



# St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

**Second Sunday of Advent**  
**December 8, 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

## *Busy Waiting*

*Today's Readings: Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Romans 15:4-9; Matthew 3:1-12.* John the Baptist warned people to change their lives or be excluded from God's kingdom. His water ritual was a way for people to show that they believed him, but it wasn't the only sign they were to give. When some Jewish religious leaders said they wanted to be baptized, John demanded that they prove it. These leaders thought that, simply because they were Jewish, God would include them in his kingdom.

We cannot claim that our Christian Baptism guarantees us a place in God's kingdom, either. In the Second Reading, St. Paul makes it clear that although God has extended salvation to all, both Jews and Gentiles must treat one another with patience, mercy, and love. Everyone who wants to live in a world without violence or pain, danger or devastation, must surrender to God's Spirit, just as Jesus did.

Sometimes we think of Advent as a season of waiting for God, but John the Baptist reminds us that God is waiting for us, too. God waits for us to blossom into holiness, to spring up with deeds of love. If we don't get busy preparing for God's arrival, "the ax lies at the root of the trees." But if we demonstrate our sincere desire to turn toward the Lord, we become signs for others to follow. And then, with Christ in our midst, "the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord" and God's kingdom "shall be glorious."

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**1913 Ritter Drive • Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63701**  
**573-335-7667 • Fax 573-335-0034 • [www.svcape.com](http://www.svcape.com)**  
*Serving the Catholic Community since April 9, 1836*

## • Mass Intentions •

### Monday, December 9

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
6:30 am Living and Deceased Members of the  
St. Vincent de Paul Women's Council

### Tuesday, December 10

6:30 am Bertha Langston ☩

### Wednesday, December 11

Saint Damasus I

6:30 am Jan Eichhorn ☩  
5:15 pm Blaine and Lucille Swan ☩

### Thursday, December 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe

6:30 am Rural Salinas Family  
8:00 am Living and Deceased Members of the  
Charles Grojean Sr. Family

### Friday, December 13

Saint Lucy

6:30 am Gene and Vera Rhodes ☩  
8:00 am Douglas Overbey (living)

### Saturday, December 14

Saint John of the Cross

6:30 am John Toenjes, Jr. ☩  
5:00 pm Ruth Glaus ☩

### Sunday, December 15

Third Sunday of Advent

7:30 am Francis and Lucille Grojean ☩  
9:00 am St. Vincent de Paul Parish Family  
10:45 am Hayden Carrington ☩  
3:00 pm Maria Juana Aceves ☩  
(Bilingual)

## • Prayer Requests •

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

#### Parish Office

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#### Father Rick Jones, Pastor

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#### Father Brian Straus

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*We must be good stewards of God's gifts to us, receiving them gratefully and cultivating them with care, lest we be the ones about whom John the Baptist speaks today, cautioning us, "Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."*

## Women's Council Bake Sale



After all Masses this weekend, the Women's Council is hosting a bake sale. Some items available will be packaged for gift giving. This is an excellent opportunity to pick up gift items for friends, co-workers and service personnel. Please be generous and support the efforts of the Women's Council.

## Secular Franciscan Order

**Second Sunday of Each Month • 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.**  
**Saint Francis Medical Center • St. Agatha Room**

*The Secular Franciscan Order is laity following the Rule St. Francis wrote, approved by the Pope, to support one another in living a simplified life - from Gospel to Life from Life to Gospel. Come and see! Contact Anita Tygett at 573-335-1538.*

## Novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe

Join in celebrating the Novena (9 days prior) of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas. The Novena began on Tuesday, December 3, and continues through Thursday, December 12. At each Novena the Rosary will be prayed along with special prayers of intercession to Our Lady of Guadalupe. After each Novena there will be a time for refreshment and celebration!

The Novenas will continue to take place at the following times in church:

Sunday, December 8, at 2:00 p.m.

Monday, December 9, at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 10, at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 11, at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 12, at **5:30 a.m.**

## Novena a La Virgen de Guadalupe

Participe en la celebración de la Novena (9 días antes) de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Patrona de las Américas. La Novena comienza el Martes 3 de Diciembre y continúa hasta el Miércoles 12 de Diciembre. En cada Novena se rezará el Rosario junto con oraciones especiales de intercesión a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Después de cada Novena habrá momentos de refresco y celebración!

La Novena se lleva a cabo en los siguientes tiempos en la iglesia:

Domingo, 8 de Diciembre a las 2:00pm

Lunes, 9 de Diciembre a las 7:00pm

Martes, 10 de Diciembre a las 7:00pm

Miércoles, 11 de Diciembre at las 7:00pm

Jueves, 12 de Diciembre a las **5:30am**

***A volunteer is needed to wash, dry, and press the corporals, purificators, and towels used during weekly Masses. Right now this commitment would only include the fifth weekend of the month (four times a year). If you are interested in this ministry, please call the parish office at 335-7667.***

## May She Rest in Peace

Sympathy is extended to the family of  
**Vicki Moschner**, stepmother of Cindy Miller.

*May she and all the souls of the faithful departed,  
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*



## Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

In celebration of the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the St. Vincent Parish family is invited to attend the 3:00 p.m. Mass. After Mass, a fiesta will take place in the parish center. If you are able, please bring a dessert. Everything else will be provided. All are welcome!

## La Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Haga planes para asistir a las misas en honor a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Nuestra principal celebración parroquial se llevará a cabo el Domingo, 8 de Diciembre a las 3:00pm en la Misa. Después de la Misa en el centro parroquial, se llevará a cabo una fiesta. Si usted es capaz, por favor traiga un postre para la fiesta... todo lo demás será proporcionado. ¡Todos son Bienvenidos!



## NDRHS Annual Concert

Notre Dame Regional High School's Band and Mixed Chorus will perform this Sunday, December 8, at 7:00 p.m. in the Notre Dame Cafetorium.

The Annual Concert, Men's, Treble, and Select Choir performance will take place at 7:00 p.m. next Sunday, December 15, at Old St. Vincent Church. All are invited to this performance. Alumni choir members are encouraged to attend and participate in the "finale."

## Mañanitas to Our Lady of Guadalupe

**Thursday, December 12**

Morning Praise and Mass will take place on Thursday, December 12 at 5:30 a.m. in church. This will include the Rosary and songs of praise to Our Lady of Guadalupe. The regular 6:30 a.m. Mass will be bi-lingual this morning.

## Mañanitas a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

**Jueves, 12 de Diciembre**

La alabanza y Misa de Mañana se llevará a cabo el Jueves 12 de diciembre a las 5:30am en la iglesia. Rosario y algunas canciones de alabanza a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se llevará a cabo alrededor de las 5:30am. Nuestra Misa regular de 6:30am será bilingüe esta mañana.

## • The Week Ahead •

### Monday, December 9

7:15 am St. Vincent de Paul Society  
7:00 pm Our Lady of Guadalupe Novena  
7:00 pm Prayer Ministry

### Tuesday, December 10

6:30 pm Harvesting Our Tears  
7:00 pm Our Lady of Guadalupe Novena

### Wednesday, December 11

9:00 am Wednesday Morning Bible Study  
9:00 am Mass at Veterans Home  
3:00 pm Divine Mercy Holy Hour  
4:00 pm Centering Prayer  
5:45 pm PSR  
6:00 pm Wednesday Evening Bible Study  
6:30 pm RCIA  
7:00 pm Our Lady of Guadalupe Novena

### Thursday, December 12

5:30 am Mañanitas  
9:00 am Maxine's Shareable Wearables  
(9:00 - 11:00 am)  
7:00 pm St. Gerard's Circle

### Friday, December 13

9:00 am Friday Women's Bible Study

### Saturday, December 14

7:00 am Men's Cursillo Group  
9:00 am Maxine's Shareable Wearables  
(9:00 - 12:00 noon)  
3:30 pm Confession

### Sunday, December 15

9:00 am Children's Liturgy of the Word  
4:30 pm Baptismal Prep  
4:30 pm Confirmation Prep (High School)



**Happy Birthday to  
Deacon Mark who will  
celebrate his birthday  
on Sunday, December 15.**

## Readings - December 15, 2019

Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10 • James 5:7-10  
Matthew 11:2-11

## Collection - December 1, 2019

Collection	\$ 22,146.50
E-Tithing	\$ 482.00
Total	\$ 22,628.50
Weekly Budget	\$ 31,450.00
Year-to-date Difference	-\$ 53,506.10

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

## REMEMBER A LOVED ONE AT CHRISTMAS

During the upcoming Christmas season, you are welcome to honor a loved one while making a contribution toward Christmas decorations. An ornament in your loved one's honor will be hung on a Christmas tree in the gathering area and his/her name will be posted next to the tree. **Place your donation in the collection basket next weekend or return to the parish office by Monday, December 16, along with the following information.**

Name of loved one \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \_\_\_\_\_ Person making donation \_\_\_\_\_



## • Ministries •

### Saturday, December 14 • 5:00 p.m.

**Servers** Jacob Brown, Addison Craig, **Volunteer**  
**Lectors** Brook Clubbs, Kevin McMeel  
**Eucharistic Ministers** Debra Bollinger, Tim Coad, Barbara Hagler, Judy Hanschen, Mike Hanschen, Lynne Karnes, Ken Kiefer, Roy Merideth, Mark Springer, Jim Welk  
**Sacristans** Karen Hagan, Pat Hagan  
**Musicians** Teresa Maurer, Mike Kohlfeld

### Sunday, December 15 • 7:30 a.m.

**Servers** Landon Alpers, Alexander Godbey, Kate Prost  
**Lectors** Sarah Vohsen, Tom Higgins  
**Eucharistic Ministers** Del Elfrink, Becki Essner, Mary Higgins, Robert Janota, Gary Lively, Marilyn Lively  
**Sacristans** Trish Buelow, Debra Unterreiner, Steve Unterreiner  
**Hospitality** Marilyn Bell, Millie Hinkle, Natalie Jones, Rae Anne Kloss, Cheryl Klueppel, **Volunteers**  
**Musicians** Lenny Kuper, Marlene Glenn, Jane Schnurbusch, Bailey Schnurbusch

### Sunday, December 15 • 9:00 a.m.

**Servers** Colby Bunker, Jackson Debrock, Silvia Schallberger  
**Lectors** Bobby Dean, Rick Cuba  
**Eucharistic Ministers** Peggy Berryhill, Rhonda Cuba, Alan Essner, Denise Essner, Mary Graves, Alex Harold, Diana Harold, Bonita VanGennip, Jerry Welker, Dottie Worley  
**Sacristans** Donna Buehrle, Tony Buehrle  
**Hospitality** Kim Bunker, Maria Gates, Barbara Hess, Jean Hillman, Pat Hillman, **Volunteers**  
**Musicians** Lenny Kuper, Jenny Schade

### Sunday, December 15 • 10:45 a.m.

**Servers** Nolan Green, Lainey Huck, Sha're Phelps  
**Lectors** Roger Arpin, Fred Meystedt  
**Eucharistic Ministers** Duva Arpin, Calvin Garner, Susy Gutierrez, Kathy Mattes, David Mueller, David Palmer, Bridget Ringstaff, Kyle Thoma, Lester Wells, Dotty Wenciewicz  
**Sacristans** Joyce Gibbar, Ken Gibbar  
**Hospitality** Lisa Church, Jennifer Hendrickson, Madeline Hendrickson, Amanda Mitsdarfer, Patrick Mitsdarfer, Lyn Mueller, Jessie Renick, Allen Toole, Anita Toole  
**Musicians** Lenny Kuper, Alan Bruns, Tyler Bruns

*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](mailto:stvincentcares@gmail.com).*



## 📍Same address, now with a NEW look!📍

Check out St. Vincent's newly designed website at the same URL - [www.svcapc.com](http://www.svcapc.com)! The website is now mobile-friendly and has some fun features!

You can submit your cell phone number and email address for upcoming email and text notifications! You can now submit a message to any staff member through the website — just visit the About page. Any ministry can have information easily added to the website if you have additional information about the ministry you lead or are involved in. To do so, please email Kelli Foster at [kceffoster@gmail.com](mailto:kceffoster@gmail.com) or call/text 573-433-4703.

Take a look around the site! Consider submitting a family or event photo to help keep the site updated and personal. Do you have action or group photos showing the vibrancy of St. Vincent Parish? If so, send them to [stvincentcapedigardeau@gmail.com](mailto:stvincentcapedigardeau@gmail.com).

## Lector Workshop

If you have not yet taken advantage of the past week's lector workshops, two additional workshops will be provided. If you are currently a Lector or if you would like to join this ministry, please attend the workshop best suited for your time schedule. Each workshop will cover the same material in helping to identify the main responsibilities of what a "Proclaimer of God's Holy Word" does before Mass, during Mass and after Mass. Qualifications for a Lector include being a registered parishioner at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, have a skill in public reading, be confirmed in the Catholic Church and have a willingness to be part of a Lector workshop. For those who find it helpful, the **Lector's Workbook** will also be given out during each of the workshops. **Workshops will be held in the Church after the 5:00 p.m. Mass on Saturday, December 14, and after the 10:45 a.m. Mass on Sunday, December 15.**

## Baptismal Prep



Parents and godparents are required to attend a baptismal preparation class before a child is baptized in the Catholic faith. The next class is scheduled for Sunday, December 15, at 4:30 p.m. and will be held in the upper meeting room. Please contact the parish office to register for the class and to fill out a baptismal registration form.

IS CATHERINE'S CUPBOARD ON YOUR GROCERY LIST?

## Foster Care/ W.H.O. Christmas Project

If you are participating in the Foster Care/Whole Health Outreach Christmas project and have not returned your gift item, you are reminded to **return your tag with the unwrapped gift item to the designated table in the gathering area this weekend. If you purchased a gift card, please bring it to the parish office early Monday morning.** All gifts must be returned to the parish office by early Monday so they can be checked and recorded before additional shopping and wrapping.

Volunteers are needed to wrap gifts for the Foster Care Christmas project. **If you would like to help, gifts will be wrapped on Wednesday, December 18, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the lower meeting room.** In addition to the gift you may be giving, please pray for foster children, their families, and the foster families who care for them.

## 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.

Friday, December 20, at 12:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00 and 8:00 p.m.

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

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

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

## Christmas Decorating

Decorating the church for Christmas will take place on 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.*

## 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.

Catholic calendars for the 2020 year are available at all church entrances. You are invited to take a calendar home for your personal use.

Thank you to Ford and Sons Funeral Home, Auto Tire and Parts, Rhodes 101 Convenience Stores, Crain Funeral Home, and McCombs Funeral Home for their support of St. Vincent de Paul Parish.

EXTEND MERCY TOWARDS OTHERS, SO THAT THERE CAN BE NO ONE IN NEED WHOM YOU MEET WITHOUT HELPING.

## • Job Opportunities •

**Regional Director** - Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri is searching for a high-performing community leader to serve as Regional Director for the southeast region. If you are mission-focused and passionate about serving the vulnerable in our communities, please visit [www.ccsomo.org/employment](http://www.ccsomo.org/employment).

**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](mailto: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](mailto:abuckley@dioscg.org) to request an application packet.

## 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. It promotes awareness and conducts advocacy campaigns in accordance with Catholic teaching on life issues. For information, contact Kathleen Keese, [kkeese@charter.net](mailto: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](mailto:SEMOCatholicManNight@gmail.com),

SEMO Catholic Man Night on Facebook or 573-837-2556

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

## 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.

## THANK YOU FROM CATHOLIC SOCIAL MINISTRIES

Dear St. Vincent Parishioners,

Thank you so much for your generous donation of over 400 hams to our food pantry, and for the volunteers who distributed them on November 9, 16, and 23. This act of charity was truly a blessing for our clients especially just before the Thanksgiving holiday. I am certain that many families were touched by your kindness.

Again, thank you for being so generous and thoughtful. Please know that I will keep you in my prayers. God bless you for all you do!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Jim Keusenkotter*

Parish Pastoral Ministry, St. Mary Cathedral





## THIS WEEK AT HOME

### Monday, December 9 Immaculate Conception

It is impossible for us to prevent sin from passing into the next generation. We see how quickly children imitate us and our sins. In the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception, we celebrate a moment in which God kept someone free from sin so that she could be mother to the sinless Son of God. This perfect Son, who came into our world as an infant, gives us hope that one day our children will perfectly imitate our Savior. Ask God to forgive you for a time that a child saw or heard you act sinfully. *Today's Readings: Genesis 3:9–20; Psalm 98:1–4; Ephesians 1:3–12; Luke 1:26–38.*

### Tuesday, December 10 Shepherding the Lost

Jesus offered consolation and forgiveness instead of immediate condemnation. He looked upon God's people differently than they looked upon themselves. Where some saw only hopeless sinners, Jesus saw people who yearned to be led back to God. Show that you are ready for God to find you by asking someone for forgiveness and by letting go of a grudge. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:1–11; Psalm 96:1–3, 10–13; Matthew 18:12–14.*

### Wednesday, December 11 Burdens

God helps us carry our burdens. He lifts us up when our bodies drag us down. He yokes himself beside us in the person of his Son. We must, therefore, ask ourselves what burdens we ought to carry and what loads we can set down. Our arms might be full of things we do not need to hold onto. Check your Christmas to-do list, and cross off anything that doesn't truly help you and others prepare to celebrate the gift of God's Son. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:25–31; Psalm 103:1–10; Matthew 11:28–30.*

### Thursday, December 12 The Faces of Grace

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrates Mary's appearance to Juan Diego, an appearance that inspired thousands to convert to Christianity. Many have venerated since childhood the image of Mary that was revealed to Juan Diego. We rejoice that God makes himself known across cultures and languages. Pray with an image of Mary or Jesus from a different part of the world, and reflect on God's love for all people, everywhere. *Today's Readings: Zechariah 2:14–17 or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab; Luke 1:26–38 or Luke 1:39–47.*

### Friday, December 13 Expectations

Sometimes we refuse to see God at work. We dismiss a teaching or invitation from God because it doesn't fit our expectations of how God should act. We might even think it is foolish. Jesus insists that what seems silly to us is wise to God. It seemed absurd that God would become human, yet that's exactly what happened. God's way is difficult for us to accept, but it is the only way for us to become one with God who came to be one with us. Make a list of things you expect from God, and surrender that list in prayer. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 48:17–19; Psalm 1:1–6; Matthew 11:16–19.*

### Saturday, December 14 Turn

We read in 2 Kings 2:11 that the prophet Elijah was taken up to heaven. In the centuries that followed, people came to believe that Elijah would return to prepare people for the day of judgment and a new era. The most significant similarity between Elijah and John the Baptist was that both devoted themselves to turning people back to God. In this season of preparation, the words of Elijah and John echo in our ears. Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Acknowledge the ways you have turned away from God, and renew your efforts to turn back to him. *Today's Readings: Sirach 48:1–11; Psalm 80:1–19; Matthew 17:9–13.*





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