

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, December 3

5:00 p.m. +**Arthur Peterson**
By Nancy and Charlie Guerriere

Sunday, December 4

8:00 a.m. +**Marina and Giovanni Nappa**
By Granddaughter

10:30 a.m. +**Ginny Moss**
By Gerry and Brian Moss

Monday, December 5

8:45 a.m. **Parishioners of St. Theodore Church**

Tuesday, December 6

8:45 a.m. + **Theresa Rebinski**
By Henry Rebinski

Wednesday, December 7 Vigil Immaculate Conception

NO MORNING MASS

6:30 p.m. + **Ludwik Tomiczek**
By Altar Rosary Society

Thursday, December 8 Immaculate Conception

8:45 a.m. **In Honor of the Madonna of Health**

6:30 p.m. + **Antonietta and Sabino Antinolfi**
By Daughter

Friday, December 9 NO MASS

Saturday, December 10

5:00 p.m. **Altar Rosary Society**

Sunday, December 11

8:00 a.m. +**Thomas R. Mattison**
By Jim and Eileen Mattison

10:30 a.m. **Parishioners of St. Theodore Church**

groups in this period are thought to have practiced ritual washings for similar purposes, and John's baptism may have been related to the practices of the Essenes, a Jewish sect of the first century. John's baptism can be understood as an anticipation of Christian baptism. In this passage, John himself alludes to the difference between his baptism and the one yet to come: "I am baptizing you with water, for repentance . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Matthew 3:11).

In this reading, John makes very clear that his relationship to the Messiah yet to come (Jesus) is one of service and subservience: ". . . the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals" (Matthew 3:11). In the context of Matthew's Gospel, today's passage is followed by Jesus' baptism by John, an event that is attested to in all four of the Gospels and appears to have been the start of Jesus' public ministry.

John's preaching of the coming of the Lord is a key theme of the Advent season. As John's message prepared the way for Jesus in the first century, we, too, are called to prepare ourselves for Jesus' coming. We respond to John's message by our repentance and reform of our lives. We are also called to be prophets of Christ, who announce by our lives, as John did, the coming of the Lord.



In this week's Gospel Reading and next week's, our Advent preparation for Christmas invites us to consider John the Baptist and his relationship to Jesus. In this week's Gospel, Matthew describes the

work and preaching of John the Baptist.

John the Baptist appears in the tradition of the great prophets of Israel, preaching repentance and reform to the people of Israel. In fact, the description of John found in this reading is reminiscent of the description of the prophet Elijah (2 Kings 1:8). In this reading, John directs a particularly pointed call to repentance to the Pharisees and Sadducees, parties within the Jewish community of the first century.

John marks the conversion of those who seek him out with a baptism of repentance. Other

The Immaculate Conception



It's important to understand what the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is and what it is not. Some people think the term refers to Christ's conception in Mary's

womb without the intervention of a human father; but that is the Virgin Birth. Others think the Immaculate Conception means Mary was conceived "by the power of the Holy Spirit," in the way Jesus was, but that, too, is incorrect. The Immaculate Conception means that Mary, whose conception was brought about the normal way, was conceived without original sin or its stain—

that's what "immaculate" means: without stain. The essence of original sin consists in the deprivation of sanctifying grace, and its stain is a corrupt nature. Mary was preserved from these defects by God's grace; from the first instant of her existence she was in the state of sanctifying grace and was free from the corrupt nature original sin brings.

When discussing the Immaculate Conception, an implicit reference may be found in the angel's greeting to Mary. The angel Gabriel said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28). The phrase "full of grace" is a translation of the Greek word *kecharitomene*. It therefore expresses a characteristic quality of Mary.

The traditional translation, "full of grace," is better than the one found in many recent versions of the New Testament, which give something along the lines of "highly favored daughter." Mary was indeed a highly favored daughter of God, but the Greek implies more than that (and it never mentions the word for "daughter"). The grace given to Mary is at once permanent and of a unique kind. *Kecharitomene* is a perfect passive participle of *charitoo*, meaning "to fill or endow with grace." Since this term is in the perfect tense, it indicates that Mary was graced in the past but with continuing effects in the present. So, the grace Mary enjoyed was not a result of the angel's visit. In fact, Catholics hold, it extended over the whole of her life, from conception onward. She was in a state of sanctifying grace from the first moment of her existence.

Immaculate Conception

Holy Day of Obligation Mass Schedule

Wednesday, Dec. 6: 6:30 pm; No Morning Mass

Thursday, Dec. 7: 8:45 am & 6:30 pm

Church Schedule

Bible Study: Every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. (No Bible Study on Dec. 8.)

Dec. 8: Holy Day of Obligation (Immaculate Conception). No Bible Study

Dec. 10: Warren Haven Christmas Mass

Dec. 11, 11:30: Visit from St. Nicholas

Dec. 17, 4 p.m.: Christmas Confessions

Dec. 17, 6 p.m.: Visiting Choir performing Christmas music

Dec. 18, 11:30: Brunch with Santa

Our Offering
November 27: \$2,236.05; 2015: \$2,597.25



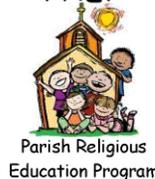
I worked for a pastor who once told me the two most important

aspects of the Mass were the homily and the music. Having been a music director at several churches and denominations throughout my life, I have always remembered that and have taken my musical responsibilities seriously.

It is important that the music during the Mass compliments the scripture readings. The congregation of every parish has particular tastes in music that can even be different from Mass to Mass. Finding the right songs to satisfy the scripture theme and parishioners' preferences can be challenging. I believe in creating a mix of songs, leaning towards more conservative selections at the 5:00 and 8:00 Masses and more contemporary ones at the 10:30 Mass. Introducing new songs and instruments is equally important and allows us new ways to praise our Lord through music. Stop by and let me know what you think. Requests accepted too!

--Chris Lance, Music Director

PREP



Dec. 10, 1:30: Leaving for Warren Haven Christmas Mass. Service Hours will be granted.

Dec. 26; No Rel Ed



Stephen, Anthony Vitale, Bridget M., Savannah Paine, Bobby Gross, Michael Dante, Keira H., Maryann Vaughan, Robert

Dicheck, Peter, Zachary, Logan Peter Saks, Anna Paine, Maryann Vaughan, Anna Saks, Lauren Lane, Jay Mildrum, Philip Kinney, Mary D., Kerry Kraft, Patty Mahoney, Cheyann Miller, Cathy Moncello, Louise C., Peter S. Helen Dicheck