





ADVENT SONGS & REFLECTIONS

ADVENT SONGS

ALL THE TITLES ARE HYPERLINKED - JUST CLICK ON THEM!

- Prepare the Way - Charlie Hall
- Even So Come - Kristian Stanfill
- Come Thou Long Expected Jesus - Meredith Andrews
- O Come, O Come Emmanuel - Pentatonix
- Come to Save Us - All Sons & Daughters
- Waiting Here for You - Martin Smith
- To Those Who Wait - Bethany Dillon
- Make Room - Casting Crowns
- God with us - All Sons & Daughters
- Help from Heaven - Matt Redman
- Wait for the Lord - Taize
- While I'm waiting - John Waller
- I Will Wait - Mumford & Sons



ADVENT THOUGHTS

- Advent: More than a Chocolate Calendar (Fr Mike Schmitz)
- Waiting for Christmas (Fr Mike Schmitz)
- JOY (The Bible Project)
- *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus (The Skit Guys)*
- *Advent in Two Minutes (Busted Halo)*
- The Advent Wreath (Kendra Tierney)
- *The Big Story: Gospel Project (Salvation History)*
- What's unique about Advent? Bishop Robert Barron
- The Meaning of Advent Candles (The Catholic Mama)



HELPFUL WEBSITES!

- Seven Catholic Advent Traditions, and which ones will work for your family: Catholic All Year
- 12 Catholic Activities for Families: Dynamic Catholic
- Advent Activities for All (Loyola Press)
- Preparing Teens for Advent (LifeTeen)
- A Complete Guide to Catholic Advent (Dynamic Catholic)
- 50+ Advent Calendar Ideas for Kids that Won't Burn You Out
- Advent Prayer Leaflet (Diocese of Waterford & Lismore)
- Liturgical Resources for Advent (Diocese of Waterford & Lismore)
- 11 Life Hacks for Advent (LifeTeen)
- Finding the Heart of God in Advent (LifeTeen)

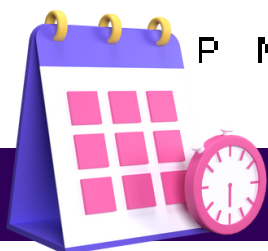




Advent



T J E S S E T R E E S H A O C K G L
 C N P X L P U D S V E L L Y L H N E
 H O E Y P O X A C H R C E S P A I U
 Z E L V I E M E S S I A H G J X M N
 U F V V D T C H T A E R W X N Z O A
 P Q A T S A N T G R T C R I S A C M
 O S O I N O I T A P I C I T N A D M
 Z E R B I R T H M T K X Q J Z H N E
 Q H L S K H E J I A I O N O B E O K
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 R O L N A L H Z E E M Y N E T O E O
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 P P F L E J S T I C F A I J A X N S
 N U E H N T T C O E U W L D G S A V
 L A E P W Q G D Q R L A E H E C W P
 P M S D R E H P E H S V S P R C I E



FIND THE WORDS RELATED TO ADVENT IN THE WORDSEARCH.

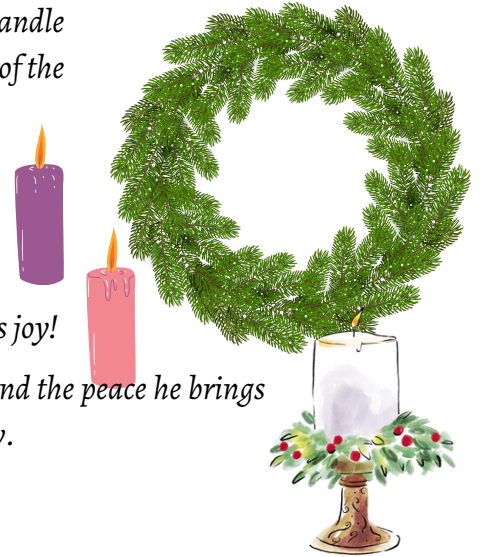
Advent | ancestors | angels | anticipation | awake | Bethlehem |
 birth | candles | christmas | Emmanuel | expectation | Herod | hopeful
 | Jesse tree | Joseph | joyful | magi | Mary | Messiah | prepare |
 Saviour | second coming | shepherds | wreath

PICK 10 AND EXPLAIN THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN THIS SEASON OF ADVENT!

ADVENT WREATH SYMBOLISM

The Advent wreath is a circular garland of evergreen branches representing eternity.

- On that wreath, four or five candles are typically arranged. Each candle represents a particular aspect of the spiritual preparation for the coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ.
- Purple or violet: Symbolizes penitence, or regret for sins, and penance. Purple is also the colour of royalty: a reminder of the birth of the new King and of his suffering.
- Pink or Rose: Used on the 3rd week of Advent, Gaudete Sunday, represents joy!
- A large white pillar candle in the centre of the wreath represents Christ and the peace he brings - lit on Christmas Eve and is lit every night until the feast of the Epiphany.



ADVENT CANDLE NAMES

Week 1:

The Prophecy Candle

The first purple candle symbolizes hope and God's forgiveness toward man. It also can symbolize the expectation of the coming of the Messiah.

ADVENT WREATH BLESSING

Dear Jesus, as we light the candle(s) on this Advent wreath, may the light of your presence bring joy to our hearts. Bless our family and our friends, and be with all those who are in need this time of year. Amen.

Week 2:

The Bethlehem Candle

The second purple candle symbolizes faith and reminds Catholics about the experience of Joseph and Mary in the city of Bethlehem.



ADVENT CLASS PRAYER

Heavenly Father, your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us, a great sign of your love. Guide us as we strive to walk in that love this Advent. As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, bring us closer to our families, our friends and our classmates, and to your son. Give us the grace and strength we need every day. Help us to always trust in you. Come, Lord Jesus, lead all people closer to you. Come and dispel the darkness of our world with the light of your love. Amen.

Week 4:

The Angel's Candle

The last purple candle is the Angel's Candle and represents the peace and justice that the angels and Christ brings to the world.

ADVENT WREATH PRAYERS

www.dynamiccatholic.com



Week 1

**light the first purple candle*

Hope

Scripture Reflection: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone." Isaiah 9:2

**pause for reflection*

Advent Wreath Prayer: Dear Jesus, you are the hope in our messy world. This Advent, help us slow down, listen to your voice, and focus on what's really important. We place our hope in you as we prepare our hearts to celebrate your birth on Christmas. Amen.



Week 2

**light the first and second purple candles*

Peace

Scripture Reflection: "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." Luke 2:4-7

**pause for reflection*

Advent Wreath Prayer: Dear Jesus, you entered our world on Christmas as the Prince of Peace. This Advent, as we strive to become the-best-version-of-ourselves, fill us with a deep and abiding peace. Help us share that peace with everyone we encounter, especially those who need it most. Amen.



Week 3

**light the first and second purple candles and the pink candle*

Joy

Scripture Reflection:

"And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them." Luke 2:20

**pause for reflection*

Advent Wreath Prayer: Dear Jesus, help us focus on you during this busy season. May we stay aware of the joy you bring into our lives. We want to find you in the everyday moments and come with hearts of gratitude to your manger on Christmas. Amen.



Week 4

**light all four candles*

Love

Scripture Reflection: "And the angel said to them, 'Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.'" Luke 2:10-11

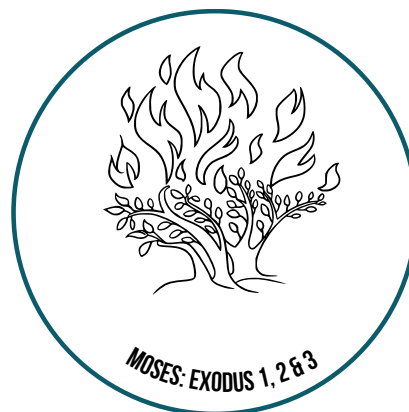
**pause for reflection*

Advent Wreath Prayer: Dear Jesus, may the light of your love always shine in our hearts. As Christmas draws closer, we marvel at your great love for us. Let your love transform every aspect of our lives and touch everyone we encounter. Our hearts are open to you, Jesus. Amen.

Advent symbol: THE JESSE TREE



The Jesse Tree is a way of preparing for Advent by discovering more about Salvation History through the stories of Jesus's family tree. Each day of Advent, read a Bible story or extract about one of Jesus' ancestors, and hang the appropriate symbol / ornament on your Jesse Tree, which can be something as simple as a branch. As the number of decorations increase, you'll see the story of salvation unfold: how God prepared for Jesus to be born through many generations.



Advent symbol: THE JESSE TREE



Isaiah 11:1:

"A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots."

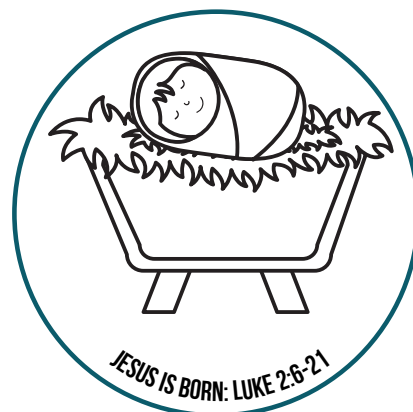
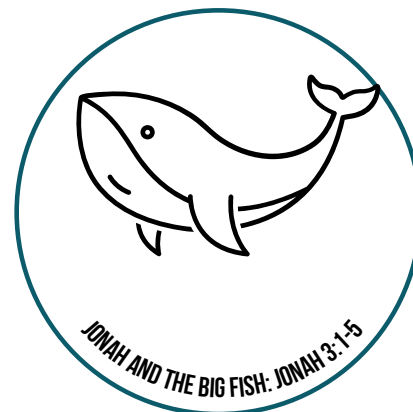
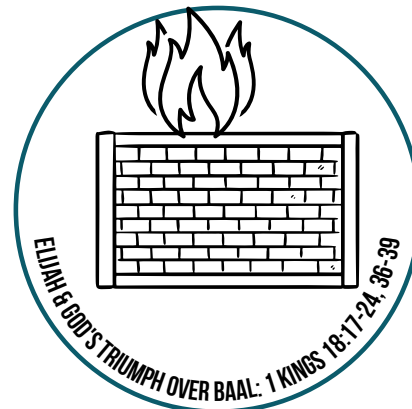
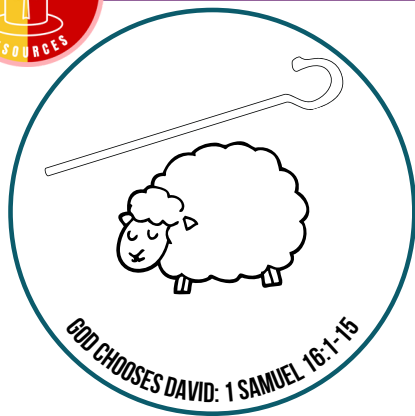
Jesse was the father of David, who became Israel's greatest king. Jesus is descended from the line of David, the promised "branch" in the line of Jesse and David.



The Big Story: Gospel Project
(Salvation History)



Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
The Skit Guys



Hope



Peace



- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -

Joy



- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -

Love



- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -



O Come,
O Come
Emmanuel

- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -



CHECK OUT THE
CATECHISM OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
SAYS ABOUT THE
SEASON OF ADVENT
CCC 440

ADVENT WEEK 1



YEAR A: MATTHEW 24:37-44
YEAR B: MARK 13:33-37
YEAR C: LUKE 21:25-36

Advent is...
Hopeful Anticipation
Expectant Waiting
Joyful Preparation

ARE YOU READY?

WALKING DEBATE

- CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS SHOULD GO UP STRAIGHT AFTER HALLOWEEN.
- CHRISTMAS MUSIC SHOULD NOT BE PLAYED UNTIL MID DECEMBER.
- CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS SHOULD STAY UP UNTIL THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (OR LATER!)



DO YOU HAVE ANY FAMILY TRADITIONS AROUND DECORATING FOR CHRISTMAS
/ PUTTING UP THE TREE / THE CRIB?

THINK - PAIR - SHARE!



WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE SEASON OF ADVENT?

WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ, "THE TRUE MEANING OF ADVENT"
(ASCENSION PRESENTS) AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



What is Fr Mike's response to people wanting to put up Christmas decorations early:
what question should people ask themselves?

Advent is a season of preparation: what is the first thing we prepare to celebrate?

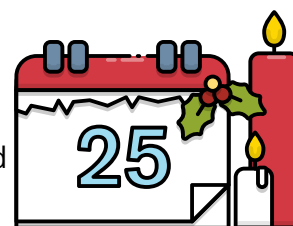
There's a deeper purpose to Advent: what is the second thing we prepare for?

Do we know when this event will happen?

How does Fr Mike explain how it will happen in our lifetimes one way or another?

What stark question does Fr Mike suggest we ask: what could we prepare for as
if it could happen on December 25th this year?

Fr Mike does not suggest this as a morbid thought. Instead he proposes it would
give focus to the season of Advent. In what way(s) could it have this effect?



ARE YOU READY?



How did one of Fr Mike's students put this challenge into action? How easy would you find it to do something like that? What would hinder you? What would be the benefits?

Can you believe it's Advent already? Where did that time go? In just a few weeks Christmas will be over and we'll be into a new year. But let's not get ahead of ourselves: today is the start of the **liturgical** new year and we have plenty of time to prepare well for Christmas.

We hear in today's Gospel about the need to stay awake: obviously we literally can't do that, we need to sleep, but what Jesus is talking about is a deeper sense of wakefulness than that. Are we awake to the presence of God in our lives. Are we awake to the real meaning of Christmas? At Christmas we celebrate "Emmanuel", God-with-us. We have to remember that our God is not a distant God, watching us slip up with a frown on His face. No, He is a loving Father who does everything possible to win our hearts and bring us to Heaven. The whole story of Salvation history (which we retell through the Jesse Tree in Advent) reminds us that God never gives up. This is why the Church gives us the season of Advent: to be prepared to celebrate Jesus' first coming in Bethlehem, and His Second Coming, at the end of the world, or just the end of our lives. Let's not waste the time we have, but use it to serve God and others, and be the best version of ourselves!



MISSION!

IF YOU WERE TO TAKE FR MIKE'S ADVICE, AND DECIDE TO LIVE THIS ADVENT SEASON DIFFERENTLY, WHAT CHANGES COULD YOU MAKE? DID ANY OF FR MIKE'S SUGGESTIONS RESONATE WITH YOUR HEART? REFLECT IN PRAYER, AND ASK GOD TO GUIDE YOU. HE KNOWS YOUR HEART AND YOUR DEEPEST DESIRES. HE KNOWS TOO, THE WOUNDS OUR PASTS CAN CAUSE US AND AREAS WHERE WE NEED TO CHOOSE HEALING. CHOOSE ONE THING THIS WEEK, A SMALL OR A BIG STEP - THAT'S UP TO YOU!



PRAYER TIME!

If you have an Advent Wreath, light the first purple candle. If you don't, try to find a tealight or candle you can light, to remind you of the Light of Christ that dispels the darkness of our world and brings Hope that darkness can never quench.

Son of God, You are the light of the world. Shine your light on all our choices this day. Create in us the ability to let your light shine forth for others. We ask this in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.
Ave Maria Press



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT



- O Come, O Come Emmanuel (Pentatonix)
- Prepare the Way (Charlie Hall)
- Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (Meredith Andrews)
- Come to save us (All Sons & Daughters)
- Help from Heaven (Matt Redman)
- To those who wait (Bethany Dillon)
- While I'm waiting (John Waller)
- I will wait (Mumford & Sons)



The Big Story: Gospel Project
(Salvation History)



Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
The Skit Guys



Advent in Two Minutes
Busted Halo



YEAR A: MATTHEW 3:1-12

YEAR B: MARK 1:1-8

YEAR C: LUKE 3:1-6

"Confession is a place of victory!"

Fr Mike Schmitz

CHECK OUT THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS ABOUT CONFESSION CCC 1423-1424

PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD

DO YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ADMIT WHEN YOU'RE WRONG?
 DO YOU FIND IT HARD TO GO TO CONFESSION? WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?
 SHARE WITH ANOTHER PERSON IF YOU ARE HAPPY TO.



WHAT KIND OF THINGS MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE TO GO TO CONFESSION?

WHAT DO YOU IMAGINE CONFESSION IS LIKE FROM A PRIEST'S PERSPECTIVE?

WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ, "CONFESSION IS A PLACE OF VICTORY" (ASCENSION PRESENTS) AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



Fr Mike describes confession as **"one of the most joyful, humble and inspiring places in the world"**. Does this surprise you? Why (or why not)?

THREE THINGS THE PRIEST SEES IN CONFESSION:

1. THE COSTLY MERCY OF GOD IN ACTION.



People who are **discouraged** being _____

People who are **wounded** being _____

People who are **lost** being _____

People who are t _____

People saying: "I'm not going to give up on the God who won't _____"

2. THE HUMAN PERSON, PART OF GOD'S MASTERPIECE.

Fr Mike says sins are like _____. That means that priests are like God's _____ collectors!

"Sins are boring". What is fascinating / memorable is the _____



3. THE PRIEST'S OWN SOUL AND HIS OWN HEART.

Sometimes a priest will recognise something in their own life when they hear another confess it. It can act as an examination of _____ for the priest himself.

- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -



PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD



Fr Mike's father was a surgeon who saved lives and healed bodies. What did he say his son (Fr Mike) would do with his priest's hands?

CONFESSION IS A PLACE OF VICTORY.

THE PRIEST HEARING CONFESSIONS GETS TO SEE GOD WINNING HIS CHILDREN BACK, EVERY SINGLE DAY!



Has this video changed / added to your understanding of confession in any way? What struck you the most from Fr Mike's explanation?



In this Gospel passage, we hear about Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, who lived a radical and unconventional lifestyle in response to a personal call by God to prepare the way for the Messiah. John understood that a genuine conversion of heart would be necessary to really accept the Messiah' message. He wanted people to repent and believe, to prepare a way for the Messiah. Can you imagine how someone like John the Baptist would be viewed in today's world? Do you think his message is still relevant today? In the Catholic tradition, one of the most beautiful and healing sacraments is the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession. It is a chance to take stock of our lives, see what is going well and not so well, see what is hindering us from drawing close to God and what we need forgiveness for. God's mercy is freely available to us. He doesn't just offer to mend our broken hearts: He puts a new heart in us each time we go to confession, and strengthens us so we can follow the path to Heaven again!



MISSION!

TAKE SOME TIME OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS OR WEEKS TO MAKE A GOOD EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE. ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE YOU AS YOU TRY TO REMEMBER ANY AREAS OF YOUR LIFE WHERE YOU FAILED IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, OTHERS OR YOURSELF; TIMES WHERE YOU FAILED TO SHOW LOVE OR DELIBERATELY IGNORED GOD'S WILL OR GUIDANCE FOR YOUR LIFE. FIND OUT WHEN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH HAS CONFESSIONS AND DECIDE TO GO. YOU CAN PRAY FOR THE PRIEST IN ADVANCE TOO!



PRAYER TIME!

ACT OF SORROW:

O my God, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for all my sins; for not loving others and not loving You. Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again. Amen



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON FORGIVENESS AND HEALING



- From the Inside Out (Hillsong)
- Prepare the Way (Charlie Hall)
- Thank You (Jesus Army)
- Lord have mercy (MW Smith)
- You Say (Lauren Daigle)
- Here's my heart Lord (David Crowder)
- Hold onto me (Lauren Daigle)
- O Come to the Altar (Elevation Worship)



Making a Good Confession
Fr Mike Schmitz



How do I go to
Confession? ODB Films



Examination of Conscience
(NET USA)



The Chosen: Jesus forgives
Mary Magdalen Scene



CHECK OUT THE
 CATECHISM OF THE
 CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS
 ABOUT THE IMMACULATE
 CONCEPTION
 CCC 490-493



THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

As the moon shines with
 the light of the sun, so the
 immaculate splendour of
 Mary is totally relative to
 that of the Redeemer.
 Pope John Paul II



WHAT FEAST DAY DO WE CELEBRATE ON 25TH MARCH, NINE MONTHS BEFORE CHRISTMAS DAY?

ON DECEMBER 8TH WE CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION. IS THIS JESUS' OR MARY'S CONCEPTION?

WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ, "THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION"
 (ASCENSION PRESENTS) AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



- What do most people think the dogma of the Immaculate Conception is about?

DEFINITION: *The Immaculate Conception means that from the very first moment of her conception, Mary was preserved from all stain of O _____ S _____ by the merits of her Son's future I _____, d _____ and r _____.*

- Who is Mary's Saviour? _____



- Explain Fr Mike's **Dr Joe Johnson cure / vaccine analogy** in your own words. What are the two ways he could be seen as a "saviour"?



- Christians are saved by Jesus at baptism, and continue to be saved by saying _____. This happened *after the fact* of Original Sin being inherited.

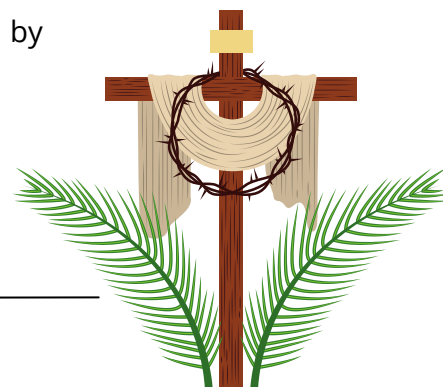
- Mary was preserved by the _____ of her Son's _____ life, death and resurrection.

- What age was Mary believed to have been when she conceived Jesus? _____



But...

- How can this special grace Mary received apply to the past - if she received this grace years before Jesus' life, death and resurrection?
- Answer:** God is outside of _____.



THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

- We can read about The Fall in Genesis Chapter ____.
- Jesus and Mary were the first man and woman conceived without original sin? ☐ True ☐ False
- Jesus is the New _____ and Mary is the New _____.

TEAM FALL:



An Angel of Light
(_____) came to a woman conceived without sin and spoke words to her which caused her to _____ and _____.

She says _____ to God.

She takes that _____ and hands it on to her _____ who hands it on to the whole world.

EVE IS THE MOTHER OF THE _____

TEAM REDEEM:



An Angel of Light
(_____) came to a woman conceived without sin and spoke words to her which caused her to _____ and _____.

She says _____ to God's message and _____ Him.

She takes that _____ and hands it on to the _____ conceived in her womb. He says _____ and hands on _____ to the whole world.

MARY IS THE MOTHER OF THE _____



But...

Why would God choose Mary to be part of his plan for salvation and cause her to be immaculately conceived?

- Answer: God **could** have saved us completely on His own, but God **chose** to use Mary!
- St Augustine said, "The God who willed to create you without you is not willing to redeem you without you." God wants us to work with Him.
- Where did Mary's power / goodness / strength come from? _____



MISSION!

GOD WILL NEVER ASK YOU TO DO MORE THAN HE ASKED OUR LADY, THE GREATEST SAINT IN HEAVEN. ALL HE ASKED OF HER WAS THAT SHE SAY "YES". TODAY, SAY "YES" TO WHATEVER GOD WANTS OF YOU - TRUSTING THAT HE HAS YOUR MAXIMUM HAPPINESS IN HIS PLAN. ASK OUR LADY FOR HELP TO BE OBEDIENT TO THE WILL OF GOD AND TO BELIEVE IN HIS FATHERLY HEART AND LOVE FOR YOU!



PRAYER TIME!

When Mary appeared to St Catherine Labouré at Rue du Bac in Paris in 1830, she asked for a medal to be created, with this prayer: "**O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you!**" The prayer prepared the way for the Marian dogma being declared in 1854, and four years later Our Lady appeared at Lourdes, calling herself "The Immaculate Conception"



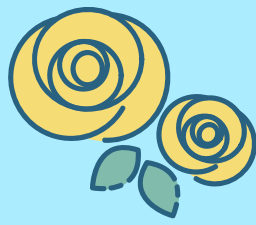
CREATE A PLAYLIST OF MARIAN SONGS (SONGS ABOUT OUR LADY!)



Ave Maria Guarani (Teen Spirit)
Ave Maria Bach Guonod

Ave Maria Schubert
Blessed One (Aaron Thompson)

Tu Pureza
Hail Holy Queen (Sister Act)



THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Find all the words associated with the Immaculate Conception in the word-search

P W S C C X F W N L P O Z D G E K L C M D I M Q M
D Q N B O K N K Y E I Q Q E Z J M Y X A D Q Z A D
H R K H C N D N A V D F R A G M S E J D X Z D E L
X E I M M A C U L A T E E T P U I X N A O A V O M
X F Q J W N Y E Z E S L F H Y A T F J D W R U V G
N I A T S I I V P U I V H O O Y P W U E E R Y T D
P C A N U R F S R T R R K D N O A M N S D M A K I
K U X G F O H R L D I V B U N E B L E E F H N R I
H L F R O A E L F A O O Q A X Y D R S F O E G T P
B G S G B C X R B D N H N H G N P R O O O D E V T
P S N Q T I O R U J C I B Q V Z D P A B R N V S D
D E Y I K N H J A B S C G E T N O Z C G N V I S A
V E O R J X T B T M V H Y I M I G A V R K S V X L
Z N C F B R C S P G V W Y M R S M O P P E Y S Q Y
C P S E C A B U D E U R Z K Z O A J Y N H A X R A
E R J K M T A N N U N C I A T I O N E T L Q B M I
J E S U S B H U L V Q O N R R U U G I V K U P Q D
A D N U J J E E B G N S P N I A K W A M E R I T S
H E N R L Q V R F E C K H Z B S Z T A A Q Q X O V
O E O D I H V B W A W U F L D A I F F R Z X F H Y
H M W X Y H I Q B T L Q G A O O K D N Y B Z V F S
D E G H W V M Q E G F L R Z N R A H P A E V E B B
H D W P V R D K E D P G H H A R F W E Y R L P F H
K P Q L L O R G Q L N M G P C P Y H U E N U O J F
X X S E E Q B Q U L Z L P K R H I J O V E L V P E



**Adam / annunciation / baptism / conception / death / December / dogma /
eve / Gabriel / Garden of Eden / Genesis / immaculate / Jesus / life /
Lourdes / Lucifer / Mary / merits / New Adam / Original Sin / preserved /
redeemed / resurrection / Rue du Bac / salvation / stain / The Fall**

QUICK FIRE QUIZ!

Choose at least ten of the words / phrases in the list above and work as a team to explain how they relate to the Catholic belief in the Immaculate Conception as quickly as you can. Who can explain the most words?





CLICK HERE TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT THE
SYMBOLISM OF THIS
IMAGE.

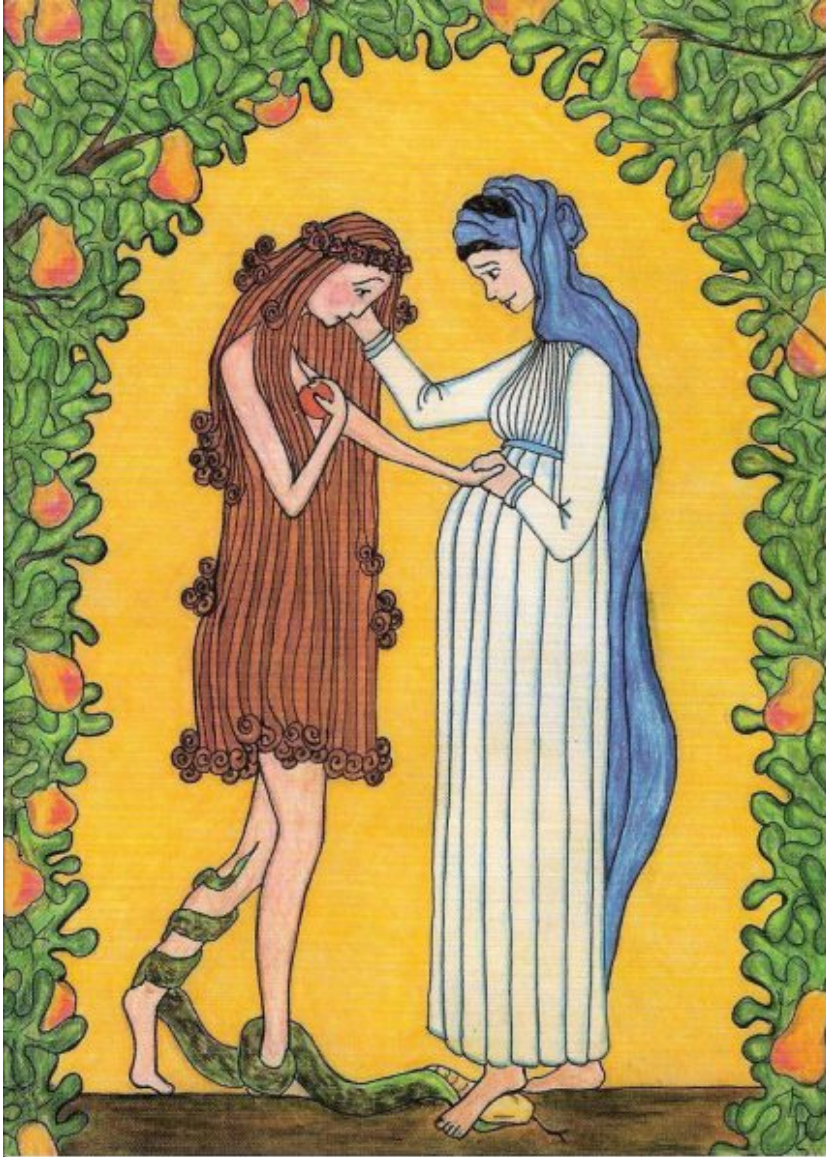


"O Mary conceived
without sin, pray for
us who have
recourse to you!"

by Sr. Grace Remington, OCSO, of the Cistercian Sisters of the Mississippi Abbey

THE NEW EVE

STUDY THIS PENCIL & CRAYON DRAWING OF MARY COMFORTING EVE.



1. What strikes you first about this image? What questions does it raise in your mind?

2. Notice that Eve is looking downwards - what emotion do you think she is expressing?

3. What is Our Lady's face expressing?

4. Why do you think Mary is trying to lift Eve's gaze?

5. Eve is holding fruit with her left hand. What "fruit" is Our Lady leading her other hand to?

6. What is wrapped around Eve's feet? What might this mean?

7. What is Our Lady's left foot doing? What does this symbolise?

8. What kind of light surrounds both women in this image? What could this represent?

9. Based on your understanding of the Immaculate Conception, summarise what this drawing tries to teach us about Eve and the New Eve (Mary)?



YEAR A: MATTHEW 11:2-11
 YEAR B: JOHN 1:6-8, 19-28
 YEAR C: LUKE 3:7-18

The Third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday - we light a pink candle as a symbol of joy!

CHECK OUT THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS ABOUT THE SOURCE OF JOY CCC 1423-1424

PREPARE JOYFULLY!

NAME A PERSON OR A PLACE THAT BRINGS A SMILE TO YOUR FACE WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THEM / IT?

DO YOU THINK A PERSON CAN DECIDE TO BE JOYFUL, EVEN IF LIFE IS TOUGH? EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER

JOY

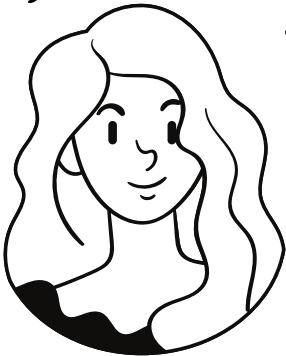
WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ, "ADVENT: MORE THAN A CHOCOLATE CALENDAR" (ASCENSION PRESENTS) AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



- Advent is a penitential season like Lent: ☐ TRUE ☐ FALSE
- Advent is a season of d_____ and j_____ preparation for the coming of Jesus.
- How does Fr Mike define "devout"? _____



JOY VS HAPPINESS



- Happiness often comes out of our _____, when things are _____.
- Joy is the ability to have a certain happiness _____ of your circumstances.
- Joy is an abiding sense of _____.
- Joy comes from knowing that the Father _____ me and He knows my _____.

- Joy is a **choice**! We can choose to live with an abiding sense of the Father's love. Our circumstances can be awful and we can still be _____.

CHRIST'S MAJOR ARRIVALS

- His Past Coming at the original C_____.
- His future coming at the End of T_____.



WHAT DO SAINTS DESCRIBE AS THE INTERMEDIARY ARRIVAL OF CHRIST?

The arrival of Christ into our _____. This can happen when we open our hearts to His _____, whenever we _____ in His name, when we are in the presence of the _____.



WHAT'S THE GOAL OF ADVENT?



The goal of Advent is not to have a merry Christmas. The goal is to worship him well, celebrate the fact He came into this world, AND to prepare for His _____

Question: If Advent is the whole-hearted and joyful preparation for the coming of Jesus into our lives.... if Jesus showed up in your life today, would there be any room for Him? Take a moment to think about today's schedule. Is there room there for Jesus?

PREPARE JOYFULLY!



Should we party during Advent? Limited amounts of Christmas parties, music and food can help us enter into the Christmas mood, but we need to be able to say no.

Why is being able to say "no" important? What does it make room for in Advent?

If I CAN LEARN TO SAY "NO" MORE TO MATERIAL THINGS, I CAN LEARN TO SAY "YES" MORE TO JESUS.



How are you Christmas preparations going for you? Shopping done? Outfits planned? Events in the diary? Decorations up? Or is it all still a muddle? Does it even feel like you're approaching Christmas yet? Sometimes it all gets so busy doesn't it, and other things like exams and visits and more mundane jobs get in the way of excitement and joy. Maybe it's even stressful, or a lonely time of year for you if you have lost someone you dearly loved.

Today is Gaudete Sunday, the Sunday we're called to pause and reflect on joy in the Advent season - because Christmas is the season of Joy: Joy Incarnate was born at Christmas time, and that's a good thing to remember in the midst of a dark and dreary month of December! It's a hard thing to remember though when we see so much suffering around us in our own communities and in the world at large. But today we can hit the pause button and take a good look around us to choose to find the joy! Jesus asked John the Baptist's disciples to look for signs of His Kingdom - to see the Good News already present through His actions. We can do the same thing in our own world. Make a conscious effort this week to notice goodness and kindness around you, and to bring that joy to others too! Make your heart a joyful place for Jesus this Christmas time.

MISSION!

MAKE A DECISION TODAY TO LIVE ADVENT JOYFULLY AND PREPARING TO WELCOME JESUS. USE OUR DAILY ADVENT CALENDAR ON INSTAGRAM TO HELP YOU IF YOU NEED SOME IDEAS.

TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR DAILY SCHEDULE. WHERE CAN YOU FIT FIVE TO TEN MINUTES IN EACH DAY FOR PRAYER? CAN YOU SET YOUR ALARM TO GO OFF EARLIER? CAN YOU CUT OUT A FEW MINUTES OF TV / GAMING / MUSIC? DECIDE FOR WHOLE-HEARTED JOYFUL PREPARATION - IF YOU DON'T DECIDE, IT WON'T HAPPEN!



WHAT COULD I SAY NO TO THIS WEEK TO MAKE MORE ROOM FOR CHRIST?

PRAYER TIME!

PRAYER FOR JOY:

My God, You know me by name and You love me, with an eternal love that never fades. Show me how to base my joy on You, because in You my joy will be complete, no matter what circumstances come my way. You delight in me - help me to truly believe that! Amen



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON JOYFUL PREPARATION



- Make Room (Casting Crowns)
- The Earth Stood Still (Future of Forestry)
- Unspeakable Joy (Chris Tomlin)
- O Come, O Come Emmanuel (David Crowder Band)
- When Hope Came Down (Kari Jobe)
- Awake O Sleeper (Ike Ndolo)
- Hearts Waiting (Matt Redman)
- God Made Low (Sovereign Grace)

7:46 MINS



Why Joy is More Christian than Happiness
(Fr Mike Schmitz)

4:31 MINS



JOY (The Bible Project)



YEAR A: MATTHEW 1:18-25
 YEAR B: LUKE 1:26-38
 YEAR C: LUKE 1:39-45, [46-55]

Mary wasn't given certainty. She was given a promise.

CHECK OUT THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS ABOUT THE VISITATION CCC 717

ARE YOU CERTAIN?

Romans 12:12 "Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times."

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS SONGS? DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE RELIGIOUS CAROL? WHICH CAROL SUMS UP THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS FOR YOU?



DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS MEMORY?

WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ, "HAVING JOY IN UNCERTAINTY" (ASCENSION PRESENTS) AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



- According to Fr Mike, what is the only thing that is certain for us?
- Why does he suggest we find comfort in past Christmas memories?
- What can we let our lack of certainty about the future steal?
- Christmas is a Season of Joy in the midst of uncertainty.

PUT YOURSELF IN MARY'S SANDALS...



In Luke 1, when the Angel Gabriel visits Mary with the news she is chosen to be the Mother of God, how do you think Mary felt?

ARE THE "JOYFUL MYSTERIES" REALLY JOYFUL???

- At the Annunciation, immediately after Mary said yes, what did the Angel do?

- What kind of things could the Angel have told Mary to take away some of her uncertainty? (List 2 things Fr Mike mentions)

- "All is calm, all is bright...." Was it really? What kind of uncertainty did Mary (and Joseph) face in Bethlehem?



- In the 4th mystery, the Presentation in the temple, where was the uncertainty?

WE CAN LOOK BACK AT THESE STORIES 2000 YEARS ON, KNOWING HOW THINGS WORKED OUT, BUT THEY WERE LIVING THROUGH THEM.

- ASCEND YOUTH MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -



ARE YOU CERTAIN?



Even in the darkest times, when we are at our weakest, or suffering the most, when it seems there is no way out, God is _____.

WE CAN CELEBRATE A "MERRY" CHRISTMAS, NOT BECAUSE OF CERTAINTY, BUT BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN GIVEN A SAVIOUR, ONE WHO ENTERS INTO UNCERTAINTY AND HIS PRESENCE IS TRANSFORMING. HE BRINGS JOY TO THE WORLD!



In the Gospel, we hear about the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, which we remember in the Second Joyful Mystery of the Rosary. It's worthwhile to take a few minutes to contemplate what is going on here. Mary has just conceived God the Son, Jesus, in her womb through the power of the Holy Spirit. Upon hearing that her cousin

Elizabeth is also pregnant, she immediately goes to her, a difficult journey across rough terrain in the hill country. As soon as Mary arrives, John the Baptist recognises Jesus in her womb and leaps for joy in Elizabeth's womb! This story can raise so many points for us to reflect on: Can people recognise Jesus in me? Do people respond joyfully to my presence, because of the love I have for them? Do I strive to serve others like Mary? Am I open to God's promises like Mary was? Am I humble? Do I allow Our Lady to help me in my times of need? Do I trust God's plan even when I can't predict the future outcomes?

MISSION!

GOD IS DOING WONDERFUL THINGS IN YOUR LIFE - BUT SOMETIMES WE ARE TOO BUSY OR TOO CAUGHT UP WITH FUTURE WORRIES TO REALISE WHAT HE IS CURRENTLY DOING, OR HAS DONE IN THE PAST. MAKE A LIST OF THE BLESSINGS IN YOUR LIFE, THINGS OR PEOPLE YOU ARE TRULY GRATEFUL FOR. THINK BACK ON SITUATIONS YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT THAT HAVE SINCE RESOLVED AND HAVE MAYBE EVEN WORKED OUT BETTER THAN YOU HAD INITIALLY HOPED. ADOPT AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE THIS WEEK, ESPECIALLY FOR THE GIFT OF OUR SAVIOUR AT CHRISTMAS TIME!



PRAYER TIME!



Choose one of the Joyful Mysteries, and reflect on what is happening in that scene. Ask Our Lady to show you how to trust in God's promises like she did. Then pray a decade of the rosary: One Our Father, Ten Hail Mary's and a Glory Be. You can use this [Ascend YM rosary resource](#) to help you if you need it!



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON GOD'S PROMISES



- Great Things - Matt Maher
- Magnificat - Mary's Song
- Greater Things - Mack Brock
- Your Promises - Elevation Worship
- Light of the World - Lauren Daigle
- Even the Winter - Audrey Assad
- When I think upon Christmas - Hillsong
- Hallelujah, Light has Come - BarlowGirl



God's Ways are not our ways
(Fr Mike Schmitz)

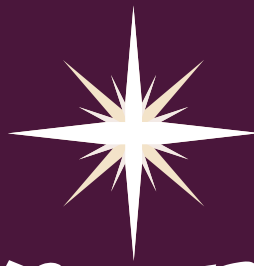


The Visitation (Ignatius Press)



YEAR A: MATTHEW 1:18-25
 YEAR B: LUKE 1:26-38
 YEAR C: LUKE 1:39-45, (46-55)

Joseph wasn't given certainty. He was given a promise.



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- Why does he suggest we find comfort in past Christmas memories?

- What can we let our lack of certainty about the future steal?

- Christmas is a Season of Joy in the midst of uncertainty.

PUT YOURSELF IN JOSEPH'S SANDALS...



How would you have felt before and after hearing the Angel's message?



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- At the Annunciation, immediately after Mary said yes, what did the Angel do?

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- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -

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Ever had plans that were so carefully thought out, so well prepared that you were sure you were in control and everything would work out the way you intended? Life doesn't always work that way does it! Just ask St Joseph! He was betrothed to the beautiful, pure, good and holy virgin Mary. They were ready to start their life together. Then he found out she was expecting a child, and it wasn't his. Can you imagine the confusion, the pain and the whirlwind of emotions he must have felt? Yet Joseph was a good man, a godly man. God honoured his faithfulness and revealed to him in a dream that Mary's child was no ordinary child, but Emmanuel, God with us. She had conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. I'm sure he still didn't understand fully what all that meant, who could? Joseph trusted God however, and he acted. We see this time and again with Joseph in the Gospel. He prays, he listens, he hears and he obeys. What a role model for all of us, especially when we're confused, or feel overwhelmed. Can you imagine what it was like knowing you were chosen to care for the Son of God, and God's mother? Talk about pressure!! Joseph listened and took the next good step, that's all he was asked to do. Trust and act, and leave the rest to God. Let that be our motto in this final week of Advent!



MISSION!

GOD IS DOING WONDERFUL THINGS IN YOUR LIFE - BUT SOMETIMES WE ARE TOO BUSY OR TOO CAUGHT UP WITH FUTURE WORRIES TO REALISE WHAT HE IS CURRENTLY DOING, OR HAS DONE IN THE PAST. MAKE A LIST OF THE BLESSINGS IN YOUR LIFE, THINGS OR PEOPLE YOU ARE TRULY GRATEFUL FOR. THINK BACK ON SITUATIONS YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT THAT HAVE SINCE RESOLVED AND HAVE MAYBE EVEN WORKED OUT BETTER THAN YOU HAD INITIALLY HOPED. ADOPT AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE THIS WEEK, ESPECIALLY FOR THE GIFT OF OUR SAVIOUR AT CHRISTMAS TIME!



PRAYER TIME!



Choose one of the Joyful Mysteries, and reflect on what is happening in that scene. Ask St Joseph to show you how to trust in God's promises like he did. Then pray a decade of the rosary: One Our Father, Ten Hail Mary's and a Glory Be. You can use this [Ascend YM rosary resource](#) to help you if you need it!



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON TRUSTING IN GOD



- Your Promises - Elevation Worship
- I am a Carpenter - Cher & Gene Klosner
- Hail Joseph Hail - Damascus Worship
- Whom shall I fear? (Chris Tomlin)
- Light of the World - Lauren Daigle
- Even the Winter - Audrey Assad
- When I think upon Christmas - Hillsong
- Hallelujah, Light has Come - BarlowGirl

6:04 MINS



God's Ways are not our ways
(Fr Mike Schmitz)



Joseph's Lullaby



MY GRATITUDE LIST!

Date: _____

Rather than a Christmas List of what you want, write a letter of thanksgiving to God for the promises He has made to you, and the blessings you have seen in your life so far.

IN ALL
THINGS
give
THANKS

Begin
EACH WITH
DAY ((A))
grateful
HEART



GRATITUDE PRESCRIPTION!

1. BEGIN BY PRAYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE YOU.
2. THINK OF FOUR THINGS YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR.
3. THANK GOD FOR EACH OF THESE.

IN ALL
THINGS
give
THANKS

DAY	MORNING	EVENING
Monday	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.
Tuesday	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.
Wednesday	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.
Thursday	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.
Friday	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.
Saturday	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.
Sunday	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.



Click the hyperlinks or
scan the QR Code!



CHRISTMAS PLAYLISTS



CHRISTMAS CAROLS

- Make Room - Casting Crowns
- Somewhere in your silent night - Casting Crowns
- Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth - Crosby & Bowie
- Adore - Chris Tomlin
- Noel - Chris Tomlin / Lauren Daigle
- Joseph's Lullaby - Mercy Me
- Light of the World - Lauren Daigle
- When Love was born - Mark Schultz
- God made Low - Sovereign Grace
- I heard the bells on Christmas Day - Casting Crowns
- Christmas Day - Chris Tomlin & We the Kingdom
- It came upon a Midnight Clear - Norah Jones



- Hallelujah, the Light has Come - Barlowgirl
- Joy (Unspeakable Joy) - Chris Tomlin
- Night of Silence / Silent Night
- When I think upon Christmas - Hillsong
- O Holy Night - Josh Groban
- What Child is This? - Chris Tomlin
- The Little Drummer Boy - For King & Country
- Silent Night - Andrei Boccelli
- His Name Shall Be - Matt Redman
- The First Noel (Holy is the Lord) - Hillsong
- Peace has come - Hillsong
- Away in a Manger - Pentatonix
- Newborn - Mercy Me

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS

- The Light of Hope Carol Service from Holy Family Mission 2020
- Paul Harvey - the Christmas Story: the Man and the Birds
- The Role of Duty in "It's a Wonderful Life" (Fr Mike Schmitz)
- Simple Christmas - Inspirational Video
- The Unpleasant Ancestors of Christmas (Fr Mike Schmitz)
- Christmas is a Season: Jackie and Bobby Angel
- The Real Meaning of Christmas: Jackie and Bobby Angel



- JOY Story
- He Came
- He Came - A Christmas Spoken Word
- Christmas: A Time for Hope (Fr Mike)
- A Fr Mike Christmas (Ascension Presents)

FOR THE KIDS!



- Campa Mhuire Mháthair Christmas Special 2021
- Born is the King - Hillsong
- Catholic Kids Media: The Nativity
- Christmas is Jesus
- Christmas Songs for Kids



- Away in a Manger
- Starlight - Monica Scott
- Jump for Joy
- Oh what a Glorious Night - Sidewalk Prophets
- The Star (Nativity Scene)
- Oh what a special night!



Pray this prayer service together, or if that's not possible, pray it on your own for your family's intentions.



"THE FAMILY THAT
PRAYS TOGETHER,
STAYS TOGETHER"
FR PEYTON

FAMILY PRAYER SERVICE



BEGIN BY LIGHTING A CANDLE

(or each member of your family can light one candle each)

OPENING PRAYER:

Father God, we thank You for the gift of our family, for each individual here (*and for those not here with us*). We thank You that You have given us each other, so that together we can grow and develop into the best versions of ourselves. We acknowledge that we have not always loved each other as we should, or treated each other with respect and love. Lord God, we need You in the heart of our family, because we are weak and frail, and need Your love to sustain us and unite us. Show us how to love each other, and through our family's love, be an example to those around us, that they may see in us a spark of Your Divine Love.

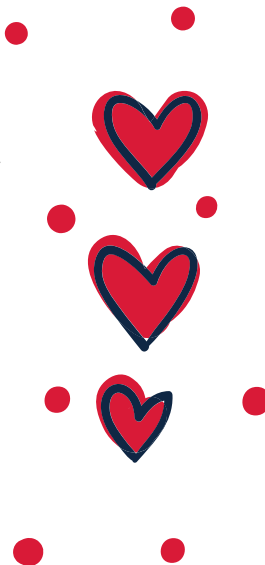
Holy Family of Nazareth, Jesus, Mary and Joseph - pray for us!



SCRIPTURE

Read the following passage of Scripture aloud and take some time to reflect in silence on it.

- Where can you see this love evident in your family?
- Where is it lacking?
- Can you put your name in instead of "love" in each sentence, honestly?
- What are you personally challenged by?



Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13: 4 - 8

TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO SHARE (OR JOURNAL) YOUR THOUGHTS.

OUR FAMILY PRAYERS:

Allow some time for each member of the family to pray out loud for any intentions they have. At the end, pray a Hail Mary (or a decade of the rosary) together for all these intentions, entrusting them to Our Lady.



THE BLESSING - KARI JOBE



HOLY FAMILY - DANIELLE ROSE



THE FAMILY PRAYER SONG - MARANATHA

- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -

**WHY NOT START A
NEW NEW YEAR'S
TRADITION?**



BLESSINGS JAR

**If you don't have a
jar, get a notebook
and write your
blessings in that
instead!**

WHAT IS A BLESSING JAR?

Blessings jars are a practical and fun way to keep a record of the things that you're thankful for on a daily basis. Whenever you recognize something that is a "blessing" in your life throughout the year, just write it on a piece of paper, fold it up, and stick it in the Blessing Jar. It might be as simple as a good chat with a friend, a hug, a gift, having the ability to play sports, having food on your table....

You can do this alone, or with your family, or even your youth group. Then decide how often you want to empty out the jar out to count your blessings: maybe on New Year's Eve, each month, on a special Feastday, or, if you're having an especially tough day, you may just want to empty out the contents of the blessings jar right then and be reminded of God how is blessing you each and every day! It will be a great reminder of God's faithfulness... in times of joy as well as in times of struggle.



HOW TO MAKE A BLESSING JAR

- Choose a large jar (or use a notebook or box if you can't source a jar)
- Stick the Blessings Label on the jar.
- Choose a scripture passage if you'd like (see next page for ideas), punch one end and tie to your jar with string.
- Decorate the jar with stickers, washi tape, ribbon, string - whatever way you like! (*Google Blessing Jars and you'll get lots of ideas!*)
- Write your first blessings idea on a small note card, fold it and put it in the jar.
- Make sure you have paper and pen near the jar to make the process easier each time you see a blessing you want to record!
- Enjoy the process and choose to be thankful every single day
- Repeat as often as you like



"MAY HIS FAVOUR BE UPON YOU AND A THOUSAND GENERATIONS,

AND YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR CHILDREN, AND THEIR CHILDREN, AND THEIR CHILDREN" THE BLESSING - KARI JOBE

- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -

BLESSING JAR SUGGESTIONS FOR LABELS



or create your own!

And my God will supply
every need of yours
according to his riches in
glory in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:19

Every good gift and every perfect
gift is from above, coming down
from the Father of lights with
whom there is no variation or
shadow due to change.
James 1:17

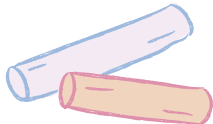
The Lord bless you and
keep you; the Lord make his
face to shine upon you and
be gracious to you; the Lord
lift up his countenance upon
you and give you peace.
Numbers 6:24-26

Fear not, for I am with you; be
not dismayed, for I am your
God; I will strengthen you, I will
help you, I will uphold you with
my righteous right hand.
Isaiah 41:10

And from his fullness we
have all received, grace
upon grace.
John 1:16

Blessed be the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ, who
has blessed us in Christ with
every spiritual blessing in the
heavenly places,
Ephesians 1:3

THE TRADITION OF CHALKING THE DOORS ON THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY



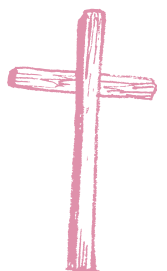
PRIEST'S PRAYER TO BLESS THE CHALK

Priest: Our help is in the name of The Lord. **All: Who made heaven and earth.**

Priest: The Lord be with you. **All: And with your spirit.**

Bless, + O Lord God, this creature chalk to render it helpful to men. Grant that they who use it in faith and with it inscribe upon the entrance of their homes the names of thy saints, Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, may through their merits and intercession enjoy health of body and protection of soul. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.



The chalk is sprinkled with holy water.

Using the blessed chalk (which many parishes will bless and make available) mark the lintel of your front door with the year as follows:

20 + C + M + B + 2_ saying:

The three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar followed the star of God's Son who became human 2023 years ago. May Christ bless our home and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

Then say the following prayer:

Visit, O Blessed Lord, this home with the gladness of your presence. Bless all who live or visit here with the gift of your love; and grant that we may manifest your love to each other and to all whose lives we touch. May we grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of you; guide, comfort, and strengthen us in peace, O Jesus Christ, now and for ever. Amen.





Take Action!
Take a Step!
Move!

1%

THE 1% RULE

THE SECRET TO STICKING TO NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS!

Therefore, my dear brothers & sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.
1 Cor 15:58

CHECK OUT THE
CATECHISM OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
SAYS ABOUT
JESUS' BAPTISM
CCC 1223 - 1225



HAVE YOU MADE ANY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS? HAVE YOU MADE THEM IN THE PAST?
WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR EXPERIENCE OF TRYING TO STAY FAITHFUL TO THEM?



WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ, "THE SECRET TO STICKING TO A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION" (ASCENSION PRESENTS) AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



Click here to see
the montage
Fr Mike
references and
see what you
think!

What is it about the Rocky movies that Fr Mike finds so inspiring?

What effect did seeing Rocky IV have on Fr Mike and his siblings?



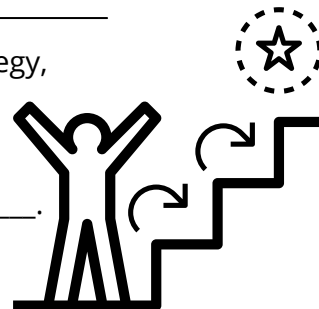
INSPIRATION ON ITS OWN IS NOT ENOUGH FOR CHANGE TO HAPPEN...

What cycling team did Dave Brailsford coach to victory in just three years?



Brailsford credited "mimimal aggregate gain" as his winning strategy,
also known as The _____ rule.

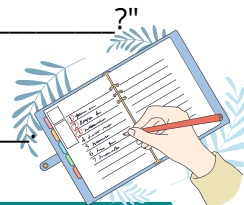
In simple terms this means we try to improve ourselves by ____ % every _____.
Small steps that help us move towards where we want to be.



This Rule demands we have a clear sense of _____.

For Christians that means asking "What kind of person does God
_____ me to be by the _____ of this _____?"

To discover this, Fr Mike invites us to do two things:
_____ and _____



goal:

WHEN WE HAVE A CLEAR VISION, WE CAN DECIDE ON THE SMALL 1% IMPROVEMENTS
THAT BRING US CLOSER TO THE VISION GOD HAS PLANTED IN OUR HEARTS.

Being faithful does not necessarily mean having a lot of faith and feeling it a lot.



- **Faithful means:** Keeping your _____ and keeping them _____.
- **Consistency** will beat _____ every time!

- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -

THE 1% RULE

AM I CONSISTENT IN CHOOSING THE LORD? AM I CONSISTENT IN REPENTING WHEN I FALL? EVEN IN THE MIDST OF FAILURE AND SIN, DO I REMAIN FAITHFUL? DO I CHOOSE GOD WHEN I FALL?

STILL FEELING A BIT MEH? *It's not about your emotions!*

If you are feeling lukewarm and don't care, what does Fr Mike recommend?

Remember: your intellect and will can guide your _____.



Now Read Luke 3:16-16, 21-22



The story of the Baptism of Jesus might seem simple enough until we start probing a little deeper. Why was John baptising people in the River Jordan? So they could repent of their sins and prepare for the coming of the Messiah. Did Jesus need to repent of any sins? Of course not, He is God, and He **was** the coming Messiah. So why did He get baptised?

Jesus' baptism was *symbolic*. Jesus, as God, actually *sanctified* the waters by His descent into them, rather than needing to be cleansed of any sin. His baptism was for *our* sake, not for His. He chose to embrace and represent the human condition which is broken and in need of forgiveness and healing, and this was symbolised at his baptism. His public ministry is about to begin, and at that moment, the Father says, "You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you." The will of Jesus was completely united with the Will of the Father. If we want to become the person God is calling us to be, we also need to unite our will to His, and follow His guidance for each day and each action of our lives!

"God has placed a vision of your life for who he wants you to be at the end of this year.

Choosing that faithfully, just 1% every day, ends up resulting in the kind of person God wants you to be."

(Fr Mike Schmitz)

MISSION!

SPEND TIME THIS WEEK PRAYING, JOURNALLING AND COMMITTING TO THE KIND OF PERSON GOD WANTS YOU TO BE AT THE END OF THIS YEAR: WHAT VIRTUES, DECISIONS, GROWTH, PRUNING, CHANGE WILL THAT REQUIRE? WHEN YOU'RE READY, COMMIT TO YOUR FIRST 1%, AND THEN REPEAT DAILY TILL THE END OF THE YEAR! KEEPING A JOURNAL, A WRITTEN RECORD, WILL HELP YOU.



PRAYER TIME!

Father God, my Father, You have a loving plan for my whole life. I do not know exactly where You want to lead me, but grant me the grace to trust in Your plan. Show me now who it is You want me to be at the end of this year. Teach me daily what I need to do, to become that person, the best version of myself. Help me to commit to small steps faithfully, to grow 1% closer daily to that vision.



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON THE YEAR AHEAD

- Your Plans for Us - Eleventh Hour Worship
- When God's Perfect Plans - Resound Worship
- I will trust - Elevation Worship
- Your Promises - Elevation Worship
- The Change in Me - Casting Crowns
- I will follow You - Kristene di Marco
- I choose to worship - Rend Collective
- Good to me - Audrey Assad



Click the links for the YouTube videos to listen to some suggestions!



New Year's Resolutions ... for Me or for God?
LITTLE BY LITTLE Fr Columba Jordan CFR





The Key to Self-Mastery: Improvements by Aggregation of Marginal Gains



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