

## Focusing on God

Today's Nativity scene shows the figures set in a golden, eternal background. Details are missing: no landscape, cave, stable, or cattle. Ghirlandaio, Michelangelo's teacher, focuses on the people. The Gospel also refrains from external details and focuses only on the main actors: Mary and Joseph and what is going on in their hearts and minds.

Joseph has to decide how to handle surprising news: His wife is with child and he isn't the father. She claims it was by divine intervention. He had every intention of protecting her while at the same time respecting the law. Luckily his open and honest heart hears indications from an angel. He is to do the unthinkable—take her to himself—because the unimaginable has happened: “It is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived” (Matthew 1:20).

The artist paints Joseph sleeping peacefully because he is the just man who silences his troubled heart in order to hear God's voice. He, like Mary, reflects on things profoundly and grapples with God's will and the amazing vocation placed before

him. His struggle in prayer leads him to have faith and trust. Following God's plan will mean pilgrimage, thus the walking stick, water jug, and knapsack.

We are all tempted to flee from the challenges of discipleship. Yet today Joseph shows us how to “man up.” He assumes his role as a servant leader, teacher, and example. His dozing is not one of laziness but of silent self-control that leads to attentiveness and obedience to God's voice.

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC



### For Reflection

Challenges are opportunities for growth.

How do I face the challenges of following Jesus?

Piece: *Nativity*

Artist: Domenico Bigordi (Ghirlandaio), 1492

Location: Vatican Pinacoteca, Room IX

*“...Do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her” (Matthew 1:20).*

# IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

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 Wendy S. Krisak, M.A. NC, LPC  
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## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 18, 2016

*The Sanctuary Lamp Burns In Memory of Josie & Gus Fredriksen*

### ★ ★ MASS INTENTIONS ★ ★

SAT	5:15 PM	LIVING & DECEASED PARISHIONERS	FRI	7:30 AM	ANTHONY VOLPICCINI
SUN	7:30 AM	DEC'D MEMBERS OF THE EVANS FAMILY	SAT	4:00 PM	CHRISTMAS ENVELOPE INTENTIONS
	9:00 AM	ANGELO, MICHAEL & DORIS BASCELLI		7:00 PM	CHRISTMAS ENVELOPE INTENTIONS
	11:00 AM	DEC'D MEMBERS OF THE OTT FAMILY	SUN	MIDNIGHT	LIVING & DECEASED PARISHIONERS
MON	7:30 AM	CHARLES WAGNER		7:30 AM	<b>No MASS</b>
TUE	7:00 PM	JOSEPHINE, PETER & JOHN BOGUS		9:00 AM	CHRISTMAS ENVELOPE INTENTIONS
WED	7:30 AM	JOSIE & GUS FREDRIKSEN		11:00 AM	CHRISTMAS ENVELOPE INTENTIONS
THU	9:00 AM	<b>ICA MASS</b> - BLANCHE WALSH			
	7:00 PM	HELEN & FRANK JANISZEWSKI			

### NEXT WEEK AT A GLANCE

**SCRIP:** There will be no SCRIP sales on December 24/25. We acknowledge with gratitude all of our volunteers who assist with the sale of SCRIP. Thank you for your kindness.

<u>DAY</u>	<u>MASS</u>	<u>LECTOR</u>	<u>COMMENTATOR</u>	<u>ALTAR SERVERS</u>
SAT	4pm	Joe Bailey	Kevin Creamer	Tray Bradfield, Sean Purretta, Luke Voelker
	7pm	Victor González	Mary Jo Simon	Beth Cote, Briana Gonzalez, Danielle Passifione
SUN	Midnight	Gretchen Markel	Adelina Kieffer	Mickey Gray, Ian Haynes, Jonathan McCollum
	9am	Barrie Pease	Brian Hannon	Sean and Stephen Hannon, Josh Piccarreta
	11am	Karl Filachek	Jim Keaveney	Robert Beitz, Ethan and Leonard Cline

***Second collection next week is the Christmas Collection***

### CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

#### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

#### PENANCE SERVICE

Monday, December 19 - 7:00pm

### CHRISTMAS MASSES

#### CHRISTMAS EVE

Saturday, December 24 - 4:00pm, 7:00pm,  
Midnight

#### CHRISTMAS DAY

Sunday, December 25 - 9:00am, 11:00am

- Remember in your prayers the sick of our parish: Marco Fiato, Bryan Fiato, John & Margaret Kakas, Maryanne Prentice, Delores Woy, Alice Arantowicz, Yolanda Marino, Ann Schlott, Kathy Patrick, Joseph & Susan McCorristin, Mary & Phil Morici, Margaret Maccarone, Dan Casciano, Paisley Stout, Jake Maccarone, William Janda, Madge Butto, Roseann Malcom, Doris Slater, Joan Cronin, Rita Conrad, Rose Osorio, Tony Williams, Dolores McCullough, Steve Mammarella, Gloria Richards, Jane Falcone, Fannie Hunter, Andrew Martin, Mary Okuniewski, Paul Bringenberg, Joseph Kolenda, Kenneth Barth, Dominic Strock, Bob Hocker, Mike DiScala, Keith Kienle, Tom Kirchner, Norma Nanni, Ralph Gullo, Nancy Iezzi, Sonny Motta, Joseph Shevenock, Jr., Mildred Mattassa, Deb Petras, Paul Milshaw, John Geisewite, Patti Frey and Ronald Kryman
- Pray for the recently deceased: Father Joseph Campion, Jennifer Pinti
- Congratulate the newly wed: Kristen Vinciguerra and Robert Melzi
- Pray for the recently baptized: Ellie Mae Ebling and Jackson Michael Mayer

## ***THIS WEEK AT ICC:***

**Mon 12/19 7pm Advent Parish Penance Service**  
**Tues 12/20 7:30pm Bell Choir**  
**Thurs 12/22 7:30pm Adult Choir**

## **WHAT'S HAPPENING**

### **PARISH OFFICE NOTICE**

**Our parish office will be closed Friday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> through January 2<sup>nd</sup> in observance of Christmas and the New Year.**

### ***NEW YEAR'S MASSES***

#### **NEW YEARS EVE**

Saturday, December 31 - 5:15pm

#### **NEW YEAR'S DAY - SOLEMNITY OF MARY**

Sunday, January 1 - 7:30, 9:00am, 11:00am

Dear Parishioners:

In your kindness, I ask you to please remember in your prayers the Reverend Joseph J. Campion who died on Friday, December 9, 2016 at the age of 71. Father Campion was the Pastor Emeritus of Saint John the Baptist Church, Whitehall. Upon his retirement in 2014, Father Campion came to our parish Church of the Immaculate Conception with the hope of spending his retirement years exercising his priestly ministry in our midst as did Monsignor Birch and Monsignor Loeper. He was in residence with us for only a few short months when health issues required that he move to Holy Family Villa for Priests in Bethlehem. A Mass of Christian Burial was offered for Father Campion on Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at Saint John the Baptist Church by Bishop John Barres. Monsignor Callaghan preached the homily. Please pray for Father Campion, that the Lord will grant to him the joys of everlasting life. May his soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Monsignor John McCann

*During the holy season of Advent, there will be a book drive donation box in the narthex. New and gently used children's books ranging from pre-school/early reader books through middle school reading levels will be accepted. The books will be donated to Commonwealth Catholic Charities and distributed to families with children who have been displaced from their homelands because of war, violence and terrorism. For more information or any questions, please contact Erin at [efhannon33@gmail.com](mailto:efhannon33@gmail.com).*

**MARCH FOR LIFE** - On Friday, January 27, 2017 our parish family of the Immaculate Conception is sponsoring a bus to the March for Life to be held in Washington D.C. The bus will depart the ICC parking lot at 8am arriving in Washington D.C. for the noon rally and 1pm March for Life. It is anticipated that the bus will return at approximately 9pm. The cost is \$30 per person. For additional information or to reserve a seat, please contact Angela Peterson at 610-582-6993 or by e-mail at [arpeterson@windsteam.net](mailto:arpeterson@windsteam.net).

**2017 IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CALENDARS** are now available in the narthex. We are most grateful to the Dengler Funeral Home for providing these beautiful religious art calendars to our parishioners.



*May this Christmas season be a time of real joy, of real peace, of real tenderness - a time in which you experience deeply and richly the intimate presence of Jesus in your life. A time for your family to come together, a time for you to be united with all those you love. A time of forgiveness, of reconciliation, of renewal. A time to celebrate lovingly, live joyfully, give generously and believe completely.*

*You and your family will be remembered at every Mass during this Christmas season with prayer and thanksgiving for all that you do for our parish and your brothers and sisters in Christ.*

*Monsignor John B. McCann  
Rev. Leo S. Stajkowski  
Deacon Paul Hiryak  
Deacon James Barji  
Deacon Charles Giordano*

*Christmas Vespers is a service of Light, Word, and Song that features students of the Berks Catholic Chorus and Select Choir. Please come and enjoy the sights and sounds of the reason for the season. Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 3pm - Berks Catholic High School - Franco-Post Auditorium.*

**Emmanuel: An Eternal Gift for Us Today** - Immaculate Conception will host a special Christmas concert on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 7pm. Join us as we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany with favorite carols and inspired readings for the whole family. This free concert will be performed by talented local musicians, including Sandy Bach on the organ and piano, the Bella Musica String Quartet, Pat DeWald on the flute, and Jaylynn Ritter on the trumpet. Refreshments will be served afterwards in the social hall. Come and enjoy some homemade wassail, egg nog, and other tasty treats. A free will offering will be taken up to benefit the Soup Kitchen at the Kennedy House in Reading.

**CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS** - Any 8<sup>th</sup> grade student in Catholic, public or private school who is registered in a parish of the Diocese of Allentown is eligible to apply for a one-year partial scholarship of \$1,000 to be applied to tuition at Berks Catholic High School. Scholarships are awarded on the basis of participation in activities, service to school and community, special honors, leadership positions, academic achievement and the recommendation of the pastor. For an application please contact Immaculate Conception Academy Principal, Mrs. Patricia Tarquinio at 610-404-8645 or Mrs. Dawn O'Donnell, Director of Religious Education at 610-582-3880. **Application Deadline is Friday, January 20, 2017.**

**Saints Shoot Out and Cheerleading Clinic - December 28, 9am-noon.** Boys and Girls Grades K-8. For more information and a registration form visit [www.berkscatholic.org](http://www.berkscatholic.org)

Please save cancelled stamps for the MSC Sisters.  
Place in the basket on the SCRIP Table.

**Berks Catholic Open House, January 29, 2017 2-4pm**

## Calendar

### Monday

December 19  
Advent Weekday  
Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a  
Lk 1:5-25

### Tuesday

December 20  
Advent Weekday  
Is 7:10-14  
Lk 1:26-38

### Wednesday

December 21  
Advent Weekday  
Sg 2:8-14  
or Zep 3:14-18a  
Lk 1:39-45

### Thursday

December 22  
Advent Weekday  
1 Sm 1:24-28  
Lk 1:46-56

### Friday

December 23  
Advent Weekday  
Mal 3:1-4, 23-24  
Lk 1:57-66

### Saturday

December 24  
Advent Weekday  
2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12,  
14a, 16  
Lk 1:67-79

### Sunday

December 25  
*The Nativity of the Lord*  
Is 52:7-10  
Heb 1:1-6  
Jn 1:1-18  
or 1:1-5, 9-14

# Dear Padre,

## Why is St. Joseph called “the Worker?” Shouldn’t he be honored primarily as the father of Jesus?

Devotion to St. Joseph has developed along an interesting path. It was not until the eighth century that Joseph, underneath the title “Spouse of Mary,” was even publicly acknowledged—except perhaps as an afterthought or silent participant in the Christmas story. The Church has always acknowledged that Joseph’s relationship with Jesus was unique, but there was,



ANDREAS BERHEIDT / SHUTTERSTOCK

and continues to be, reluctance to call him the father of Jesus. We understand the father of Jesus is not Joseph but rather God the Father.

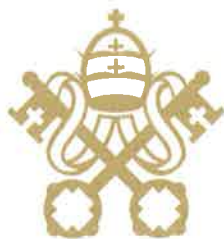
A consensus about Joseph’s role in the plan of salvation seems to be in place by the early fourteenth century. In 1870, Pope Pius IX declared Joseph the patron of the

universal Church. By the early twentieth century, worldwide devotion had found a home at St. Joseph’s Oratory in Montreal.

The title of “the Worker” was used most often by Pope Pius XI in his references to Joseph as the patron of the Church’s battle against atheistic communism. Pope Pius XII established the May 1 feast in 1955 to emphasize the Catholic teaching concerning the dignity of labor.

Saint Joseph could be summarized best as a man who did the best he could when God’s will became clear. This image and model seems the best and most helpful for deepening our understanding of and devotion to him.

From *Dear Padre: Questions People Ask*, Liguori, 2003  
sundaybulletin@liguori.org



## A Word From Pope Francis

*“By accepting himself according to God’s design, Joseph fully finds himself, beyond himself. His freedom to renounce even what is his, the possession of his very life, ...challenge us and show us the way.”*

—Angelus, December 22, 2013