing	\$ 482.00
Total	\$ 20,869.85
Weekly Budget	\$ 31,450.00
Year-to-date Difference	-\$ 51,101.58

Please be a good steward of God's gifts by using Faith Direct or by using your contribution envelope.

• Christmas Ministries •

Tuesday, December 24 • 4:00 p.m.

Servers Nicholas Bledsoe, Nick Hess, Charlotte Spence
Lectors Jeri Spence, Karen Roggow
Eucharistic Ministers Rhonda Cuba, Rick Cuba, Allen DeYong, Chris Janet, Jill Janet, Don Kaverman, Sue Kaverman, Hugh Protzel, Susan Todt, **Volunteer**
Sacristans Karen Hagan, Pat Hagan
Hospitality **Volunteers**
Musicians Christmas Ensemble

Tuesday, December 24 • 6:00 p.m.

Servers Eli Clubbs, Lily Clubbs, Nicholas Dial
Lectors Brooke Clubbs, Joan Walter
Eucharistic Ministers Flo Johnson, Ben Pfau, Monica Pfau, **Volunteers**
Sacristans Tony Buehrle, Diane Himmelberg
Hospitality **Volunteers**
Musicians Christmas Ensemble

Tuesday, December 24 • 11:00 p.m.

Servers Jackson Jones, Juliette Jones, Jacob Mahnke
Lectors Michael Kim, Jordan Huff
Eucharistic Ministers Jill Janet, Chip Janet, Kelly Johnson, Debra Bollinger, Judy Hanschen, Mike Hanschen, Patricia Heisserer, Ralph Hendrickson, Robert Janota, Ken Kiefer, Vicki Kim, Bobbi Palmer, Sherry Thomas
Sacristans **Volunteers**
Hospitality Natalie Jones, **Volunteers**
Musicians Parish Choir

Wednesday, December 25 • 8:00 a.m.

Servers **Volunteers**
Lectors Barb McKeon, Sara Edgerton
Eucharistic Ministers Del Elfrink, Becki Essner, **Volunteers**
Sacristans Jane Unterreiner, Wayne Unterreiner
Hospitality **Volunteers**
Musicians Christmas Ensemble

Wednesday, December 25 • 10:00 a.m.

Servers Colby Bunger, **Volunteers**
Lectors Tom Higgins, Anita Tygett
Eucharistic Ministers Cody Bunger, Kim Bunger, Mary Higgins, Elizabeth Rolwing, **Volunteers**
Sacristans John Edwards, Pat Edwards
Hospitality **Volunteers**
Musicians Christmas Ensemble

If you would like to take up the offertory gifts at one of the weekend Masses in the upcoming months, please contact Debbie Wells at the parish office or email her at stvincentcares@gmail.com.

Catholic Mission Trip

You can put your faith into action on a Catholic Mission trip! Immaculate Conception Parish is planning a mission trip May 30 - June 6, 2020, to General Cepeda, Mexico. This trip will be with the Jeremy and Lisa Nice Family through Family Missions Company. Jeremy, Lisa, and their family are living and serving as missionaries and you can serve alongside them in their ministries. Step outside your routine and encounter Christ! Please contact Meg at 579-2188 or icyouthspirit@gmail.com for more information or with questions. Registration deadline is December 31.

Eucharistic Minister Workshop for New and Current Ministers

If you would like to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (Eucharistic Minister), or you are currently a Eucharistic Minister, please attend one of the upcoming workshops. Each current Eucharistic Minister is requested to attend to be refreshed on the requirements and a few minor adjustments. The workshop will identify the main responsibilities of Eucharistic Ministers before, during, and after each Mass. Those who bring Communion to the homebound, hospitals, and nursing homes are still required to attend a workshop, even if you do not assist at Mass! Each workshop will cover the same material. Contact Father Brian if there are any questions!

The workshop options are:

Tuesday, January 7, 6:30 p.m. in the Church
 Thursday, January 9, 6:30 p.m. in the Church
 Saturday, January 11, 9:00 a.m. in the Church
 Wednesday, January 15, 6:30 p.m. in the Church

Virtus Sessions

The VIRTUS Protecting God's Children is the adult safe-environment program being offered by the Diocese of Springfield-Cape. The Diocese requires all adult employees and volunteers who have substantial contact with children to attend. Upcoming sessions include:

- **Saturday, January 11**, 9:00 a.m., St. Vincent de Paul, Cape
- **Monday, February 10**, 6:30 p.m., St. Vincent de Paul, Cape
- **Saturday, March 7**, 9:00 a.m., St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Cape

Check availability for additional dates/locations on the VIRTUS website. To attend a seminar you must pre-register with your full legal name. **Pre-registration is necessary:** Go to www.virtusonline.org and click on the yellow link labeled 'Registration' (you may either view a list of sessions or begin the registration process). To register for a specific session, select 'Begin the Registration Process'. From the pull-down menu, select 'Springfield-Cape Girardeau'. Follow the online prompts, completing the Code of Conduct and your information for a background screening.

47th Annual March for Life

You are invited to attend an amazing pro-life pilgrimage by accompanying hundreds of thousands of marchers in the nation's capital on January 24, 2020. Organized by the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau's Voice for Life lay apostolate, a bus will leave at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 22, from St. Vincent De Paul Church, Cape Girardeau. The mission of Voice for Life (VFL) is to support life from conception to natural death while promoting awareness and conducting advocacy campaigns in accordance with Catholic teaching. Contact Kathleen Keese, kkeese@charter.net or 573-986-3320.

Attention: Adult Catholic Men

You are invited to the Cape Girardeau-area



Thursday, January 23, 2020 • 6:30-9:00 p.m.
St. Vincent de Paul Parish • Cape Girardeau, Missouri

An evening of Adoration, Confession, and a Manly Meal with discussion.

To help plan for food please RSVP to SEMOCatholicManNight@gmail.com,
 SEMO Catholic Man Night on Facebook or 573-837-2556

**If you are interested in helping with this event,
 please contact Tony Buehrle at 573-979-5013.**

Youth Ministry News

Diocesan Youth Conference (DYC)

The Springfield-Cape Girardeau Diocesan Office of Youth Ministry invites **all** high school students to the **DYC 2020** which will be held March 27-29, 2020 in West Plains, Missouri! **Put it on your calendars now!** The theme this year is **"RISE"**. The keynote speakers for the conference will be Paul J. Kim, Carrie Ford, and "American Ninja Warrior" - Father Steven Gadberry. Also, the St. Vincent's house band will be returning! Bishop Rice expects to be with the diocesan youth for the entire weekend, along with several priests, deacons and the beloved seminarians. More information and a registration packet will be available in early 2020. For more info, contact Father Brian or Father Rick.

Ignite Youth Conference

All 8th grade students are invited to attend the **Ignite Youth Conference** on Saturday, March 28, at the West Plains Civic Center in West Plains, Missouri. This **one day** event will begin at 10:00 a.m. and conclude after Mass with Bishop Rice at 5:00 p.m. Lunch is included. Just like last year, St. Vincent de Paul will have a chartered bus to go to the conference. Registration information will be coming in early January, 2020! For more info, contact Father Brian or Father Rick.

Steubenville STL Mid-America Youth Conference

Save the date, **July 10 - 12**, for the 2020 Steubenville Youth Conference in Springfield, Missouri. Registration information will come in early January, 2020! For more info, contact Father Brian or Father Rick.

Low-Gluten Hosts for Holy Communion

Low-gluten Communion hosts are available at all weekend liturgies to those suffering from Celiac Sprue disease. The hosts, made by the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Clyde, Missouri, contain 0.01% wheat gluten. They are accepted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/celiac-disease-and-alcohol-intolerance.cfm>), and are recommended by the journal *Gluten-Free Living* as "perfectly safe" for sufferers of Celiac Sprue disease (Vol. 9, no. 1). The Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau has approved these low-gluten altar breads for use in the Diocese. During a weekend Mass, the minister having the consecrated low-gluten hosts will be in the **center aisle on the left side**. When you approach this minister, just indicate that you need one of these consecrated hosts.

• Weekend Ministries •

Saturday, December 28 • 5:00 p.m.

Servers Colby Bunger, Charlie West, Elle West
Lectors Virginia Sander, Don Kaverman
Eucharistic Ministers Debra Bollinger, Kim Bunger, Jim Govreau, Sue Kaverman, Pat McDonald, Kevin McMeel, Roy Merideth, Tedd Powers, Linda Shaffar, Neal Tanner
Sacristans Donna Buehrle, Tony Buehrle
Hospitality **Volunteers**
Musicians Cheryl Oberhaus, Alan Bruns, Tyler Bruns

Sunday, December 29 • 7:30 a.m.

Servers Kolby Grimes, Emmett Pfeifer, Blake Schreckenberger
Lectors Trent Summers, **Volunteer**
Eucharistic Ministers Chip Janet, Becky Lively, Gerry Strohmeier, **Volunteers**
Sacristans Debra Unterreiner, Steve Unterreiner
Hospitality Lisa Church, Millie Hinkle, Robert Janota, Allen Toole, Anita Toole, **Volunteers**
Musician Dale Haskell

Sunday, December 29 • 9:00 a.m.

Servers Nicholas Bledsoe, Kate Prost, Gabriel Raines
Lectors Sarah Vohsen, Sara Edgerton
Eucharistic Ministers Rhonda Cuba, Rick Cuba, Glenda Irwin, Flo Johnson, Chuck Prost, Michelle Prost, Scott Raines, Lisa Seabaugh, Ginny Wene, Sue Wibbenmeyer
Sacristans Diane Himmelberg, Mike Himmelberg
Hospitality Toni Arnold, Judy Cantoni, Phil Cantoni, Barbara Hess, Bridgett Wengert, Matt Wengert, **Volunteer**
Musician Tom Wenciewicz

Sunday, December 29 • 10:45 a.m.

Servers Hunter Bonham, Julianne Oliver, Charlotte Spence
Lectors Jennifer Smith, Jeri Spence
Eucharistic Ministers Sherry Clark, Linda Gosche, Mary Gosche, Chris Janet, Jill Janet, Vicki Kim, Kathy Mattes, Tim Powderly, Anita Tygett, Amy Young
Sacristans Sara Cook, Tom Cook
Hospitality Jill Bruenderman, Ralph Hendrickson, Lori Powderly, Bridget Ringstaff, Lindsey Ringstaff, Logan Ringstaff, Rebekah Schnurbusch, Bradley Shuh, Rachel Shuh
Musicians Jeffrey Overbey, Nick Hogan

• Job Opportunities •

Principal Opening - St. Francis Xavier School, Sikeston, has an opening for the position of Principal for the 2020-2021 school year. All interested parties must be a practicing Catholic in good standing, be living his/her Catholic faith and a moral life, have experience of teaching in a Catholic School, and preferably have some administrative experience or working towards a degree in Administration. If interested, please contact Father David Dohogne at 573-471-2447 for an application.

Diocesan Superintendent of Schools - The Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau has an opening for Diocesan Superintendent of Schools, effective July 1, 2020. The diocesan school system includes 23 elementary and 3 high schools. Requirements: Practicing Catholic, advanced degree in Educational Administration, certifiable in State of Missouri, and experience in Catholic school administration, preferably on a diocesan level. Ability to promote Catholic mission of the schools is a high priority. Must also be willing to travel throughout the diocese. Competitive salary, excellent health benefits, and retirement based on diocesan guidelines. Send cover letter and resume to Janet L. Smith, Chancellor, 601 S. Jefferson, Springfield, MO, 65806. You may also call 417-866-0841 or email jansmith@dioscg.org to request an application packet.

High School Principal - The Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau is seeking a principal for Notre Dame Catholic High School in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, effective July 1, 2020. Qualified applicant must be an Active Catholic, have Missouri principal certification, have a Master's degree in School Administration (or be working towards it) with 3-5 years of Catholic school experience. Administrative experience preferred.

Please contact Anne Buckley at the Catholic Center, 417-866-0841, abuckley@dioscg.org to request an application packet.

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Foster Care/Whole Health Outreach Christmas project. A special thank you goes to Debbie Baumgart, Julie Schuchardt, Jamie Shaffar, and those who wrapped gifts. Because of your generosity, 136 foster children will be able to enjoy Christmas. A truckload of Christmas gifts was also taken to Whole Health Outreach for teens/families in the Ellington area. Thank you for your generosity!

Faith Direct is the innovative solution that allows you to support St. Vincent de Paul Parish using electronic funds transfer from a bank account or credit/debit card just as you may do now with your mortgage payment, etc. It is simple, safe and convenient. You can begin supporting St. Vincent electronically today by visiting **faith.direct/MO885**. Thank you!

UGLY QUILT NEWS

St. Vincent de Paul Parish and the Ugly Quilt Committee would like to thank all who helped in any way to make the Ugly Quilt ministry a huge success this year. More than 650 ugly quilts have been completed during 2019. The quilts made during Ugly Quilt Weekend, and others made throughout the year, have been distributed to the Warming Center in Sikeston, Salvation Army, Homeless Connect, People's Shelter, Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Branson, Scott City Food Pantry, Veteran's Administration, St. Vincent de Paul Parish in St. Louis, Whole Health Outreach and other locations.

FYI - The Wednesday morning Ugly Quilt Ministry will resume in the new year.



Welcome to St. Vincent de Paul

If you would like to register for the parish, change your address, or simply have questions, please fill out the form and place it in the collection basket. You may also mail it to the parish office at 1913 Ritter Drive, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701. Please free to contact parish office staff anytime during regular office hours, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. You may email the parish office at contactus@svparish or call 335-7667. A parish registration form is available at <http://www.svcape.com/Parish/>.

Name _____

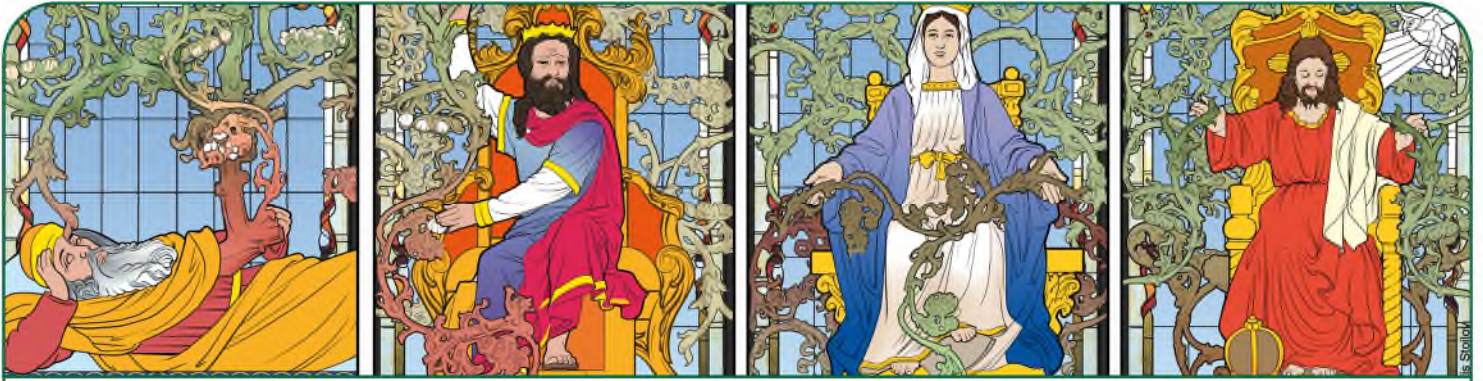
Street Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

- ☐ I am new to Cape Girardeau. ☐ I am new to St. Vincent de Paul Parish.
- ☐ I have been attending St. Vincent Parish and would like to register as a member.
- ☐ Please change my address to the one shown above.
- ☐ I would like to sign up for Faith Direct.
- ☐ I would like to learn more about the Catholic faith.
- ☐ I would like to register my child/children for Parish School of Religion.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 23

Elijah Returns

Our Old Testament ends with the prophecy that Elijah will return to prepare people for God's arrival. It would be several centuries, however, before someone would again speak for God. When John the Baptist began his prophetic ministry, people believed that God was at last speaking to them. The unusual elements of John's birth point to the new era that is about to begin. Find or draw an image of John the Baptist and use it to reflect on the ways people of his era might have reacted to him. *Today's Readings: Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Psalm 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14; Luke 1:57-66.*

Tuesday, December 24

Peace

King David united Israel, brought the nation peace, and upheld God's covenant. God's promise that a descendant of David would reign forever is part of God's promise to bring peace to the world. By calling Jesus the "son of David," we acknowledge that Jesus is the "daybreak from on high" who will "guide our feet into the path of peace." Pray for all the nations of the world, especially those that are in the deadly grip of violence. *Today's Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Psalm 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29; Luke 1:67-79.*

Wednesday, December 25

God's Goodness

When God created the world, he saw that it was good. Sin plunged the world back into darkness, but God did not give up on his creation. Instead, he prepared to bring light to the world once again. Today we celebrate God's advent in our world. We celebrate his affirmation of the goodness of creation and his promise that "all the ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God." Look for the goodness in each moment of this day. Thank God for the goodness that surrounds and fills you. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18.*

Thursday, December 26

St. Stephen, the First of Many

The light has come into the world, but not everyone wants to hear about it. Jesus warned his followers that they would face persecution. Stephen was the first to face persecution: he was brutally killed for proclaiming the Gospel. Thousands have given their lives since then. Their courage shows the unwavering light and truth of the Incarnation. Place the names or images of Christian martyrs you admire by your nativity set. *Today's Readings: Acts of the Apostles 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Psalm 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17; Matthew 10:17-22.*

Friday, December 27

St. John, Evangelist and Apostle

Although St. John does not include stories about Jesus' birth in his Gospel, he emphasizes that Jesus is God's Son in the flesh. Those who believe that Jesus is the fullest and most perfect revelation of God enter into communion with his Father. Through this fellowship with God, all who believe will enter eternal life. St. John longed for people to believe that Jesus was truly God-in-the-flesh, and he rejoiced when they did. Celebrate the Incarnation by praying the Angelus today. *Today's Readings: 1 John 1:1-4; Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; John 20:1a and 2-8.*

Saturday, December 28

The Holy Innocents

The joyful, uplifting stories surrounding the birth of Jesus come to us mostly from the Gospel according to Luke. St. Matthew's stories foreshadow Jesus' passion and death. We're reminded of the threat that looms over Jesus as we hear how King Herod goes to horrific lengths to eliminate a potential rival. Not only did King Herod walk in darkness, he even tried to destroy the light itself. Confess the ways you still walk in darkness, and ask God to forgive you and bring you back into the light of Christ. *Today's Readings: 1 John 1:5-2:2; Psalm 124:2-3, 4-5, 7b-8; Matthew 2:13-18.*



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