

**The Roman Catholic Parishes of  
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher  
St. James the Apostle, Irwin  
Sacred Heart, Goodrich**

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**DECEMBER 17-18, 2022**



**Weekend Masses:**

St. Margaret Mary	Sat. 5:00 pm	Sun. 10:30 am
Sacred Heart	Sun. 7:30 am	
St. James	Sun. 9:00 am	

**Confessions:**

St. Margaret Mary	Sat. 4:15 pm
Sacred Heart	Sun. 7:05-7:20 am
St. James	Sun. 8:35-8:50 am

**Church Mailing Address: 207 E. 5th Street Herscher, IL 60941 Phone: 815-426-2550**

**Quotable:** "To say "they shall call him Emmanuel" means nothing else than they shall see God among us. Admittedly God has always been among us, but never before so openly." —*Saint John Chrysostom*

<b>The Nativity of the Lord</b>		<b>December 24-25, 2022</b>		
<b>Liturgical Schedule</b>	<b>St. Margaret Mary Saturday, December 24 3:00 pm</b>	<b>Sacred Heart Sunday, December 25 7:30 am</b>	<b>St. James Sunday, December 25 9:00 am</b>	<b>St. Margaret Mary Sunday, December 25 10:30 am</b>
<b>Celebrant</b>	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron
<b>Ushers</b>	Todd Datweiler Wayne Bisailon Brent Fulton Corey Eich	Dennis Pankey Dale Pfeiffer	Jeff Martin Jeff Steinke Dave Ladehoff Dallas Ferris	Erik Wheeler Corinn Wheeler Kim Smicker Jeremy Wolles
<b>Lector</b>	Dave Emling	Darlene Cipcich	Andy Hansen	Corinn Wheeler
<b>Servers</b>	Charlotte Fulton Caroline Fulton			
<b>Greeters</b>			<b>Greeter— Dallas Ferris R. Leader—</b>	The Wheelers

### Mass Intentions for the Week

**Monday, December 19 (SMM)**

8:00 am +Tom & Nina Smolkovich (Cindy Sedar)

**Tuesday, December 20 (SH)**

8:00 am +Robert West (Dino/Cheryl Helopoulos)

**Wednesday, December 21 (SJ)**

8:00 am +Leonard Papineau (Larry/Janice O'Connor)

**Friday, December 23 (SMM)**

8:00 am +Jerome Ruder (Janet Andrzejewski)

**Saturday, December 24 Christmas Eve**

3:00 pm SMM +Gary Jensen (His Family)

+JR Matern (Norm/Sharon Riordan)

5:00 pm SJ +Jared Devine (Jerry/JoLynn Ogrentz)

9:00 pm SH +Dorine Schafer (Shirley St. Germaine)

+Leland Denault (Steve/Donna Jacob)

**Sunday, December 25**

7:30 am (SH) +Zeb Pfeiffer & Cecelia Monk (Debbie Jensen & Family)

9:00 am (SJ) +Carl Coy (Steve/Dena Coy)

10:30am (SMM) For All the Parish Family

### A Look Ahead

Sunday, Dec. 18—Christmas Pageant/Fundraiser at SJ

Tuesday, Dec. 20—Confessions at St. James 7:00pm

#### St. James Ministries for Dec. 24 at 5:00 pm

Greeter—Rita Thiesen Lector—Carrie Abrassart

Ushers—D. Forsythe, C. Jensen, J. Ogrentz, T. Mesewicz

#### Sacred Heart Ministries for Dec. 24 9:00 pm

Ushers—Kyle Ferris, Daryl Ferris

Lector—Terri Weakley

Pastor— Fr. Ron Neitzke- 815-426-2550

Deacon – Ron Gagnon— rjgckg@aol.com

Home—815-933-4077

Parish Email – smm\_sja\_sh@yahoo.com

TriParish web page – [www.triparishcatholics.org](http://www.triparishcatholics.org)

Like us on Facebook triparishcatholic communities

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Sacred Heart – Rhonda Berns – 426-5015

**Parish Nurse** – Jackie Eberle – 815-421-4048

**Prayer Line**– SMM—Pat Wagner 815-592-0773

SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 Jdstreefarms@aol.com

St. James— Mary Offerman—602-670-8888 (call or text)



## Collections Week of Dec. 10-11, 2022

St. Margaret Mary—\$1,777      Retired Rel.-\$643  
 St. James—\$1,707              Retired Rel.—\$679  
 Sacred Heart—\$1,459         Retired Rel.-\$630  
 Thank you for your generosity!

### 2022 CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

#### CHRISTMAS EVE;

3:00 PM AT ST. MARGARET MARY  
 5:00 PM AT ST. JAMES  
 9:00 PM AT SACRED HEART

#### CHRISTMAS DAY:

7:30 AM AT SACRED HEART  
 9:00 AM AT ST. JAMES  
 10:30 AM AT ST. MARGARET MARY



#### Gospel Shorts- From Nearby to Next Door

For many of us, making shocking discoveries can be traumatic. Undoubtedly, Joseph's discovery of Mary's "situation," her sudden and (initially) inexplicable pregnancy, was one of those discoveries. Yet, Joseph learned a lesson and we learn one, too, from Matthew 1: 18-24. Joseph discovers, as can we, that God is no longer distant. Joseph also discovered that he was valuable and that he, too, would have a role in making sure that Emmanuel, "God with us," arrived safely into the world. Joseph's encounter with God's representative, the angel, assured him, and us now, that God is now not just "nearby" in, say, the Temple or, for us, in a church, but rather, that God is literally right next door, as close as we might be to our neighbors. A God that close, a God who is right next door, then becomes the God who wishes to live in our lives and be to us as close as possible. That is one of the great promises of Christmas.



Joseph, son of David, have no fear  
 about taking Mary as your wife  
 MT.1:20

#### Parish News:

St. Margaret Mary—  
 St. James—  
 Sacred Heart—

- There will be a special collection today, Sunday, December 18 that will once again replace the income we have missed out on from not having our stag/stagette. There are envelopes in the back of the church. This additional income is very beneficial to the running of our parish. From the money collected last year, we have been able to install a new furnace in the parish hall, have plans for an air conditioner to be installed in the spring and for restroom improvements.

#### All Parishes:

- Tuesday, December 20 will be the last opportunity to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before Christmas. Confessions will begin at 7:00 pm.

**Question of the week:** Through all the excitement and stress of this coming week, can I be attentive to how Jesus remains with me and discern how God is calling me?

**A Stewardship Moment      December 17-18, 2022** In today's Gospel we hear of the coming of Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." We celebrate three Advents: the birth of Christ, his Second Coming, and his presence in the world today. Our daily lives are attended by God's presence. Indeed, "God is with us." The Good News of Christ's Incarnation is that we are the sign, the "sacrament," of Christ's presence in the world. People are supposed to see us, see how we love one another, see how we treat the stranger among us, see how we give comfort to the poor and afflicted, and share the Good News with joy. They see how good stewards are the light of Christ. And there can be no possible response except to say: "God is here!"



The next Knights of Columbus next Food for Families collection is December 17-18 at all three parishes. This is a great way to give to help those in need.  
 "For I was hungry and you gave me food..." Matthew 25:35

Please join us today for the Christmas Pageant, breakfast, and basket Raffles after the 9:00 am Mass.





Did you know there are feasts of saints every day of the year including Christmas Eve and Christmas Day?



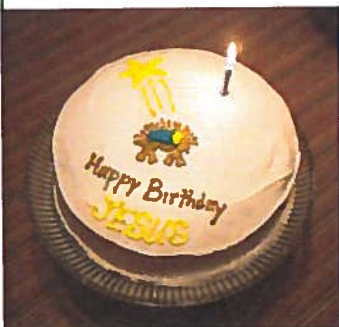
**St. Trasilla (Dec. 24)** was the sister of Saint Sylvia of Rome, Saint Emiliana, and the aunt of Pope Saint Gregory the Great. She lived as a religious sister without joining any order, taking private vows. She received a vision of Pope Saint Felix III, an ancestor, who encouraged her to leave this vale of tears; she died a few days later on Christmas Eve. A few days after her death, she appeared to Emiliana with the same message; Emiliana died on Epiphany eve.

**St. Peter Nolasco (Dec. 25)** was born to the French nobility. Peter grew up a pious youth. His father died when Peter was fifteen, and he inherited a substantial fortune. When he came of age, he gave away his possessions and moved to Barcelona, Spain to avoid the Albigensian heretics. He later took part in the Crusades against the Albigensians in southern France. Peter became the tutor to King James I of Aragon. Later Peter settled in Barcelona. He was a friend of Saint Raymond Penafort. He used his large inheritance to ransom Christians held prisoner by the Moors. He founded the *Order of Our Lady of Mercy (Mercedarians)* beginning in 1218, an order devoted to ransoming Christians; the *Order* received papal approval in 1230. Peter twice served as a captive in Africa, winning the release of over 400 captives. In 1249, Peter retired from the *Order* to spend his remaining days in quiet prayer.



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**Christmas Traditions-** In the days when the hearth was the source of heat in most homes and much larger than hearts today, the yule log was a large log that was to be kept burning for the twelve days of Christmas. A general prayer was said over the log, then the husband would pour three glasses of wine over the log; one for the Father, one for the Son, and one for the Holy Spirit. If the log didn't last for the entire twelve days, or if the flame went out it was thought to be a sign of bad luck in the coming new year. As the French came to the new world they replaced the yule log with the buche de Noel, a log shaped cake served after midnight Mass on Christmas Eve at a supper called Le Reveillon. For Yule Log recipes go to [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com) and search Yule Log.



In the past I brought to your attention of the revived tradition of a birthday cake for Jesus on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Its roots go back five hundred years to Germany but fell out of practice. In the 1990's a revival of this tradition began and it has been growing ever since.

The chocolate layer reminds us that we are sinful.

The red layer reminds us that Jesus shed his blood for our sins.

The white frosting reminds us that Jesus has given us a clean heart.

The green layer represents how we should grow to look more like Jesus.

The yellow star decorations remind us of the star God put in the sky when Jesus was born.

The candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World.

For recipes go to [www.celebratingholidays.com](http://www.celebratingholidays.com), other recipes are available if you do an internet search.



## Questions Catholics Ask

### What is Original Sin?

Original sin is not so-named in the biblical Creation story, which describes the event mythically. Obviously it's not only about eating a piece of fruit. Rather, Genesis presents the universal experience of free choice exercised without wisdom. For God's creatures, the wise choice is made in the direction of God's will, ordered toward life and happiness. Only the foolish choose in deliberate opposition to God, a direction leading invariably to sorrow and death.

Although original sin seems to refer exclusively to "the first sin ever committed," more profoundly it identifies the *origin* of sin as well. From what aspect of human nature does sin arise? Pride is often fingered as "the mother of all sins." It's the Frank Sinatra Complex: "I did it *my way!*" Another good description of the source of sin is disobedience, because "obedience" is rooted in the Latin word for "listening." Tune out God, the source of truth, and don't be surprised when you're lost in a forest of lies. As the saying goes, I'd turn back if I were you.

Lust gets tapped as the root of sin because our sexuality is such a basic, instinctual part of us that, to many ages of thinkers, that alone made it suspect. A better theological word for this idea is *concupiscence*, because desire tugs at us in more ways than only the sexual. Shorthand for *concupiscence* is "the sin of more." No matter what we have—money, possessions, success, pleasure, leisure—it's never enough. It's that feeling we get after having a fantastic slice of pie that makes us reach for another—even though we're already full. We just want to hit that sweet spot again.

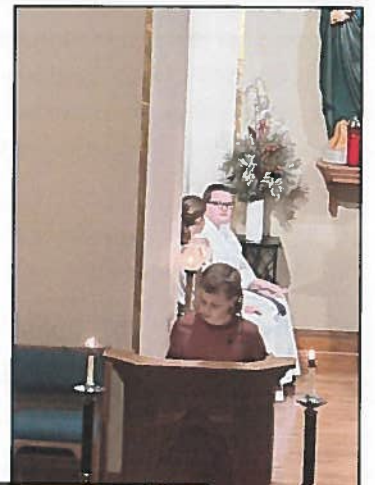
That probably led the Christian writer C. S. Lewis to say, OK, maybe it really *is* about that piece of fruit, in his wonderful sci-fi novel *Perelandra*. Humanity gets a second shot at a new and sinless planet. Then an earthling tastes an amazing fruit, is completely delighted and satisfied—and immediately wants another. What part of "perfect experience" didn't he understand?

Saint Augustine of Hippo is often cited as the inventor of the doctrine of original sin in the 4th century. The idea certainly had predecessors, but Augustine gave us the first thorough examination of conscience in his *Confessions*. He also gave us the prayer that helps us to appreciate why human nature is so greedy for more: "God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you."

#### Scripture

- Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-24; Wisdom 2:24; Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:21-28

## SMM Youth Mass Saturday, December 10





## Get Fed, Catholic Snacks

What is the tradition of the Christmas Oplatki wafer?

The spirit of Christ-like charity is baked into this wafer bread.

The Oplatki have an unassuming appearance and only the mildest flavor, looking more like a thick piece of paper.

This modest appearance, however, conceals a symbolically-rich custom.

The Christmas wafers come from Eastern Europe. The name means “Angel Bread.” Made only of flour and water, they are stamped with Christmas images such as the Star of Bethlehem or the Nativity.

On Christmas Eve, the head of the family prays for the members of his family, present or absent, then breaks a piece off the wafer and gives it to each person. As the family members receive the wafer pieces, they are greeted with a kiss and a felicitation for a joyful feast. They then return the greeting in the same way.

The lesson of this custom is that the family must be united with the bonds of charity. It reminds us that we do not seek salvation alone, but with others, especially our family. We should help each other obtain salvation, always bearing Christ-like charity toward one another. When we are united in charity, we are joined, by the head of the family, to the unbroken links of One Body, One Bread, One Christ, and One Church.

Do you want to renew and cultivate the bond of charity you have with your family? Incorporate the [Oplatki Christmas Wafers](#) tradition into your own family customs this year. The delicate sets of Angel Bread, colored white and pink, come in an envelope printed with the description of the Oplatki tradition.

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### The Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

The birth of Jesus took place like this. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. Before they came to the marriage bed, Joseph discovered she was pregnant. (It was by the Holy Spirit, but he didn't know that.) Joseph, chagrined but noble, determined to take care of things quietly so Mary would not be disgraced.

While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream. God's angel spoke in the dream: “Joseph, son of David, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will name him Jesus—‘God saves’—because he will save his people from their sins.” This would bring the prophet's embryonic sermon to full term: Watch for this—a virgin will get pregnant and bear a son; They will name him Immanuel (Hebrew for “God is with us”).

Then Joseph woke up. He did exactly what God's angel commanded in the dream: He married Mary. But he did not consummate the marriage until she had the baby. He named the baby Jesus (*from Matthew 1*).

### Understand Your Catholic Faith with

#### The Catechism in a Year Podcast

with Fr. Mike Schmitz!

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- Transform their relationship with the Church that Christ founded

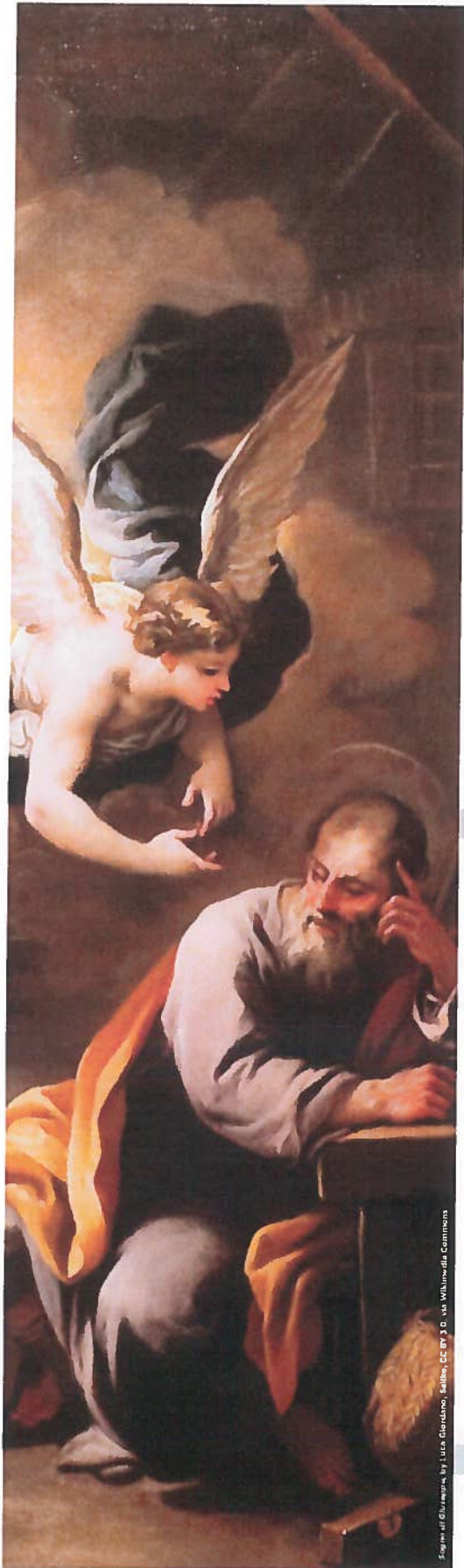
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December 18, 2022

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

Is 7:10-14 | Rom 1:1-7 | Mt 1:18-24

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

### **GROW** AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

In our family's department-store Nativity set, Joseph blends into the background: Mary and the Infant Jesus steal the scene, she in her blue robes and looking over the sweet, tiny and vulnerable Son of God. Even the Magi stand out more than humble Joseph. Yet today's Gospel focuses on Jesus' earthly father, whom many of us Catholics grew to know a little better during the Year of St. Joseph in 2021. Imagine Joseph's shock at learning Mary was pregnant! Rather than quietly divorcing her, he accepts the angel's words at face value: "For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Joseph takes Mary into his home and embraces her and the child Jesus she bears. As we celebrate this fourth Sunday of Advent, we can all do well to follow Joseph and Mary's example by saying "yes" to God, even though it may turn our lives upside down. We can dust off our Nativity scenes and ask the Lord to help us prepare our hearts and homes for Jesus.

### **GO** EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

I remember our first trip to the pediatrician with our newborn. Our job as parents, he said in so many words, was to raise him so that he'd be ready to leave us at 18. As our youngest approaches that milestone, I'm having a hard time letting go. In his apostolic letter *Patris Corde*, Pope Francis holds up St. Joseph as an example of what it means to be a father (and I think this applies to mothers, too): "Every child is the bearer of a unique mystery that can only be brought to light with the help of a father who respects that child's freedom. A father who realizes that he is most a father and educator at the point when he becomes 'useless,' when he sees that his child has become independent and can walk the paths of life unaccompanied. When he becomes like Joseph, who always knew that his child was not his own but had merely been entrusted to his care." Joseph and Mary loved Jesus in this way, accepting that Jesus did not "belong" to them but to all of us. Whether or not we are parents, we can learn from their example, entrusting our lives and those of our loved ones to God. As St. Paul reminds us, we "belong to Jesus Christ."

**ACTION** "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" As you light the Advent candles or say evening prayers this week, reflect on the ways Jesus has made his presence known to you today and give thanks.

**Sunday, Dec 18, 2022**

**Welcome!**

Most folks live in the land of their birth. Only one in 30 migrate, and for many reasons. They may marry a non-national and relocate to make a life together. Jobs may move overseas. But most often, people migrate under forces they can't control: military conflicts, natural disasters, extreme poverty, or other dangers. Migration may not be chosen, but it doesn't have to spell doom to those who depart or those who receive them. Migrants have knowledge, networks, and skills to share. U.S. history proves it as does the history of our faith. As Yahweh told the Israelites: "You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt" (Lev. 19:33-34). On this International Migrants Day, O Sacred Lord, give us the spirit of welcome and openness so we may each find our way to you.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (O SACRED LORD)

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 7:10-14; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-24 (10). "The Lord's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it."

**Monday, Dec 19, 2022**

**Cherish your roots**

Today's O Antiphon—"O Root of Jesse's stem, sign of God's love for all his people: come to save us without delay!"—invites us to meditate on the theme of Jesus' genealogy and our spiritual ancestry. Jesse was the father of King David, and God told the prophet Nathan that David's royal family would last forever. Jesus is the enduring branch that grows out of the root of Jesse, the fulfillment of a hope past and present. When we belong to Christ, we belong to the rest of the tree, too—a family that includes God and humanity. Christmas brings people together, biologically related or not—let the longing of this season bond you closer to all in love.

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O FLOWER OF JESSE'S STEM)

TODAY'S READINGS: Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1:5-25 (195). "He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God."

**Tuesday, Dec 20, 2022**

**Let's make some room at the inn**

We're in the middle of two great spiritual traditions that overlap in Advent: The O Antiphons (December 17-23)—recited at vespers for the church's Liturgy of the Hours—and the celebration of "Las Posadas" (December 16-24), reenacting Joseph and Mary's search for shelter ahead of Jesus' birth. Since Las Posadas come from our Latin American brothers and sisters, each year the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops encourages us to work and pray, in intentional ways, for migrants to our country who—like Mary and Joseph—seek safety and basic biblical hospitality. The Key of David is also the key to our hearts. See Justice for Immigrants for more background and suggested actions.

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O KEY OF DAVID)

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-38 (196). "Listen, O house of David!"

**Wednesday, Dec 21, 2022**

**A light of faith from the North Star**

On this day in 1892, Saint Peter Claver Catholic Church was founded in Saint Paul, Minnesota, the first black parish in the state of Minnesota. Founded decades before the Great Migration of southern blacks to northern states, the church was the brainchild

of hopeful black Catholics (inspired by Josephite founder John Slattery, S.S.J.) and Archbishop John Ireland, a tireless advocate for black liberation in an era of widespread racism. The new church was named for the famed Jesuit missionary, just a few years after his canonization by Pope Leo XIII, and among its first members was Fredrick McGhee, the first black lawyer in state history. May he and his companions inspire our faith and encourage us to witness for justice in our daily lives!

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O RADIANT DAWN)

TODAY'S READINGS: Song of Songs 2:8-14 or Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Luke 1:39-45 (197). "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!"

**Thursday, Dec 22, 2022**

**Picture this**

For Americans, the O Antiphon for today, "O King of All Nations," might be less than compelling since our incipient nation rebelled against the only king it ever had back in its colonial days. The image of God or Jesus as "king" comes from the prevailing social structures 2,000 years ago. Centuries of church-monarchy unity in Europe and elsewhere kept the tradition going. Contemporary Catholics can understand the power and authority of kingship, but God's tenderness and mercy can be sidelined by this term, which leads to a good question for any disciple: What is your image of God? What helps you connect with the Divine?

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O KING OF ALL NATIONS)

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Samuel 1:24-28; Luke 1:46-56 (198). "The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name."

**Friday, Dec 23, 2022**

**Rejoice, rejoice!**

The "O Emmanuel" antiphon heralds the conclusion of Advent. It also conveys a powerful truth about how we experience the divine. Yes, God is awesome and transcendent—and God is the one who draws close to us, takes on our humanity, and is truly Emmanuel, "God with us." As we prepare to enter into the mystery of the Incarnation, let us take a moment to pray "O Emmanuel" and reflect on how we experience God with us in our day-to-day life. And as a church let us sing together, "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel / Shall come to thee, O Israel."

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O EMMANUEL)

TODAY'S READINGS: Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Luke 1:57-66 (199). "Yes, he is coming."

**Saturday, Dec 24, 2022**

**Forgiveness under the tree**

If you haven't finished your Christmas shopping by now, you're toast (at least according to consumer culture). The best you can hope for now is forgiveness. Which is exactly what this day and this night are all about. Zechariah's Benedictus in today's gospel (which takes its name from the first words in Latin—*Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel") reflects God's eternal plan of deliverance: "To give his people knowledge of Salvation by the forgiveness of their sins." The best present you can give anybody, tonight or ever, is the forgiveness of their sins. Today is the perfect day to give this perfect gift!

ADVENT WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Morning: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Luke 1:67-79 (200). "To give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins."

*Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time*



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