

**November 24, 2013**

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
ST. JOHN, TEXAS

**ASCENSION OF OUR LORD CHURCH**  
MORAVIA, TEXAS

**DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS**



**REV. MSGR. JOHN C. PETERS, PASTOR**

REV. DANIEL DANSO, PAROCHIAL VICAR

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**MASS SCHEDULE**

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**Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe**

Saturday	Nov. 23	6:00 P.M.	Leroy Rybak	St. John
Sunday	Nov. 24	9:30 A.M.	Agatha Janak	Moravia

**Thanksgiving Day**

Thursday	Nov. 28	8:00 A.M.	In Thanksgiving	Moravia
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**First Sunday of Advent**

Saturday	Nov. 30	6:00 P.M.	Dominic Loth	Moravia
Sunday	Dec. 1	9:30 A.M.	Ervin & Irene Mendel	St. John

**Second Sunday of Advent**

Saturday	Dec. 7	6:00 P.M.	Sylvester Janak	Moravia
Sunday	Dec. 8	9:30 A.M.	Henry R. & Julia Olsovsky & Rebecca Patterson	Moravia

**Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

Monday	Dec. 9	7:00 P.M.	Fr. Brian Crookes & all former pastors	St. John
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**THE WORD OF GOD**

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**Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe**

Readings: 2 Samuel 5:1-3 Psalm 122:1-5 Colossians 1:12-20 Luke 23:35-43

In Hebron, David is hailed as king by all the tribes of Israel. Jesus is anointed king on the wood of his cross, a sign of paradox, of defeat yet final victory. Through his cross we have passed from darkness into the kingdom of light.

**First Sunday of Advent**

Readings: Isaiah 2:1-5 Psalm 122:1-9 Romans 13:11-14 Matthew 24:37-44

Let us rejoice in the Lord's peace; let us live honorably as we await his return.

**Second Sunday of Advent**

Readings: Isaiah 11:1-10 Psalm 72:1-2,7-8,12-13,17 Romans 15:4-9 Matthew 3:1-12

Reform your lives: live in God's peace so that justice may flourish.

**The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

Pastoral Feast Day of the United States of America (not a holy day of obligation this year)

Readings: Genesis 3:9-15,20 Psalm 98:1-4 Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12 Luke 1:26-38

Chosen by God, Mary reverses the sin of Eve. Because of her obedience, God's salvation is made known to all the nations. Originating in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, feast of the "Conception of Mary by St. Anne," Pope Clement XI, in his Bull, *Commissi Nobis*, established this Solemnity for the entire Church in 1708; patroness of the United States of America, Spain, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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**FROM DESK OF MSGR. JOHN**

We are in need of more lectors and more Ministers of Holy Communion for St. John. If you are interested please contact me as soon as possible.

Today, Sunday, we have the Christ the King procession. We will begin at 2:00 p.m. in Sacred Heart Church and process around the Hallettsville Courthouse Square and back to the church. We hope to have the various organizations to process with their banners. If the weather is bad, we will have the service in the church from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Let us turn out to honor Christ our King.

Americans celebrate Thanksgiving Day this Thursday. This week will be one of the busiest for travel. Local news channels will broadcast stories about Thanksgiving meals and also about the poor who will be served by others. The president will pardon a turkey. Stores will gear up for Black Friday sales and a big shopping weekend. Financial markets in the U.S. will be closed down Thursday and have shortened hours on Friday. The collision of sentiments of gratitude and crass commercialism on a single weekend can make for certain incongruence in one's experience of these few days.

As we celebrate the feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, we are presented with a seemingly huge incongruity in the Gospel that is proclaimed this year. We celebrate a great King, and in our human experience when we hear of a king we think of fine robes, sumptuous feasts, grand castles, and scores of courtiers and servants. The Gospel today gives us a broken man, abandoned by His friends, condemned, reviled by a criminal, and hanging on a cross. This is the King we honor today.

Thank God that we can live with a certain amount of discord in our lives. It is what allows us to hold in balance seemingly contradictory notions, like the fact that a crucified man is our Lord and King. One of the criminals crucified with Jesus asks that he be remembered when Jesus comes into His kingdom. That plea, uttered near the moment of his death, has become a prayer for Christians through the centuries, because we believe that the death of Jesus was not the end. We believe that His death was just the beginning, ushering in a new kingdom, and promising a new life that can be ours if we submit ourselves to the rule of this universal King. The promise Christ makes to the repentant thief is the promise He makes to us: we will be with Him in paradise.

### **ST. JOHN ALTAR SOCIETY FUND RAISER REPORT (CORRECTION)**

Harlan's Food Market will donate 1% of all cash register receipts to your Church or charity of your choice. Harlan's sales receipts turn in from St. John Church totaled \$63,231.00 and a check for \$632.31 was received. Please continue to save your Harlan's receipts and drop them in the envelope in back of Church. THE ST. JOHN ALTAR SOCIETY THANKS YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

### **ST. JOHN CHURCH CLEANERS**

St. John Church Cleaners for December: Sharon Bujnoch, Vicky Kainer and Tracy Kristinik

### **ST. JOHN CHURCH USHERS**

St. John Church Ushers for December: Scotty Brossmann and Nathan Redman

### **MORAVIA ALTAR SOCIETY COOKBOOKS FOR SALE**

Cookbooks are still available for sale at Hallettsville General Store, 405 N. Texana, Hallettsville, TX. Books contain 300 recipes and cost \$10, with proceeds benefiting the Moravia Altar Society. Folks can pick up at the store OR call 512.461.3236 (Janet Spies cell) to order. I can ship books for an additional \$2/each. These books make GREAT Christmas presents!!

### **PRO-LIFE CORNER**

Bolstered by American Life League's Bringing Jesus to Planned Parenthood through Mary Campaign, 7 Planned Parenthood facilities in Texas closed during the 43 day period between July 19 and September 1, 2013: Midland, San Angelo, Burleson, Corsicana, Lufkin, Huntsville and Bryan. Clearly, the victories that unfold day by day, as more PP facilities close, are the fruit of that trust in Our Lady. (from October\_November 2013 ALL NEWS)

### **MEMORIALS –Ascension Building Fund**

**In memory of Andrew Brosh, Sr.** by Phil & Kathy Guenther - \$20

**In memory of Eugene Stepanek** by Richard & Wilma Schaefer - \$20

### **ALTAR SERVER SCHEDULE**

Saturday, Nov. 23 - 6:00 p.m. - St. John - Alex Lozano, Miranda Shimek, Blaine Besetzny

Sunday, Nov. 24 - 9:30 a.m. - Moravia - Joshua Becan, Dylan Goldberg, Seth Eckhardt

Saturday, Nov. 30 - 6:00 p.m. - Moravia - Caitlin Deem, Jenna Kubenka, James Lofland

Sunday, Dec. 1 - 9:30 a.m. - St. John - Dylan Goldberg, Rylie & Regan Lux

Saturday, Dec. 7 - 6:00 p.m. - Moravia - Joshua Becan, Miranda Shimek, Alex Lozano

Sunday, Dec. 8 - 9:30 a.m. - Moravia - April Brossman, Seth Eckhardt, Blaine Besetzny



### **FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**

**Festival of Lights, Hallettsville Courthouse Square, Saturday, November 30.** Santa's visit, food & market days booths, lighting extravaganza, kiddie parade, lighted Christmas parade and Christmas Pageant. For information, call (361) 798-5818, (361) 798-2662 or go to [www.hallettsville.com](http://www.hallettsville.com).

### **ARCHDIOCESE OF THE MILITARY - COLLECTION**

St. John - \$369.00

Moravia - \$213.00

### **THANKSGIVING DAY PRAYER –**

Father, all of Creation rightly owes you thanks and praise. Your justice, love and mercy abound. We thank you this day for all that you have given us: For the Passion and Death of your Divine Son, we thank you Father, through the Cross, He redeemed the world; For the Church, we thank you Father, it is our beacon for salvation; For the martyrs and saints who give testimony to your Son, we thank you Father, their witness to your Son is our inheritance; For our loved ones and friends who have died and gone before us, we thank you Father, their love abides with us forever; For loving spouses, we thank you Father, together we seek you; For the gift of children, we thank you Father, they are your precious gifts to us and to the world For the gift of our families, loved ones and good friends, we thank you Father, through them we see the reflection of your Son; For jobs, our homes and all that we have, we thank you Father, give us only that which we need, as we seek Your Kingdom; For the bounty we are about to eat, we thank you through Christ Our Lord. Amen.



**PRAYER FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY** – O gentle Heart of Jesus, ever present in the Blessed Sacrament, ever consumed with burning love for the poor captive souls in Purgatory, have mercy on them. Be not severe in Your judgments, but let some drops of Your Precious Blood fall upon the devouring flames. And, Merciful Saviour, send Your angels to conduct them to a place of refreshment, light and peace. Amen.

## A fruitful Advent makes for a wonderful Christmas

It is said that a good beginning leads to a good outcome. Then a true Advent observance is a great step toward a wonderful Christmas. And a good Advent can also bring you spiritual renewal along the way.

Waiting can often produce greater joy when the wait is finally over. Why not consider adopting one or two of these ideas to increase your Christmas joy through a fruitful Advent wait?

### Pray the Wait.

- **Commit random acts of prayer.** Pray while you wait in line. Pray in the car. Pray when you're put on hold. Pray on your way to work. Keep your prayer simple and heartfelt.
- **Wait in his presence.** Make a visit to the tabernacle in your church to the Body of Christ. Spending time in reverent prayer before the Eucharist will bring healing and peace.
- **Ask God's advice for how much to spend on Christmas gifts.** It is hard to fully prepare for the Savior when you are racking up debt. Celebrate joyfully, simply, and responsibly.
- **Make a joyful noise.** St. Augustine is credited with saying that singing is praying twice. Hum along with the carols in the elevator. Sing hymns joyfully at Mass. Listen to Handel's Messiah or other sacred music of the season. Use song to boost your prayer - even if it's just singing in the shower.
- **Before you speak or act, pray that you will bear God's image in all that you say or do.** In this way, we won't be strangers, but rather will be ready and waiting to welcome him.
- **"Hail Mary" your way through Advent.** Consider the Blessed Mother's example of faith. Learn to see through her eyes, listen with her ears, and trust with her heart.



### Anticipate with hope.

- **This is a good time to make peace with one another, and be forgiving.** Jesus said, *"Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift"* (Matthew 25:23-25).
- **Open your heart.** December is the loneliest month of the year. Make a list of people you know who live alone, are new to your area, or who have lost a loved one this year. Include them in your family events, invite them to Mass, or pay them a visit.
- **Champion a service project.** Many parishes gather gifts for disadvantaged families or folks forgotten in nursing homes. Find out what your local community is doing or begin your own service traditions.
- **Become a soldier in the war for peace.** Avoid quarreling or gossip, and work for a spirit of unity.
- **Convert your heart.** Do a thorough examination of your conscience so that you can recognize patterns of sin that need to be changed. If you need help spotting them, ask your priest for advice when you go to Confession. (Hint: if you think you don't have any sins, read Exodus 20 and Matthew 5.)
- **Mark the season.** You may not be able to wait until Christmas Eve to decorate your home, but why not decorate slowly throughout Advent to measure progress through the season?
- **Advertise your faith in Jesus' birth.** Put on a joyful appearance, no matter what is going on in your day. Remind yourself of the coming miracle and what it means for each of us.

However you choose to observe Advent, remember the gifts of the first Christmas -- justice, peace, and freedom. They are God's Christmas gifts to us all.

# Growing in FAITH™

Discovering **hope and joy** in the Catholic faith.

December 2013

**Sacred Heart, St. Mary, St. John and Ascension Churches**

Fr. John C. Peters, Pastor

## One Minute Meditations

### St. Juan Diego

On December 9th we honor St. Juan Diego. A humble Native American convert to Christianity, Juan Diego was visited by the Blessed Virgin at Tepeyac Hill in Mexico in 1531. She sent him to ask the bishop to build a chapel for her, and had Juan bring roses as a sign. When the roses spilled from his tilma (cape) before the bishop, it retained the image of the Blessed Mother which can be seen today. Millions converted as a result.



### Christmas unity

Christmas is a wonderful time to forgive anyone who hurt or disappointed us. After all, Jesus came to repair our broken relationship with God. He will give us the strength and power to forgive others if we ask.

### Hope always

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope"*  
(Romans 15:13).



## What is under your tree this Christmas?

Christmas celebrates the most amazing truth: God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, loves each of us individually and particularly. Of all God's creatures, we alone were made for God himself. His love is free - the best gift for Christmas.

**Accept the gift.** To do that, open your heart to receive all the love he wants to give you. Empty yourself of resentment, bitterness, anger, envy - anything that doesn't belong - to make room. Start with the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent. Repeat often throughout the year.

**Unwrap the gift.** The Bible is the great

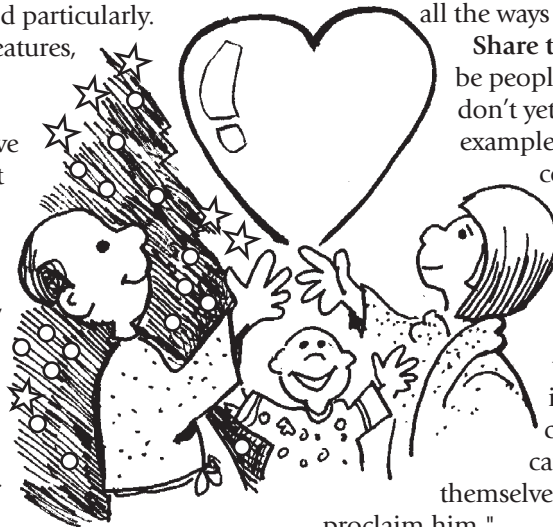
story of God's love and a personal love letter written by God to each of us.

Reading Scripture is key to revealing all the ways God loves us.

**Share the gift.** There may be people in your life who don't yet know God. Your example and influence could be the only way they will know what God's love can be like. Blessed Pope John Paul II said, "Those who have come into genuine contact with Christ cannot keep him for themselves, they must

proclaim him."

**Give a gift yourself.** Take time to love God more each day. St. Augustine said, "To fall in love with God is the greatest romance, to seek him the greatest adventure, to find him, the greatest human achievement." Merry Christmas.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why do we celebrate the Immaculate Conception?

In December, we commemorate that Mary was conceived in St. Anne's womb without Original Sin. (Normally a Holy Day of Obligation, this year the solemnity is on December 9th and Mass attendance is not obligatory.)

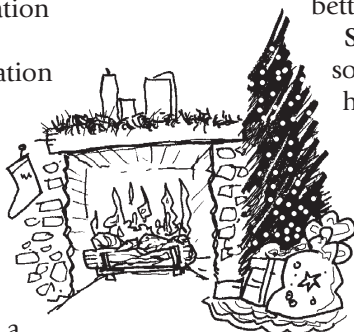


In 1854, Pope Pius IX pronounced that by a special act of divine grace, the Blessed Mother was conceived, through the union of her natural father and mother, without the stain of Original Sin, which has afflicted all other humans except for her divine Son.

# Have a real Merry Christmas!

Do you wish for an idyllic Christmas celebration complete with a warm fire, joyful music, and tinsel-covered tree? For many of us, the celebration comes at the end of weeks spent shopping, wrapping, and spending, and is wrought with family tensions, obligations, and exhaustion. Try these steps to keep your sanity and your Savior in your Christmas celebrating:

**Be realistic.** It isn't the goal of the season to make everyone happy. If you don't overspend and over extend before Christmas, you'll be in a



better frame of mind when it arrives.

**Soothe the beast.** Beautiful music can set a soothing tone for your celebration. Pick your favorite holy hymns to put yourself in the Christmas mood.

**Reach out.** Want to make your own problems seem small? Take on someone else's. Do at least one good Christmas deed for someone needy.

**Seek the eternal.** Jesus gives us peace, purpose, and perspective. Spend time with Jesus each day of Advent and Christmas to remind yourself of what is most important about Christmas.

## from Scripture

**Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23, God chooses each of us in a special way.**

Mary and Joseph were forced to travel in the last stages of her pregnancy from Nazareth to Bethlehem. On foot or donkey, it was a dirty and exhausting journey. Once there, they had no option for decent housing and had to stay in a stable with animals. Young Mary gave birth in crude conditions with no friend or family to help.



they arrived and they had to make their own way in an unfamiliar land.

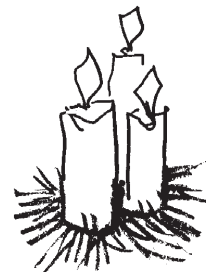
Refugees all over the world flee violence like the Holy Family. Catholics have a special charge to protect them and those who are vulnerable: children, elderly, and poor. Like Mary's

After a short time, they fled to Egypt with their newborn to escape threats from the government, and stayed there for several years. There were no friendly faces to greet the family once

and Joseph's, God has a special place for each of us in his plan of salvation. Prayerfully ask God what he wants you to do for him and his kingdom.

## Q & A Do I have to attend Mass on Christmas?

In our culture, Christmas has become a warm and wonderful time to gather with friends and family, a time to exchange gifts of love, and a time to enjoy family traditions. But first and foremost, Christmas celebrates the Incarnation - the



fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it.

There is nothing the world can offer us that compares to the fact that God "so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). God came and lived among us and rose from the dead to save us. He is still with us and offers us eternal life. That's what Christmas celebrates. So, yes, we do have to go to Mass to worship, adore, and offer thanks to the one who makes our salvation possible. He was born on Christmas.

Remember, Christmas is a Holy Day of Obligation when all Catholics are obliged to attend Mass.

## Feasts & Celebrations

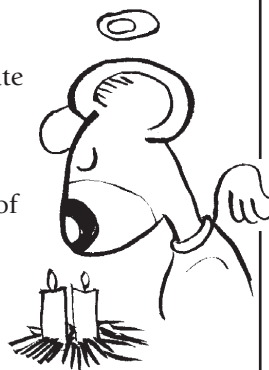
**Dec. 14 – St. John of the Cross (1591).** As a Carmelite, St. John led a reform in the Order to encourage more prayer and simplicity. Briefly jailed over a misunderstanding, some of his best spiritual writing came from this experience.

**Dec. 21 – St. Peter Canisius (1597).** Born in Holland, he was ordained into the Society of Jesus and vigorously safeguarded the Catholic faith through writings and teaching. His work, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, is still used today.

**Dec. 26 – St. Stephen (first century).**

A deacon of the early Church, St. Stephen preached that God can be found everywhere, not just in one place like the temple. He angered the Jewish authorities and became the first martyr of the Catholic Church.

**Dec. 29 – The Holy Family (1st century).** On the feast of the Holy Family, we celebrate the family life of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. By their love and support of one another the Holy Family is a model for all Christian families.



**Our Mission**

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)