



# St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

Third Sunday of Advent  
December 15, 2024

### 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

### Weekend Masses

Saturday 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.,  
3:00 p.m. (Spanish/English)

### 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 the month 12:00 noon  
Saturday 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.  
or by appointment

### Parish Office Hours

Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



## Extending the Mission

— BUILDING ON THE —  
CORNERSTONE OF CHRIST

### Capital Campaign Update



You are invited to go into the gathering area and see the new updates that are displayed on the Capital Campaign television screen! You may also use this QR Code to review the progress through the St. Vincent de Paul Parish website.

### Woman's Council Bake Sale

After all Masses this weekend, **December 14-15**, the Women's Council is hosting 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.



### Welcome to St. Vincent

On the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, three people were welcomed into the Catholic Church. After having been in OCIA instruction for several months, Augustine Rivera, Morgan McGarr, and Anna Hunter made their Professions of Faith and received the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist! *Congratulations and welcome to the St. Vincent de Paul Parish family!*



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 16**

6:30 am Tom LeGrand ☩

**Tuesday, December 17**

6:30 am Janet Knobbe ☩

**Wednesday, December 18**

6:30 am Kyle Ahern (living)

5:15 pm Henry Azuma ☩

**Thursday, December 19**

6:30 am Glenn Kroenung ☩

8:00 am Liz Burns ☩

**Friday, December 20**

6:30 am Sam Johnson ☩

8:00 am Robert and Anna Drury ☩

**Saturday, December 21** St. Peter Canisius

6:30 am Living and Deceased Members of the Ben and Lucille LeGrand Family

5:00 pm Lazar Ruga (living)

**Sunday, December 22**

Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:00 am Living and Deceased Members of the St. Vincent de Paul Women's Council

10:00 am Rose and Charles Heisserer ☩

3:00 pm St. Vincent de Paul Parish Family (Bilingual)

• **Prayer Requests** •

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



**Camp Re-NEW-All registration is open!** All youth currently in grades 4-8 are invited to register for a week of fun and faith-filled activities at the diocesan summer camp, Camp Re-New-All. Registration is also open for staff (high school and adult).

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](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 info (<https://dioscg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025-Camp-Brochure.pdf>).

*Today's Gospel provides a blueprint for good stewardship: "Let the man who has two coats give to him who has none. The man who has food should do the same."*



*The Source and Summit ...*  
**Eucharistic Revival 2022-2025**

**Walk With One**  
*The Greatest Love Story*

This Season of Advent is a great time to pray for those who have been away from the Church. May our hearts be open to welcoming those who have been away from the Church back to the Mysteries of our Faith this Christmas. This would not be too early to begin asking those who have been away to return to experience the greatest gift of all eternity ... Jesus! At Christmas we will remember his first coming into this world by being born in Bethlehem, but we will also witness his continuing unending presence among us this Christmas as well. Jesus is our Emmanuel ... Our God With Us!

For additional information, go to <https://www.eucharisticrevival.org/walk-with-one> and investigate more.

*What is a Spiritual Bouquet?*

A spiritual bouquet is a beautiful, Catholic tradition of offering prayers, charitable acts, and sacrifices to someone else to express joy, best wishes, or comfort in sorrow and often in commemoration of a special occasion. They are devotional acts and prayers said on behalf of someone else and for their intentions.

During the weekends of **December 14/15** and **December 21/22** spiritual bouquets will be gathered for **Diocesan Seminarians**, **Seminarian Mark Buehrle** (Congregation of the Mission), and **Jordan Huff** who is discerning consecrated life with the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, Nashville.

**Spiritual bouquet cards will be available in the Gathering Area. Please return your completed card to the marked container.**

**Rosary Prayer Group**

The Holy Rosary will be prayed this **Sunday, December 15, at 1:30 p.m.** at the **St. John Henry Newman Center**, Cape Girardeau.



**Dead Theologians Society - This Sunday**

**DTS (Dead Theologians Society)** is a gathering of High School teens from across the region. Meetings are hosted monthly on the **third Sunday from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.** in the old convent here at St. Vincent. Each meeting consists of snacks, fun and, of course, prayer! Time is spent praying for the dead and learning about different saints. The motto of DTS is **Mortuum Mundo, Vivum In Christo (Dead to the World, Alive in Christ)**. Grab a few friends and make plans to attend!

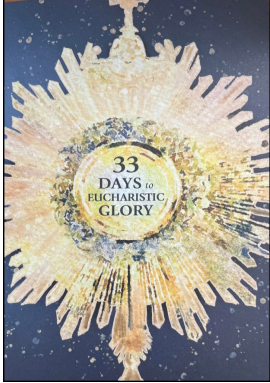
*Catholic calendars for the year 2025 are available in the gathering area. Thank you to Ford and Sons Funeral Home for making these calendars available.*

## May They Rest in Peace

Sympathy is extended to the families of:  
**Duke Duggan**, father of Shannon Reinagel; and  
**Teresa Welter**, sister of Mary Cotner.



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



**Coming Soon**

Let this be your new year's resolution:  
 Join the parish-wide  
 Consecration to the Eucharist

sponsored by the  
 St. Vincent de Paul Parish  
 Discipleship Committee

## SEMO Food Bank

The St. Vincent de Paul Council of Catholic Women will pack food boxes at the SEMO Food Bank in Miner, Missouri, on **Tuesday, December 17, 2024**. The volunteers will carpool from the JC Penney parking lot at 8:30 a.m. If interested, please call Carol Simon at 314-440-4467.

## St. Gerard's Circle

**Mothers, give yourself the evening off and reflect on this season!**

St. Gerard's Circle is hosting their monthly meeting this **Thursday, December 19, at 7:00 p.m.** at the Top of the Marq, downtown Cape Girardeau. If you would like to participate in the exchange game, please bring an ornament.

St. 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 moms are welcome!) The goal is to provide friendships and support within the parish, a Catholic foundation for children, continuation of spiritual guidance for members and families, and to encourage community involvement.

Please check the Facebook page for more details: Saint Gerard Circle- St. Vincent de Paul Parish- Cape Girardeau, MO.

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

## 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 this weekend or return to the parish office by Monday, December 16, along with the following information.**

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

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

Donation \_\_\_\_\_

### • The Week Ahead •

#### Monday, December 16

7:15 am St. Vincent de Paul Society

#### Tuesday, December 17

9:30 am Communion Service  
 at Fountainbleau

6:00 pm Tuesday Evening Bible Study

#### Wednesday, December 18

10:00 am Mass at Capetown

3:00 pm Divine Mercy Holy Hour

6:00 pm Parish School of Religion

#### Thursday, December 19

9:00 am Maxine's Shareable Wearables  
 (9:00 - 11:00 am)

5:00 pm Centering Prayer

5:00 pm School Board

7:00 pm St. Gerard's Circle

#### Friday, December 20

7:00 pm Ukraine Presentation

#### Saturday, December 21

8:00 am Youth Ministry Advent Bible Study

2:00 pm / 3:00 pm / 6:00 pm / 7:00 pm  
 Reconciliation (on the hour)

#### Sunday, December 22

10:00 am Children's Liturgy of the Word

4:00 pm / 5:00 pm / 6:00 pm / 7:00 pm  
 Reconciliation (on the hour)



**Question:** This deacon, who grew up in Neodesha, Kansas, is celebrating his 68th birthday on December 15. What is his name?

**Answer:** Deacon Mark Kiblinger, Kansas native, is celebrating his birthday on Sunday, December 15. Happy Birthday, Deacon Mark!

### Readings - December 22, 2024

Micah 5:1-4a • Hebrews 10:5-10  
 Luke 1:39-45

### Collection - December 8, 2024

Collection	\$ 43,037.86
E-Tithing	\$ 3,482.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 46,519.86</b>
<b>Weekly Budget</b>	<b>\$ 35,000.00</b>
<b>Difference (7-1-24 to 12-8-24)</b>	<b>\$ 5,473.40</b>

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



• **Contact Information** •

**Parish Office**

contactus@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

**Father Rick Jones, Pastor**

Stvcapepadre@gmail.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 OCIA  
mkiblinger@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

**Deacon Tony Peters**

tpeters@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

**Deacon Thomas Schumer**

Director of CCM, SEMO University  
thomas.schumer@semocatholic.org / 573-335-7667

**Tiffany Brey, Youth Ministry Coordinator**

stvcapeyouth@gmail.com / 573-335-7667

**Pamela Chambliss, Parish Office Receptionist**

pchambliss@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

**Kay Glastetter**

Principal of St. Vincent DePaul Grade School  
kglastetter@svcape.eduk12.net / 573-334-9594

**Kathy Hotop Raines**

Director of Religious Education  
kraines@svcape.eduk12.net / 573-335-7667

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stvincentcapegirardeau@gmail.com / 573-335-7667

**Lenny Kuper, Music Coordinator**

lennykuper@notredamecape.org / 573-335-7667

**Jeffrey Lloyd, Maintenance Supervisor**

jllloyd@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

**Beverly McMeel**

Accounting Clerk/Administrative Assistant  
bmcmeel@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

**Cheryl Oberhaus, Director of Parish Finance**

coberhaus@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

**Gail Overbey, Mass Scheduler**

goverbey@svparish.com / 573-335-7667

**Presentation on Life in Ukraine**

Nicholas Koeppel, son of Dan and Rita Koeppel and former member of St. Vincent, has spent the past three years living in Ukraine and Poland. He has been volunteering and serving as an English teacher at the Ukrainian Catholic University. While visiting home for Christmas, Nick would like to give a presentation about his experiences in Ukraine, share his love for the culture and people he has come to know, and to tell you about his ongoing mission. You are invited to join him for this presentation and discussion on **Friday, December 20, starting at 7:00 p.m.** in the upper meeting room. Nick hopes to see you there!

**YOU ARE INVITED**

**Christmas Novena & Scavenger Hunt**

**★ Friday December 20, 2024 - 6-9pm**  
**St. Mary School Gym, Cape**  
**event for 6th - 12th grades ★**

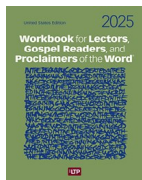
**WEAR AN UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER**  
**HOT COCOA & CHOCOLATE MILK WILL BE PROVIDED**

For more information contact your youth leader  
or email Briana Brown @ [bribrown24@yahoo.com](mailto:bribrown24@yahoo.com)  
Scan the code to RSVP (REQUIRED)  
Last day to RSVP is Tuesday Dec 17th

**Get ready to have some fun!**

**Parents: interested in being a chaperone?**  
Let your youth leader or Briana know, we need  
★ **Virtus trained adults to drive & ride in cars.**





**Church Year Cycle C lector workbooks may be picked up in the sacristy after Masses or at the parish office between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday.**

▶ **Sign Up for FORMED**

1. Go to FORMED org/signup and
2. Enter your parish zip code (63701) or name to select your parish (St. Vincent de Paul).
3. Enter your name and email.

**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 for 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.

**Saturday, December 21 • 2:00, 3:00, 6:00, 7:00 p.m.**

**Sunday, December 22 • 4:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00 p.m.**

**Monday, December 23 • 3:00, 4:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00 p.m.**

## 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 warm pajamas (sizes newborn and 0-3 months), socks (newborn), baby wash and lotion, baby bottles (5 and 8 oz.) and brushes, diapers (all sizes).

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, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.) at 105 Church Street. Your generosity is appreciated.

## Vincent's Vittles

The next Vincent's Vittles meal will be on **Saturday, December 28**. Plan to attend and invite a friend! If you, as an individual or group, would like to help with this rewarding community meal, please contact Deacon Mark.

## Job Openings

**St. Vincent de Paul Parish** is seeking a friendly and enthusiastic minister for the position of **Parish Social Media Coordinator**. As a Social Media Coordinator, you will help in promoting the Parish's mission of "Loving Jesus, Serving Jesus and Sharing Jesus with others". Responsibilities include: 1) Create and maintain engaging content for various social media platforms, including written posts, images, and videos. 2) Monitor comments, messages, and inquiries on parish social media channels and work with parish staff on responding. 3) Assist in planning live events in Church, i.e. Mass. 4) Assist with keeping parish website current and up-to-date. This ministry requires 10 hours of work each week and a stipend is available. For information, please contact Father Rick Jones at the parish office by email [stvcapepadre@gmail.com](mailto:stvcapepadre@gmail.com) or 573-335-7667.

**St. Vincent de Paul School** is currently seeking a **full-time custodian** for the current school year. Hours are 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Monday - Friday. Applicant must complete Virtus training and a background check. For an application or more info, please contact St. Vincent de Paul Parish office at 573-335-7667.

**St. Vincent de Paul School** is hiring **after-school care workers**. Interested candidates should contact the school office for an application at 573-334-9594 or email [kglastetter@svcape.eduk12.net](mailto:kglastetter@svcape.eduk12.net).

## Christmas Mass Schedule

**Christmas Eve - Tuesday, December 24**

**Christmas Vigil Mass**  
4:00 p.m. • 6:00 p.m.

**Midnight Mass**  
11:00 p.m.

**Christmas Day - Wednesday, December 25**

9:00 a.m. • 11:00 a.m. (Bilingual)

*On Christmas, all parishes of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau will conduct 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 Eve, Tuesday, December 31**  
5:00 p.m.

**New Year's Day, Wednesday, January 1**  
8:00 a.m. • 10:00 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.*

## Taizé Prayer Service

A **Taizé service, meditative prayer with simple prayer-chants, will be held on Sunday, January 5, at 6:00 p.m. in the Church.** Enjoy an evening of simple chants, a variety of musical instruments, prayer, candlelight, scripture, silence, and peace ... everything you need to get your heart ready to celebrate the Feast of Epiphany! Come together to pray during this Christmas season. All are welcome!





## Christmas Cards for Priests, Sisters, Deacons, and Seminarians

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

### Father Milton Ryan, CM

Holy Trinity Parish  
3826 Gilbert Avenue  
Dallas, TX 75219

### Father Charles Prost, CM

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

### Father Derek Swanson, CM

St. Vincent de Paul Parish  
1010 W. Webster Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60614

### Father David Hulshof

c/o Francis and Sally Hulshof  
1011 County Highway 419  
Portageville, MO 63873

### Father Rahab Isidor

St. Lawrence Parish  
PO Box 311  
Monett, MO 65708

### Father Joseph Stoverink

Sacred Heart Parish  
1609 N. Summit Avenue  
Springfield, MO 65803

### Father David Baunach

St. Eustachius Parish  
200 W. Fourth Street  
Portageville, MO 63873

### Father Brian Straus

St. Peter the Apostle Parish  
812 S. Pearl Avenue  
Joplin, MO 64801

### Sister Theresa Davey, OSU

2520 Saint James Rd.  
Springfield, IL 62707-9736

### Sister Susan Kienzler, OSU

9308 Sutton Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63144

## Conference Table Needed

St. Vincent de Paul School is looking for a conference table that would seat 10-12 people. If you have a used table that you would like to donate or sell at a reduced rate, please call the school office at 573-334-9594 or email [kglastetter@svcape.eduk12.net](mailto:kglastetter@svcape.eduk12.net).

## Magnify 90

*A Spiritual Exercise for Women*

January 20 - April 20, 2025

This 90-day journey asks women to foster a deeper relationship with God and others. Through prayer, spiritual readings, mortifications, and offerings we can link arms as desert sisters, and set the world ablaze with Christ's light by being the saints we were created to be! We hope you'll join us! Simply scan the QR Code to register. For more info visit [www.mag90.com](http://www.mag90.com) or contact Melanie Diebold ([melaniecowell@gmail.com](mailto:melaniecowell@gmail.com)), Laura Enderle ([lenderle@staangels.eduk12.net](mailto:lenderle@staangels.eduk12.net)) Stacey Welter ([swelter.4christ@gmail.com](mailto:swelter.4christ@gmail.com)), Alicia Schumer ([arsachse@yahoo.com](mailto:arsachse@yahoo.com)), Leah Shrum ([director@optionsforwomenscape.com](mailto:director@optionsforwomenscape.com)), or Rachael Bremer ([rachaelbremer@stmarycape.org](mailto:rachaelbremer@stmarycape.org)).

Register by using the QR code or the following link: <https://forms.gle/jd6sLPATHAGwfj3a6>.



**Diocesan Youth Conference**

- March 29-30, 2025
- West Plains, MO
- 7th - 12th grades
- Register by **Jan 10**
- \$50 deposit due **Jan 10**
- Total Cost: \$100-150

\*\*financial assistance available for StV & DioSCG parishioners\*\*

**"Look to him and be radiant,"**  
Psalm 34: 6-8

**REGISTER NOW**



All married couples and religious who previously took part in a **Worldwide Marriage Encounter** weekend are invited to a community meeting on the **third Sunday of each month from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.** at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 316 S. Spanish. If planning to attend, RSVP to Alicia Schumer at 573-225-8776.

**Worldwide Marriage Encounter** presents weekend experiences for married couples to rekindle romance, enhance meaningful communication, and deepen and renew commitment. Sign up now as space is limited. For more information or to apply, go to [wwme.org](http://wwme.org), or call Terry and Eric Engholm at 314-649-7317. Upcoming dates include ...

- **January 31 - February 2, 2025, St. Peter's**
- **April 4 - 6, 2025, St. Peter's**
- **June 13 - 15, 2025, St. Peter's**

**IS CATHERINE'S CUPBOARD ON YOUR GROCERY LIST?**

## Prepare the Way

### Trust

**Monday, December 16**

In today's Gospel, religious leaders question Jesus' authority as he taught and ministered. At times, you might find yourself faltering in your faith and may question God's authority in your life. Spend some time journaling about your trust in the Lord. How have you questioned him? After your reflection, pray with today's psalm, then choose a line or phrase that stands out to you, calling it to mind throughout your day. Ask for the strength to trust in Jesus. *Today's readings: Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a; Psalm 25:4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9; Matthew 21:23-27.*

### O Wisdom

**Tuesday, December 17**

The "O" antiphons date back to around the eighth century. They accompany the Magnificat during evening prayer between today and December 24. As the final days of Advent are entered, dedicate time each evening to meditate with the "O" antiphon of the day. Today's antiphon is "O Wisdom of God our Most High, guiding creation with power and love: come to teach us the path of knowledge!" How can you look to Wisdom to guide you this week? *Today's readings: Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Psalm 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8, 17; Matthew 1:1-17.*

### O Sacred Lord

**Wednesday, December 18**

An angel appears to Joseph in a dream and, similarly to Mary's call at the annunciation, tells him to "not be afraid." Joseph courageously responds by taking Mary "into his home" and faithfully accepting his role as Jesus' earthly father. Today's "O" antiphon is "O Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai: come to rescue us with your mighty power!" As you pray with the antiphon, consider how you might courageously respond to God. *Today's readings: Jeremiah 23:5-8, Psalm 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19; Matthew 1:18-25.*

### You Are My Hope, Lord

**Thursday, December 19**

In today's Gospel, the angel Gabriel appears to Zechariah and tells him that Elizabeth, his barren wife, will give birth to John. Questioning Gabriel, Zechariah notes that he is "an old man, and [Elizabeth] is advanced in years." Gabriel renders Zechariah speechless because of his disbelief. As you light the three candles on your Advent wreath today, pray for those who struggle with their faith. Consider how you might "speak of the mighty works of the Lord." *Today's readings: Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Psalm 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17; Luke 1:5-25.*

### The Lord Is With You

**Friday, December 20**

The angel greets Mary, saying, "Hail, full of grace." Today you might ponder how Mary may have received those words. Spend time with the Gospel reading, using the prayer form *lectio divina*, a slow and repetitive reading and praying with Scripture. In this practice, a phrase is repeated and meditated upon in prayer. At the end of your prayer, pray for pregnant women and those who will give birth today. *Today's readings: Isaiah 7:10-14; Psalm 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6; Luke 1:26-38.*

### O Radiant Dawn

**Saturday, December 21**

Today's antiphon is "O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death." As you pray with today's antiphon, take a moment to pray for those who may "dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death" near you. Dedicate time to serve them this weekend: visit a shelter, a soup kitchen, someone who is homebound, or reach out to a person in mourning. *Today's readings: Song of Songs 2:8-14 or Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Psalm 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Luke 1:39-45.*

**Sunday, December 15**

### The Lord is Near

*Today's readings: Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Isaiah 12:2-3, 4, 5-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:10-18.*

On this Third Sunday of Advent, also called Gaudete Sunday, the second reading and the entrance antiphon proclaim, "The Lord is near." On Gaudete Sunday, a rose-colored candle is lighted on the Advent wreath, along with two purple candles from the previous two weeks of Advent. The purple candles symbolize our prayer and preparation; the rose candle symbolizes our joyful anticipation at the halfway point of Advent.

In today's first reading, the prophet Zephaniah speaks of the restoration of Jerusalem after the nation's sinfulness. He invites us to not be discouraged, but rather to "Shout for joy ... / Sing joyfully" and "Be glad and exult with all your heart." The faithful today, like the people who approached John the Baptist in the Gospel, are filled with expectation.

This week, to continue preparing your heart for the full joy of Christmas, dedicate time every day to pray. As St. Paul suggests in his letter to the Philippians, "with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God." Begin your prayer by expressing your joy and gratitude to God. How will the Lord's nearness inspire you to share your kindness with others? End your prayer by resting in the peace of God.



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