



St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

First Sunday of Advent
December 3, 2023

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
Service • Worship



The Source and Summit ...

Eucharistic Revival 2022-2025

Coming Soon: Jesus and the Eucharist

Beginning in late January, St. Vincent de Paul Parish along with parishes across the country will participate in a 7-session study series called *Jesus and the Eucharist*. This study will unveil the beauty of the Eucharistic faith and invite you to discover the true power and promise of this incredible gift. Connect with your fellow parishioners in a small group setting as you hear from some of the most brilliant voices in Catholicism. *Details coming soon!*

Weekend Masses

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

Weekday Masses

Monday 6:30 a.m.
Tuesday 6:30 a.m.
Wednesday 6:30 a.m., 5:15 p.m.
Thursday 6:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m.
Friday 6:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m.
First Friday 8:00 a.m.
Saturday 6:30 a.m.

Confessions

First Friday of month 12:00 noon
Saturday 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.
or by appointment

Bless Our Advent Time

Eternal God, you are the architect of time. As we prepare for your promised coming, guide us to turn toward you. Let us see your face and we shall be saved. Bless our Advent wreath. As we light each candle, may the flame of Christ's coming grow brighter and enkindle our eagerness to welcome him into our hearts, lives, and world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



BEST ADVENT EVER

make the most of Advent by getting to the heart of what truly matters...and putting aside what hardly matters at all.

Sign up for your daily advent email
@ <https://bestadventever.com>
(Dynamic Catholic-Matthew Kelly)



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 4 St. John Damascene

6:30 am Andrew Buchheit (living)
6:00 pm Men's Association Christmas Mass
(Old St. Vincent's Church)

Tuesday, December 5

6:30 am Gabriel Kiblinger (living)

Wednesday, December 6 St. Nicholas

6:30 am Living and Deceased Members of the
Tony Biondini Family
5:15 pm Living and Deceased Members of the
St. Vincent de Paul Women's Council

Thursday, December 7 St. Ambrose

6:30 am Living and Deceased Members of the
Anita Worl Family
8:00 am No Mass

Friday, December 8

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

6:30 am Sheila Ryan Family (living)
8:00 am Shirley Owens Family (living)
12:10 pm Pat Brase ☩
5:15 pm Glen Grojean ☩
7:00 pm Living and Deceased Members of the
(Bilingual) Robert Dunn Family

Saturday, December 9 St. Juan Diego

6:30 am Leonard and Joyce Jansen ☩
5:00 pm Collin McGuire ☩

Sunday, December 10

Second Sunday of Advent

7:30 am Bertha Langston ☩
9:00 am Clyde and Alfreda Bohnert ☩
10:45 am Libby Scherer ☩
3:00 pm St. Vincent de Paul Parish Family
(Bilingual)

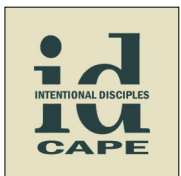
• Prayer Requests •

Please remember **Vince Kelley**, the sick, the hospitalized, and those who care for them. Pray also for homebound St. Vincent parishioners.



Young Adult Disciples Night

On **Thursday, December 7**, i.d.Cape (young adults) will host their monthly Disciples' Night at the old convent. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m.; a meal will be served at 6:15 p.m. followed by a live-streamed talk. All young adults in their 20's and 30's are invited. See the event on Facebook or email idCapeinfo@gmail.com for more information. Please RSVP for the meal. Come and bring a friend!



We are the servants of God, each with his or her own task. We will be judged good stewards if, at His coming, He finds us ready and conscientiously pursuing the tasks to which we have been called.

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 and unwrapped gift to the designated table in the gathering area this weekend. If you purchased a gift card, please bring it to the parish office on Monday, December 4**. All gifts must be returned to the parish office by Monday so they can be checked and recorded before additional shopping is done. In addition to the gift you may be giving, please pray for foster children, their families, and the foster families who care for them.

Women's Council Christmas Party

The St. Vincent de Paul Women's Council Christmas gathering will take place on Monday, **December 4, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.** in the lower meeting room. All women of the parish are invited. A **catered** Christmas dinner will be served. More socializing will occur with the traditional gift exchange game. If you would like to participate, please bring a \$5.00 - \$10.00 wrapped gift. All women of the parish are invited!

Gifts will also be collected for Birthright. Needed items include slow flow bottles (4 and 8 oz.), Similac Advance/Sensitive formulas, grooming kits, teething toys, board books, long sleeve onesies, heavy weight pajamas, warm outfits (boys and girls sizes newborn and 0-3 months).

Men's Association Christmas Mass and Dinner

All men of the parish, ages 18 and older, are invited to the annual St. Vincent de Paul Men's Association Christmas Mass and Dinner on **Monday, December 4, 2023**. Mass will be celebrated at 6:00 p.m. at Old St. Vincent Church. Immediately following Mass, there will be a smoked chicken dinner hosted by Kolhfeld Distributing. Bring a friend to celebrate the Christmas season with Mass, Christmas carols, and fellowship with the men of the parish.

Notre Dame Regional Highs School Open House

Learn more about Notre Dame Regional High School at the final Open House event of the year, scheduled for **December 6!** The Open House is designed for parents and their children who are in sixth through eighth grade to take a first-hand look at a one-of-a-kind high school.

Open House guests will learn about Notre Dame's mission and philosophy and see how the school lives out that mission by spreading the gospel, one student at a time. This event will begin with a program in King Hall followed by student-led tours of the school where families will have the opportunity to meet and talk with current students, parents, faculty and administrators.

Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. and the event will begin at 6:30 p.m. Please register in advance at www.notredamehighschool.org/openhouse.

IS CATHERINE'S CUPBOARD ON YOUR GROCERY LIST?

May They Rest in Peace

Sympathy is extended to the families of:

Chris Walker, brother of Kim Kolda;

Christy Holzum Wittenbrink, sister of Jeff Holzum;

Leonard Canoy, brother of Shirley Fraser; and

Norma Buerck, a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Parish family.

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



• The Week Ahead •

Monday, December 4

- 6:00 pm Women's Council Christmas Party
- 6:00 pm Men's Association Mass/Party
- 6:00 pm Parish Mission/Novena (Spanish)

Tuesday, December 5

- 6:00 pm Tuesday Evening Bible Study
- 6:00 pm Parish Mission/Novena (Spanish)
- 6:30 pm St. Francis de Sales

Wednesday, December 6

- 10:00 am Mass at Chateau Girardeau
- 3:00 pm Divine Mercy Holy Hour
- 6:30 pm Guadalupe Novena (Spanish)

Thursday, December 7

- 9:00 am Maxine's Shareable Wearables (9:00 - 11:00 am)
- 9:00 am Thursday Women's Bible Study
- 9:30 am Communion Service at Arbors/Auburn Creek
- 5:30 pm Centering Prayer
- 6:00 pm i.d.Cape
- 6:30 pm Guadalupe Novena (Spanish)

Friday, December 8

- 6:30 pm Guadalupe Novena (Spanish)

Saturday, December 9

- 9:00 am Maxine's Shareable Wearables (9:00 - 12:00 noon)
- 3:30 pm Reconciliation
- 6:00 pm Women's Council Bake Sale
- 6:30 pm Guadalupe Novena (Spanish)

Sunday, December 10

- Women's Council Bake Sale after Masses
- 9:00 am Children's Liturgy of the Word
- 2:30 pm Rosary (Spanish)



Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Holy Day of Obligation

Mass Schedule

Friday, December 8

6:30 a.m. • 8:00 a.m. • 12:10 p.m. • 5:15 p.m.

7:00 p.m. (Bilingual)

The money collected during the Masses on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception will benefit the LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home of Southeast Missouri, a housing program for pregnant women which also provides healthcare and social services.

Woman's Council Bake Sale

After all Masses next weekend, **December 9-10**, the Women's Council will host a bake sale. The 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.

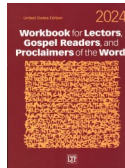


Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe



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 next **Sunday, December 10, 2023**. After Mass, a fiesta will take place in the parish center. If you are able, please bring a dessert and soda. Everything else will be provided. All are welcome!

Church Year Cycle B lector workbooks may be picked up in the sacristy after Masses.



Advent

Readings - December 10, 2023

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 • 2 Peter 3:8-14
Mark 1:1-18

Collection - November 26, 2023

Collection	\$ 18,825.01
E-Tithing	\$ 21,374.10
Total	\$ 40,199.11
Weekly Budget	\$ 34,200.00
Difference (7-1-23 to 11-26-23) -	\$ 24,571.02

Thank you for being good stewards of God's gifts!

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 placed on a Christmas tree 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 11, along with the following information.**

Name of loved one _____

Person making donation _____

Donation _____

• Contact Information •

Parish Office

contactus@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

Father Rick Jones, Pastor

Stvcapepadre@gmail.com / 573-335-7667

Father Alex Sutachan

Associate Pastor/ Chaplain of NDRHS
fatheralex@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

Deacon Robbie Huff

Superintendent of Schools /Diocesan Chancellor
Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau
rhuff@dioscg.org / 573-335-7667

Deacon Mark Kiblinger

Coordinator of Stewardship and RCIA
mkiblinger@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

Deacon Tony Peters

tpeters@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

Deacon Thomas Schumer

Director of CCM, SEMO University
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stvcapeyouth@gmail.com / 573-335-7667

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Cheryl Oberhaus, Director of Parish Finance

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Gail Overbey, Mass Scheduler

goverbey@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

Saint Gerard's Circle

Saint Gerard's Circle is a ministry for mothers of young children in the St. Vincent de Paul Parish. (Public, private, homeschool, and not in school yet mommas are all welcome!) The goal is to provide friendships and support within the parish, a Catholic foundation for children, a continuation of spiritual guidance for members and families, and to encourage community involvement.

The next meeting will be held on **Thursday, December 14, at 7:00 p.m.** at the Top of the Marq. The program for the evening will be the **Annual Ornament Exchange Party**. Additional details can be found on the St. Gerard Facebook page www.facebook.com/groups/saintgerardcircle.

Camp Re-New-All

Celebrating 50 Years in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau



All youth going into 5th-9th grade during the 2024-2025 school year are invited to register for a week of fun and faith-filled activities at the diocesan summer camp, Camp Re-New-All.

Online registration opens at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 13, 2023. Some age groups fill quickly so early registration is recommended to secure your desired date. You may register at https://dioscg.formstack.com/forms/camp_re_new_all.

Information can be found on the bulletin board in the gathering area. You may also download the Camp brochure for more information (<https://dioscg.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Camp-Brochure-2023.pdf>).

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

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

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 feel free to contact parish office staff anytime during regular office hours, Monday - 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 _____

Phone _____

Email _____

- ☐ 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.

????????? Guess Who!

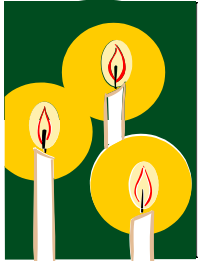
Questions: Which St. Vincent priest/
deacon's favorite books as a child were
The Chip Hilton Sports stories?

Which priest/deacon ran a half marathon
in Victoria Falls, Africa?

**For answers, please see next
week's bulletin!**

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 here at St. Vincent is scheduled for **Sunday, December 17, at 4:30 p.m.** and will be held in the upper meeting room. Contact the parish office to register and to fill out a baptismal registration form.



Taizé Prayer Service

A Taizé service, meditative prayer with simple prayer-chants, will be held **Sunday, December 17, at 6:30 p.m.** in the Church. Expect chants or simple songs, silence, prayer, candlelight, scripture, peace, and Adoration of the Eucharist. All are welcome!

Vincent's Vittles

Thank you to **Immediate Convenient Care, Cape Primary Care of Saint Francis Medical Center**, and the **Secular Franciscans** who hosted Vincent's Vittles in November. A delicious traditional Thanksgiving meal was served to 100 community members and parishioners. Many thanks to all who provided the delicious desserts and who helped in any way. The next Vincent's Vittles meal will be served on **Saturday, December 30, 2023**. Plan to attend and invite a friend! If you, as an individual or a group, would like to help with this rewarding community meal, please contact Deacon Mark.



Maxine's Shareable Wearables

Due to the overwhelming amount of donations received lately, lack of space, and the time-consuming task of sorting, Maxine's must currently limit donations accepted to the following items.

- Men's heavy coats, gloves, hats, shoes, belts, jeans, and warm winter clothing (all sizes)
- Ladies' gloves, hats, boots, robes, slippers, XL sweatpants, winter coats sizes 2X and larger **only**, and winter clothing for sizes 4X and larger **only**
- Children's long-sleeved tops and pajamas sizes 7/8 and larger **only**, and heavy winter coats

Maxine's is also in need of an additional volunteer to wait on clients one Saturday per month. *Thank you for your help and understanding.*



Worldwide Marriage Encounter presents weekend experiences for married couples to rekindle romance, enhance meaningful communication, and deepen and renew commitment. Make a New Year's resolution to keep your marriage a priority. Sign up now as space is limited. For more information or to apply, go to wwme.org, or call Terry and Eric Engholm at 314-649-7317.

February 2-4, 2024 • St. Peters, Missouri

March 15-17, 2024 • Drury Inn, Cape Girardeau, Missouri

April 5-7, 2024 • St. Peters, Missouri

Congratulations

**to James and Rebecca Manker
as they celebrate their
55th Wedding Anniversary
and to
Norman and Elaine Hayden
as they celebrate their 40th
Wedding Anniversary.**

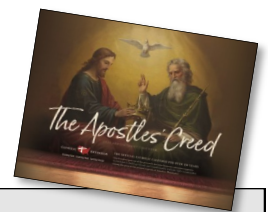


*Please continue to pray for
all married couples and those
preparing for marriage.*

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. Items needed include pajamas and outfits for boys and girls (sizes newborn and 0-3 months), socks (newborn), baby quilts, afghans, and fleece blankets. Birthright is also in need of baby wash and lotion, baby bottles (4 and 8 oz.), Similac Advance Formula, diapers (sizes newborn, 1, 2, and 3), and wipes.

Items may also be brought to the Cape Girardeau Birthright location at 2633 Hopper Road (Monday - Friday 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon) or the Marble Hill location (Monday and Thursday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.) at 105 Church Street. Your generosity is appreciated.



Catholic calendars for the year 2024 are available in the gathering area. Thank you to Ford and Sons Funeral Home for making these calendars available.



St. Mary Cathedral School **Live Nativity**

Friday, December 8, 2023
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

St. Mary School Grassy Field
210 S. Sprigg Street
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Come and enjoy live Christmas music and refreshments! School children will play Mary, Joseph, angels and shepherds.

*An Advent tradition celebrating
the coming of Christmas*

Festival of Nine

Friday, December 8, 2023
6:30 p.m.

St. John Henry Newman Center
512 N. Pacific Street
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

6:30 p.m. Marian Grotto Dedication
7:00 p.m. Lessons and Carols Concert
8:00 p.m. Refreshments
All ages welcome!

Christmas Concert

Notre Dame Regional High School's Concert Choir, Treble Choir and Men's Choir will be performing their annual Christmas Concert at Old St. Vincent Church on **Sunday, December 10, at 7:00 p.m.** Notre Dame Choir alumni are invited to join in the finale at the Christmas Concert!

Breakfast and Bake Sale

December 10, 2023
7:30 - 11:30 a.m.

St. Joseph Church Hall
138 St. Joseph Lane • Apple Creek
Serving sausage, scrambled eggs, fried potatoes, biscuits and gravy, homemade coffee cake, fruit, and beverage
Adults \$10.00, Children 5-12 \$5.00
Children under 5 Free
Sponsored by Apple Creek Men's Club

Confessions before Christmas

"Prepare the Way of Lord" by making a good Confession! This is the best gift you can give to yourself and your family during the days leading up to Christmas. Confessions will be offered on the hour starting on Thursday, December 21. ("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.

Thursday, December 21 • 12:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00 p.m.

Friday, December 22 • 12:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 23 • 3:00, 4:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00 p.m.

Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve - Sunday, December 24

Christmas Vigil Mass

4:00 p.m. • 6:00 p.m.

Midnight Mass

11:00 p.m.

Christmas Day - Monday, December 25

9:00 a.m. • 11:00 a.m. (Bilingual)

Please Note:

**Mass will not be celebrated at 3:00 p.m.
on Sunday, December 24.**

On Christmas, all parishes of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau will be conducting a second 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.

Mary, Mother of God Mass Schedule

New Year's Day, Monday, January 1

6:30 a.m. • 9:00 a.m.

The second collection taken up at Masses on Mary, Mother of God will benefit Care Portal, a platform bringing the needs of children and families in crisis to the attention of local churches and their parishioners.

A Note from Bishop Rice: Please note that since **January 1** falls on Monday in 2024, it is **not** a Holy Day of Obligation, though it retains its liturgical rank as a Solemnity. While the faithful are not obligated to attend Mass on this day, they are still strongly encouraged to attend Holy Mass to celebrate this Mystery of Faith regarding the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"Like a man away on a journey, he assigns each of us a task; be on the alert." Being chosen to serve as a priest, deacon, or religious is an amazing work of the Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Mother to help you recognize and be faithful to your vocation. Contact Father Alex Sutachan at 573-335-7667 or email fatheralex@syvparish.com.



St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

1913 Ritter Drive, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

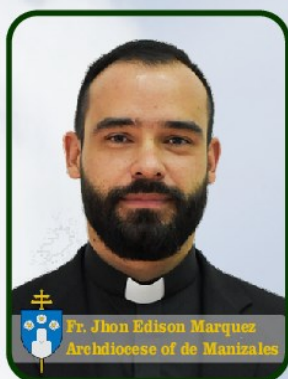
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Novena from December 3rd to 11th, 2023

- 6:30 p.m. at the Church -

Parish Mission in Spanish, December 4th and 5th.

“Knowing the Eucharist from the Holy Scripture”



Fr. Jhon Edison Marquez
Archdiocese of San Antonio

Sunday - December 3rd - 3:00 p.m.

- Mass with fr. Jhon Edison Márquez Torres
to learn about the Mission.

December 4th and 5th of 2023

6:00 - 6:50 pm - Adoration

6:30 pm - Novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe

7:00 - 8:00 pm - Conference in Spanish

Sunday 10

2:30 p.m.

- Holy Rosary to Our Lady

3:00 p.m.

- Holy Eucharist in Honor of
Our Lady of Guadalupe

4:00 p.m.

- Celebration in Honor of Our Lady

Tuesday 12

5:00 a.m.

- Mañanitas in Honor of Our Mother

6:00 a.m.

- Holy Rosary

6:30 a.m.

- Eucharist





St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

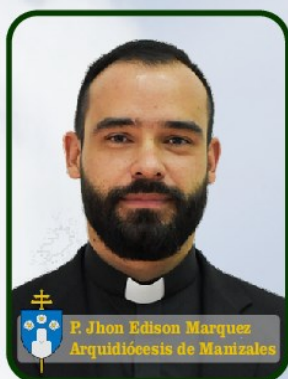
1913 Ritter Drive, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Fiesta a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Novena del 03 al 11 de Diciembre, 2023

~ 6:30 p.m. en el Templo Parroquial ~

Misión Parroquial en Español, los días 04 al 05 de Diciembre "Conocer la Eucaristía desde la Sagrada Escritura"



Domingo 03 de Diciembre ~ 3:00 p.m.

~ Eucaristía con el padre Jhon Edison Márquez Torres para conocer sobre la Misión.

Diciembre 04 y 05 de 2023

6:00 ~ 6:50 pm ~ Adoración

6:30 pm ~ Novena a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

7:00 ~ 8:00 pm ~ Conferencia

Domingo 10

2:30 p.m.

~ Santo Rosario a Nuestra Señora

3:00 p.m.

~ Santa Eucaristía en Honor a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

4:00 p.m.

~ Celebración en Honor a Nuestra Señora

Martes 12

5:00 a.m.

~ Mañanitas en Honor a Nuestra Señora

6:00 a.m.

~ Santo Rosario

6:30 a.m.

~ Eucaristía



Prepare the Way

Say the Word

Monday, December 4

Today's Gospel relates a miracle performed by Jesus. Within the dialogue, the words of a Roman soldier become what we pray at Mass: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." The soldier understands that Jesus' words carry divine power. Throughout Advent, we follow the soldier's example of faith by assuming a stance of humility and openness to the work of the Lord. *Today's readings: Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9; Matthew 8:5-11.*

The Shoot of Jesse

Tuesday, December 5

The Jesse tree is an Advent custom that helps us connect the festive practice of decorating Christmas trees to Jesus' biblical ancestors. Its name is derived from today's first reading, "A shoot shall come out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isaiah 11:1). Jesse, the father of King David, is often looked upon as the first person in the genealogy of Jesus. For your Jesse tree, start with a bare branch and hang a new ornament every day. These ornaments represent the individual figures from the Bible. They can be made from any material you choose. *Today's readings: Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Luke 10:21-24.*

St. Nicholas

Wednesday, December 6

St. Nicholas was the bishop of Myra (modern-day Turkey) in the fourth century. According to legend, he anonymously provided generous help to those in need. One story says he dropped bags of gold down the chimneys of poor families, widows, and orphans. Surprise family members with a stocking filled with gifts. Plan an anonymous gift for a person or agency in need this Advent. *Today's readings: Isaiah 25:6-10a; Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Matthew 15:29-37.*

St. Ambrose

Thursday, December 7

St. Ambrose served as the bishop of Milan during the fourth century. A brilliant theologian and doctor of the Church, St. Ambrose helped articulate the Christian faith through his writings. He is also remembered for a beautiful Advent carol, "O Come, Redeemer of the Earth." Create your own playlist of Advent music to keep your heart and mind firmly planted in the spirituality of preparation. *Today's readings: Isaiah 26:1-6; Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a; Matthew 7:21, 24-27.*

Immaculate Conception

Friday, December 8

The Church sets aside today as a holy day of obligation, recognizing that Mary was conceived without original sin so that she could become the vessel to bear God made flesh. Today's Gospel highlights the fullness of grace given to Mary, by which she said *yes* to God's plan for her life. Advent is a perfect time to pray the joyful mysteries of the Rosary, from the mystery of the annunciation through the incarnation to the rearing of Jesus in faith. *Today's readings: Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Psalm 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38.*

St. Juan Diego

Saturday, December 9

On December 9, 1531, the Virgin Mary asked Juan Diego to tell the bishop that she desired a temple to be built on Tepeyac Hill in Mexico. From this place, she would hear the anguish of all who live in the region and respond with love, compassion, and protection. Hesitant to accept Juan Diego's account of Mary's appearance, the bishop requested a sign. Mary sent Juan Diego to pick roses where only desert plants grew. She arranged the roses in Juan's cloak and sent him back to the bishop. When Juan opened his tilma before the bishop, he discovered an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe imprinted on it. *Today's readings: Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Psalm 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6; Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8.*

Sunday, December 3

Come, Lord Jesus

Today's readings: Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7; Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:33-37.

The season of Advent (from the Latin *adventus* meaning "coming") is a time to prepare for the coming of Christ. We anticipate three advents: the first is the historical coming of the Christ two thousand years ago; the second, the coming of Christ among us now; and the third advent, the hope of Christ coming again at the end of time.

Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas. This year, it lands in early December, shortening our Advent season by an entire week. One of the best-known customs of the season is the Advent wreath. The circle of evergreens symbolizes the eternal character of God's time and Christ's reach into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles on the wreath, three violet and one rose, mark our progress through the season. The rose candle is for the Third Sunday of Advent, called *Gaudete Sunday* after the first word of the entrance antiphon on that day, meaning "rejoice." The day symbolizes our joy as we draw closer to the birth of Christ. Bless your Advent wreath with the lighting of the first violet candle, and as a prayerful entrance into Advent invoke today's psalm response: "Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved" (Psalm 80:4).

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