

Like the Morning Star

For the first four centuries following Jesus' ascension, Christians grappled with how to understand how his humanity and divinity commingled in his person. His humanity was evident to all who walked and talked with him. His divinity was also evident to his disciples because of the miracles he worked, not least his death and resurrection. In short, they knew he was fully human, and they knew he was fully God, but how could he be fully both at the same time?

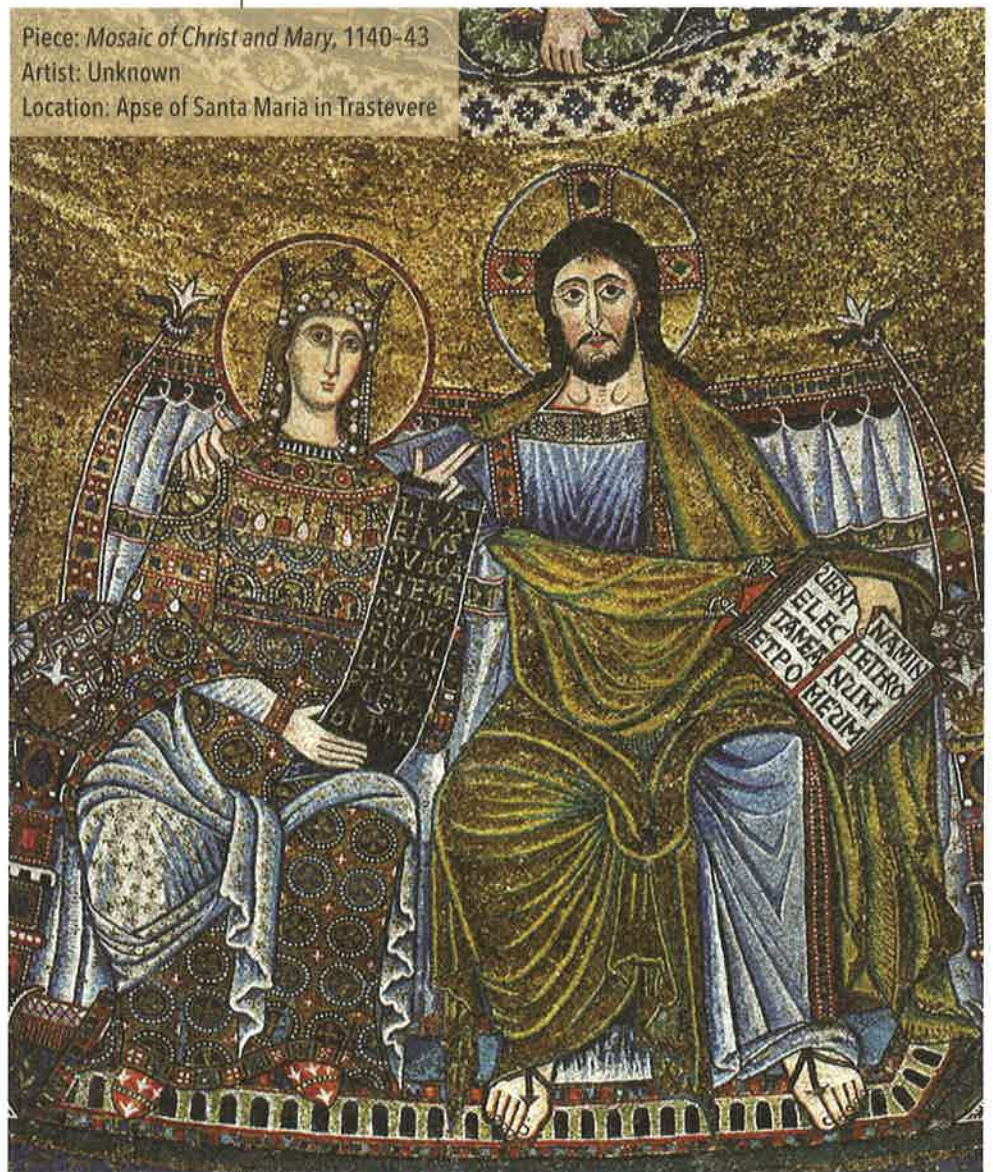
The Council of Ephesus in 431 settled the issue definitively. The Church declared that in the one person of Christ there are two natures: one divine and one human. This same council also declared, as a natural consequence, that the holy virgin is the Mother of God (*Theotokos*), since she conceived and gave birth to the Word of God. So today's feast is one of the oldest, shared by all Christians from the earliest times.

When Mary said "yes" to the Incarnation and gave birth to the

Savior, all of us could bask in his divine light. She is like the morning star that first breaks the horizon and mirrors the light of the sun that she both foretells and follows. In loving Mary, we truly honor her Son. God was the first to praise her through Gabriel—"Hail, favored one!"—and the one who blessed her beyond all other creatures. We are merely following his example.

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Piece: Mosaic of Christ and Mary, 1140–43
Artist: Unknown
Location: Apse of Santa Maria in Trastevere



For Reflection

Do I let God's face shine on me by spending time in prayer or before the Eucharist? How can I honor Mary today for her lifelong fidelity and grace?

"The LORD bless you and keep you! The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!" (Numbers 6:24–25).

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

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SOLEMNITY OF MARY - JANUARY 1, 2017

The Sanctuary Lamp Burns In Memory of Josie Fredriksen

☆☆ MASS INTENTIONS ☆☆

SAT 5:15 PM ANNETTE BRENNAN
 SUN 7:30 AM CATHERINE ALDERMAN
 9:00 AM THEONA KOZAK
 11:00 AM LIVING & DECEASED PARISHIONERS
 MON **No Mass**
 TUES 7:00 PM MICHAEL PULITI, JR.
 WED 7:30 AM LUCINDA WEILER

THURS 7:00 PM JASON JULIANO
 FRI 7:30 AM ROSANNA J. LONG
 SAT 5:15 PM FRANK JANISZEWSKI
 SUN 7:30 AM BRUCE KETTERER
 9:00 AM NOAH CENCETTI
 11:00 AM LIVING & DECEASED PARISHIONERS

NEXT WEEK AT A GLANCE

SCRIP: Dowling 5:15pm Costanzo 7:30am Schwendt 9:00am Grieco 11:00am Hafer

| <u>DAY</u> | <u>MASS</u> | <u>LECTOR</u> | <u>COMMENTATOR</u> | <u>ALTAR SERVERS</u> |
|------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|--|
| SAT | 5:15 PM | Ann Marie Arbo | Mary Schwendt | Carina Cress, Kathryn Krueger, Avery Lang |
| SUN | 7:30 AM | Dennis Piontek | Dan Sweeney | Ryan Ferrante, Vinny Ferrara, Zach Whalen |
| | 9:00 AM | Tim Stewart | Pat Fessler | John Dinnocenti, Marissa and Steven Tepper |
| | 11:00 AM | Greg Shemanski | Barbara Romig | Joey and Logan Conlon, Austin Lobaugh |

Second collection next week is the Monthly Collection

Dear Parishioners,
 Thank you very much for your Christmas greetings and gifts. We deeply appreciated your thoughtfulness and are most grateful to you for your prayerful support and encouragement. We hope that each of you had a holy and happy Christmas and that the New Year will bring you and your family much happiness, lasting good health and peace.

Please continue to remember us in your prayers and as always be assured of our prayers and best wishes.

God Bless You,
 Msgr. John B. McCann
 Rev. Leo S. Stajkowski
 Deacon James A. Bardi
 Deacon Charles A. Giordano
 Deacon Paul Hiryak
 Staff of Immaculate Conception Church

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 Guilliams, Dolores McCullough, Steve Mammarella, Gloria Richards, Jane Falcone, Fannie Hunter, Andrew Martin, Mary Okuniewski, Paul Bringerberg, 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, Ronald Kryman, Anthony Neishloss, Anna Swiezak, Margarie & Walter Hansen, Arlene Shirley, Mark McDonald, Louis Tamburro, Roger Wolf and Helen McDonald

HOSPITAL VISITATIONS: Monsignor McCann, Deacon Hiryak, Deacon Bardi and Deacon Giordano visit our parishioners who are hospitalized, in nursing homes or homebound regularly. If you or a member of your family is hospitalized, please call the parish office at 610-582-2411.

THIS WEEK AT ICC:

Mon 01/02 7:30pm RCIA
Tues 01/03 7:30pm Baptism Class
7:30pm Bell Choir
Sat 01/07 4-5pm Confession

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Please be advised that there will be no daily Mass on Monday, January 2, 2017. Thank you for your kind understanding in the regard.

The Junior High School Youth Group will meet Friday, January 6th at 7pm. All of the 7th and 8th grade students are invited attend and bring a friend for an evening of fun, food, game and prayer.

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.

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS - Any 8th 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.

Immaculate Conception Academy Aftercare is looking for someone willing to work several hours per week from 3pm to 6pm. Must have completed "Protecting God's Children" and obtain required background checks and clearances. Call Laura DeFalco at 610-463-8157.

Berks Catholic Open House, January 29, 2017 2-4pm
A terrific opportunity to meet faculty, administration and current students. Our clubs and activities are on display to give you a glimpse into what we are about. Open House is an exciting experience seeing our community together.

Before departing to become the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, NY, Bishop Barres will celebrate a final Mass in the Diocese of Allentown on January 22nd at 12pm at the Cathedral of Saint Catharine of Siena, 1825 W Turner St, Allentown. All in the Diocese are welcome and invited to attend this Mass as we recognize and give thanks for the pastoral leadership of our fourth Shepherd. Let us pray together, as a Diocese, for Bishop Barres as he takes on the responsibility to lead and govern the people of Rockville Centre. Following the Mass a social will follow with light refreshments in the Parish Activity Center, directly below the Cathedral.

Emmanuel: An Eternal Gift for Us Today
Immaculate Conception will host a special Christmas concert on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 8th, 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.

The Women's Society will be holding its annual **Soup Sale** before and after all Masses on **January 14th and 15th**. The only thing better than a hot bowl of hearty homemade soup on these chilly days is having someone else make it for you. If you want to warm yourself twice, consider making up a batch or two of your favorites to share. Contact Marsha at 610-385-6319 or email mgazz615@icloud.com if you need containers. Thanks in advance for your donation.

SCRIP FACTS - Do you realize that you can reduce your child's tuition at Immaculate Conception Academy, Berks Catholic High School or CCD just by buying **SCRIP** to use at stores and restaurants that you go to anyway?
It's as easy as...

1. Bring a check/cash to any weekend Mass or parish office during business hours to buy **SCRIP**.
2. Choose the **SCRIP** you need; basically you are buying a gift certificate. You have just credited yourself 2.5% of the **SCRIP** purchase price toward school tuition or CCD tuition and made a donation to ICC. And it didn't cost you a penny more than what you would have spent anyway! You'll be surprised at how quickly this will add up! You could literally save hundreds of dollars off your tuition!
3. Use the **SCRIP** at the store or restaurant for your purchase. Pay your Kohl's bill or Boscov's bill (at the East store only) with **SCRIP**. **SCRIP** also makes a great gift at holidays, birthdays or anytime!!
4. Meanwhile, ICC keeps a tab on how much credit you have earned. The credit year for school tuition is June 1 through May 31 and is deducted from tuition for the following school year. For CCD, the credit year is March 1 through the end of February for the following year.
5. Feel free to choose any family to receive your credit! If no family is chosen, the church receives the credit.

SCRIP is available for Boyer's Family Market, Boscov's, Redner's, Applebee's, Giant, Red Lobster/Olive Garden/Bahama Breeze/Smokey Bones/LongHorn Steak House/Seasons 52, Kohl's and Flynn & O'Hara in many different denominations. **SCRIP** is available at the parish office or at each weekend Mass. For info, call Rita at 610-582-2411.

Calendar

Monday

January 2

*Sts. Basil the Great and
Gregory Nazianzen,
Bishops and
Doctors of the Church*

1 Jn 2:22–28

Jn 1:19–28

Tuesday

January 3

Christmas Weekday

1 Jn 2:29–3:6

Jn 1:29–34

Wednesday

January 4

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton,

Religious

1 Jn 3:7–10

Jn 1:35–42

Thursday

January 5

St. John Neumann, Bishop

1 Jn 3:11–21

Jn 1:43–51

Friday

January 6

Christmas Weekday

1 Jn 5:5–13

Mk 1:7–11

or Lk 3:23–38

Saturday

January 7

Christmas Weekday

1 Jn 5:14–21

Jn 2:1–11

Sunday

January 8

The Epiphany of the Lord

Is 60:1–6

Eph 3:2–3a, 5–6

Mt 2:1–12

Dear Padre,

Does calling Mary “the Mother of God” mean that she came before God?

No; it simply expresses our belief that Mary is truly the Mother of Jesus, who from the moment of his conception was both human and divine. Catholics believe that God is a Trinity of persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in one divine nature. We believe that God existed from all eternity and is the source of all created things. We also believe that, to save us from sin, the second person of the Trinity, the Son, took on a human nature. God became one of us in the mystery of the Incarnation.

Luke’s Infancy narrative (1:26–38) tells us that God sent Gabriel to Mary to announce that she would have a child, the Son of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mary consented, and Jesus Christ was conceived in her womb. Later, Mary is greeted by Elizabeth as “the mother of my Lord” (1:43). This greeting expresses the reality that the Lord, the God of the Hebrew Scriptures, is present in Mary’s womb. Other passages testify to the same fact. Mary is the Mother of Jesus. Jesus is God (John 20:28). Therefore, Mary is the Mother of God.

When we honor Mary as “the Mother of God,” we are professing our belief that Jesus is truly God. We are not saying that Mary came before God but rather that the Son, who existed from all eternity, “became flesh and lived among us” (John 1:14).

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



A Word From Pope Francis

“In Christ...we recognize a human nature and a divine nature, united in the same person in a miraculous and indissoluble way. This holds in an analogous way for the Church.”

—General audience, October 29, 2014