



CONTACT

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12365 Sturgis Road
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Office Open M-F
8:30-2:30 PM

LITURGY & PARYER

Sunday Liturgy:

Saturday, 5 PM

Sunday, 8 & 11 AM

Daily Liturgy:

Tuesday-Friday, 8 AM

Eucharistic Adoration:

Wednesday, 8:30-7:30 PM

Reconciliation:

Wednesday, 5:30-6:30 PM

Saturday, 3:30-4:30 PM

First Fridays, 8:30-9:30 AM

First Friday Devotion:

Following Daily Mass on
First Fridays

CLERGY

Pastor:

Fr. Andrzej Wyrostek

awyrostek@diorc.org

Deacons:

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John Osnes josnes@diorc.org

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Our Lady of the Black Hills exists
to proclaim the joy of the Gospel
to all creation and to transform
lives with the Father's mercy.

the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it

Phil 1:6

This past summer, I read Caryll Houselander's book, *The Reed of God*. This book is focused on Mary, and as the forward to the book describes, "she gives flesh and spirit to solid theological affirmations about Mary." It goes on to say, "The Mary she presents for our contemplation is one that is at home in our world." One of the chapters in the book is titled Advent. She describes Advent as "the season of the seed...the seed, ..., is the Word of God sown in human heart."

During the season of Advent, our focus is preparing for the birth of Jesus. And just as Mary carried Jesus within her, we too, carry the seed, the Word of God, in our human heart. Houselander says Mary "had nothing to give Him but herself. ... Working, eating, sleeping, she was forming His body from hers. ... From her humanity she gave Him His humanity. ... Every beat of her heart gave Him His heart to love with, ... she gave Him human sight. ... she gave him human voice."

She describes how completely dependent Jesus was on Mary as He grew within her. Today, Jesus is just as dependent on us. In the Eucharistic Host, He is put into our hands. We carry the seed, the Word of God, dwelling in our human hearts, to the dying, the imprisoned, the homebound, the hospitalized, to our family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers.

Houselander continues, "we must believe that He is growing in our lives; we must believe it so firmly that we cannot help relating everything, literally everything, to this almost incredible reality. ... This attitude it is which makes every moment of every day and night a prayer. ... How could it be possible that anyone who was conscious that Christ desired to see the world with his eyes would look willingly on anything evil? Or know that He wished to work with his hands, do any work that was shoddy, any work that was not as near perfection as human nature can achieve? ... None of us knows when the loveliest hour of our life is striking. It may be when we take Christ for the first time to that grey office in the city where we work, to the retched lodging of that poor man who is an outcast, to the nurse of that pampered child."

She continues, "Sometimes it may seem to us that there is no purpose in our lives, that going day after day for years to this office or that school or factory is nothing else but waste and weariness. But it may be that God has sent us there because but for us Christ would not be there. If our being there means that Christ is there, that alone makes it worthwhile. ... If Christ is growing in us, if we are at peace, recollected, because we know that however insignificant our life seems to be, from it He is forming Himself."

In other words, He is continuing to complete the good work He began in you. Live Advent every day.

Deacon Greg Sass
Serviam

Christmas Giving Tree

Please place your **UNWRAPPED** gift in the gathering space by December 15th.

*****We need help with wrapping gifts.** ***

We will wrap on **December 16th** from 9:15-4 PM. Help us for all or part of the wrapping process.

St. Vincent de Paul Cookie and Treat Sale

St. Vincent de Paul will hold their annual bake sale with FRED and GINGER. The bake sale will be December 18-19. If you would like to donate treats to the bake sale to aid SVdP please have your baked goods dropped off by December 18 at 11 AM. Thank you for supporting our neighbors in need.

SoulCore is BACK

Join SoulCore Leader Jenny for the Sundays of Advent, to nourish body, mind & soul. SoulCore is a prayer experience that combines the prayers of the rosary with core strengthening, stretching and functional movement. No fitness level or experience required. All are welcome! Visit www.soulcore.com for more information. Follow us locally on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/soulcore605>. There is no cost but a suggested donation of \$10, for those who are able. Dress in comfortable clothing or sportswear and bring a fitness mat if you have one. Contact Jenny Scherr at j.scherr@hotmail.com for additional information.

Sunday, Dec 5 @ 4:00pm (upstairs in St. Joseph's Hall)

Sunday, Dec 12 @ 4:00pm (upstairs in St. Joseph's Hall)

Sunday, Dec 19 @ 4:00pm (downstairs in the church)

Theology on Tap **CANCELLED FOR DECEMBER**

Teaching Tuesday December 28th 6:30-8pm

Deacon Bill White will screen "Walking the Good Red Road: Nicholas Black Elk's Journey to Sainthood," and give his account of the holiness and service of Nicholas Black Elk to the Catholic Church and the native people in our area.

Steubenville Meeting

There is a meeting on Tuesday, December 7, 2021, for students and their parents who will attend Steubenville this summer.

Advent Celebration of the Feast of St. Lucia

Come and celebrate St. Lucy on Sunday, **December 12th** from 3-4:30 PM. All ages are invited. Learn more about St. Lucy, make St. Lucy buns, enjoy some hot chocolate and end with a processional and an introduction to the liturgy of the hours. Call Amy in the office to RSVP so we can make sure to have enough dough for you and your family at 605-787-5168.

Advent Penance Liturgies

December 5 @ 3 PM St. Francis - Sturgis

December 9 @ 4-7 PM Blessed Sacrament Church – Rapid City

December 13 @ 6 PM OUR LADY OF THE BLACK HILLS – Piedmont

December 16 @ 6:30 PM St. Therese – Rapid City

December 22 @ 6 PM St. Isaac Jogues – Rapid City

Catechism of the Catholic Church – What is a catechism? How do you use a catechism? What kind of information is in the Catechism of the Catholic Church? Interested in learning more about the Catechism of the Catholic Church and its contents? Come join us in an 8-session series beginning Monday January 10th, from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm.

Thank you for your donation.

Please prayerfully consider automatic contributions via electronic withdrawal, check service, or at www.olbh.org/donate. Please prayerfully consider including the Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation and Our Lady of the Black Hills in your estate planning.

"All good giving and every perfect gift is from above" (Jas 1:17)			
November 27-28, 2021			
	Automatic	Basket	Total
Adopt a Seminarian	54	-	54
Sunday Collection	2,599	3,905	6,504
Rectory	31	-	31
Bottles of Hope	-	-	-
Building Fund	-	-	-
Priest Retirement	-	-	-
Food Pantry			0
Total Contribution	2,684	3,905	6,588.75

Weekly Schedule

Monday, December 6

Saint Nicholas, Bishop

7:30 AM Early Bird Bible Study

No Mass

7:15 PM Theology on Tap CANCELLED

Tuesday, December 7

Saint Ambrose, Bishop, Doctor of the Church

8 AM Mass for the repose of Dennis Schumacher

6 PM St. Vincent de Paul Meeting

Wednesday, December 8

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

8 AM Mass for Mike and Marilyn Rohde

8:30-5 PM Adoration

9-12 Noon Food Pantry Open

No Confessions

NO Faith Formation

6 PM Mass for Eloise Harwood

Thursday, December 9

San Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin

8 AM Mass for Joyce Williamson

9 AM "Just Men" Bible Study

9 AM Women's Bible Study

Friday, December 10

Our Lady of Loreto

8 AM Mass at OLBH for All Souls in Purgatory

Saturday, December 11

Saint Damasus I, Pope

9-12 Noon Food Pantry Open

3:30-4:30 PM Confessions

5 PM Mass –Live stream link on Facebook and OLBH.org for Diocesan Masses for Life

Sunday, December 12

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8 AM Mass for the community of OLBH and our sister parishes emphasis on our children

9:15-10:45 Faith Formation

9-11 AM RCIA

11 AM Mass for Collette Gaeta

4 PM Soul Core in St. Joseph's Hall

ADVENT RESOURCES

Pick up your free Advent materials on the table in the gathering space.

Intentions of the Holy Father for December:

Pope's Intention: Catechists. Let us pray for the catechists, summoned to announce the Word of God; may they be its witnesses, with courage and creativity and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer Chain Requests

To request an intention for the prayer chain, please contact Sue Colgan at 431-0310 or at ssacolgan@gmail.com.

Prayers for the Recently Deceased

Morris Brosnan

Linda Weishaar

Eucharistic Adoration

For information on Adoration or to sign up to Adore or to fill in as a substitute, please contact Dave Allardyce at 791-2303.

Prayers for Life and Health Concerns

These individuals are in special need of your prayers. To have someone placed on the prayer list, contact Katie in the office.

- **Edwin and Omel Weaver** (parents of Bob Weaver)
- **Blanche Rieth • Jean Schacher • Bernard Wiehl**
- **Sid and Mary Ann Pulaski • Maynard Traversie**
- **Lowell Amiotte • Randy Oberle • Tracy Rudnick**
 - **Joan Wrobel** (aunt of Rachael Held)
- **Vickie Crowley • Patti Cariveau • Marjorie Lee**
 - **Cap Holzer • Doug Wermers**
- **Marek Kopec • Brett Whealy • Jennifer Kinney**
 - **Robert Forest** (father of Cathy Long)
- **Tony Corbine • Wayne Gamroth • Rachael Held**
 - **Tim Curns • Rayola Anderson**
 - **Dean Antonsen • Moneik Stephens**
 - **Christy Marie** (sister of Linda Schacher)
 - **Alicia Castor** (niece of Kathleen and Lowell Amiotte) • **Billy Hudson • Les Weishaar**
- **John Mangan** (brother-in-law of Diane Gittings)
- **Jim & Vonnie O'Dea** (parents of Holly Phillips)
- **Carol Michaelson** (mother of Linda Schacher)
 - **Joyce DePaulo • Katie Niederwerder**
- **John Mizenko Sr.** (father of Jeff) • **Norbert Liebig**
 - **Ruth O'Neil** (mother of Lisa Katzenstein)
- **Jasper Wermers** (grandson of Peggy and Doug)
- **Tim Keller** (son-in-law of Cap and Arlene Holzer)
- **Craig Lindemann** (Uncle of Maggie Whiteside)
 - **The Nalley Family • Jean Scheope**
 - **Derek Dowdy** (grandson of the Gittings)
- **Hudson Henry** (great grandson/nephew of the Collings and Denekamps) • **Kit Soyland**

† Necrology †

To remember in prayer for the repose of their souls. Those whose deaths are recorded in the parish; and the bishops, priests, and deacons that served the Diocese of Rapid City.

- December 6** Rev. James Michalski, S.J. (2014)
Milton H. Gray (2000)
Ember Erin Smith (2004)
Alice Donley (2010)
James Darwin Weisbeck (2010)
- December 7** Msgr. Vincent J. Christie (1953)
Gene Albrecht (2017)
- December 8** Rev. Matthew Connell, S.J. (1957)
- December 9** Rev. James D. Becht (2002)
- December 11** G. Carol Maicki (2004)
Alan Jeffers Kinney (2016)
- December 12** Rev. Matthias Schmitt, S.J. (1936)
Mary V. Keller (1986)

Welcome Visitors!

We hope you have enjoyed sharing in the celebration of the Mass with us. Whether you are new to the area or have lived here for years, coming to visit, or returning after a long break, you are invited to join our parish family. Please come again! We have opportunities for all ages and stages of faith. Please pick up a welcome packet from the counter in the gathering space. If you are passing through, we hope you will call our parish your "home away from home" and visit again soon!

Ministry Schedule To become a liturgical minister or for more information contact Katie in the office.

Mass Times	Wednesday 12/8 8 AM	Wednesday 12/8 6 PM	Saturday, 12/11 5 PM	Sunday 12/12 8 AM	Sunday 12/12 11 AM
Presider	Fr. Andrzej	Fr. Andrzej	Fr. Andrzej	Fr. Andrzej	Fr. Andrzej
Altar Server	Bruce Lehman - Lead NOT FILLED	Shawn Harwood - Lead Emerson Harwood	Dustin Huiten - L Dominic Huiten Keeana Pesek	Caleb Weishaar - L Marty Reeve Freddy Weishaar	Lucy Hamer - Lead Sydney Bremer Anya Juelfs
Eucharistic Minister - Body	Deacon Greg Sass	Deacon John Osnes	Deacon Greg Sass	Deacon Greg Sass	Deacon Greg Sass
Hospitality	NOT FILLED NOT FILLED	NOT FILLED NOT FILLED	Pam Freeman Ken Freeman	Barb Coyle Mike Coyle	LuElla and Jim Grieve
Lector	Bernadette Usera - 1st Nancy Sass - 2nd	Joni Osnes - 1st NOT FILLED - 2nd	Jean Hohm - 1st Reader DeWayne Yantes - 2nd Reader	Christine Pulaski - 1st Reader Marty Quinn - 2nd Reader	Meryl Gaeta - 1st Reader Laura Varilek - 2nd Reader
Sacristan	Bruce and Emma Lehman	Brad Blauvelt Matthew Blauvelt Mary Blauvelt	Mary Blauvelt Matthew Blauvelt Brad Blauvelt	Jeff Mizenko	Stacy Tate

Daily Readings

- Monday:** Is 35:1-10; Ps 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14; Lk 5:17-26
- Tuesday:** Is 40:1-11; Ps 96:1-2, 3 and 10ac, 11-12, 13; Mt 18:12-14
- Wednesday:** Gn 3:9-15, 20; Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38
- Thursday:** Is 41:13-20; Ps 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13ab; Mt 11:11-15
- Friday:** Is 48:17-19; Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6; Mt 11:16-19
- Saturday:** Sir 48:1-4, 9-11; Ps 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19; Mt 17:9a, 10-13
- Sunday:** Zep 3:14-18a; Ps Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6; Phil 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18

The weekly readings can be found anytime online on the USCCB website or by clicking: [Weekly Readings](#)

GO TO JOSEPH

DIOCESAN ADVENT MISSION

DECEMBER 1
THE BEAUTY OF THE
HEART OF ST. JOSEPH
BLESSSED SACRAMENT

DECEMBER 8
DIOCESAN CONSECRATION
WITH BISHOP PETER
CATHEDRAL OLPH

DECEMBER 15
ST. JOSEPH: PILLAR OF FAMILIES,
GLORY OF HOME LIFE
OUR LADY OF THE BLACK HILLS

All events begin at 6 PM, more information is at rapidcitydiocese.org



December 8th at Cathedral Our Lady of Perpetual Help – Diocesan Consecration to St. Joseph by Bishop Peter
December 15th at Our Lady of the Black Hills – Fr. Mark McCormick will lead a reflection on St. Joseph: The Pillar of Families and Glory of Home Life

DEVOTED: A GOING DEEPER RETREAT

Feb 18-20, 2022 | Terra Sancta Retreat Center
This GOING DEEPER retreat is offered by the Diocese of Rapid City and geared towards high school youth that desire to grow deeper in faith. This retreat will provide an opportunity for those youth who have encountered Christ and are desiring to deepen their faith and relationship with Him. Through the teachings of Saint Francis De Sales and his book Introduction to the Devout Life the participants will gain a deeper understanding of devotion to Christ, prayer, virtue, and ways of examining their spiritual life and the practice of devotion. The retreat begins Friday at 5pm and ends at 3pm on Sunday. We will be lodging in the monastic wing at Terra Sancta – retreatants will be housed two to a room. The following meals are provided: Friday dinner; Saturday breakfast, lunch, and dinner; Sunday breakfast and lunch. You can learn more about the retreat and register at: www.godeeperretreat.com.

Night of Prayer for Life, December 7

Blessed Sacrament Pro-Life Committee will host the annual Night of Prayer for Life on Tuesday, December 7. This event will begin with the 5:30 PM Mass for the Immaculate Conception Solemnity. Mass will be followed by Eucharistic Adoration, including the sung Chaplet of Divine Mercy and the rosary. The closing Benediction will be at 8 PM. Because of the many challenges to life this year and the Texas and Mississippi cases being heard by the Supreme Court, prayer is essential. Please join us!

Mark Your Calendars!

Redeeming Administration with Ann Garrido will be leading a deeper reflection and prayer on the spiritual dimensions of administrative work **June 9-10, 2022** at Terra Sancta. Register at terrasancta.org/redeeming.

A Weekend with Dr. Mary Healy, Mary is a professor of Sacred Scripture, healing evangelist, author, and international speaker. Join her **December 9-11, 2022** at Terra Sancta Retreat Center. Register at terrasancta.org/drhealy.

St. Francis of Assisi Holiday Bake Sale

The Cookie, Candy, and Holiday Bake Sale to benefit St. Martin's Chapel and St. Aloysius Cemetery will be held at St. Francis Parish Hall on Saturday, December 18th from 8am until noon, after the 5pm Mass on Saturday evening and after the 8:30am Mass on Sunday morning. The cost is \$5.00 per pound for cookies and candy and as priced for other holiday baked goods.

Simbang Gabi

Simbang Gabi or night Mass is a series of nine novena Masses. It is Filipino Advent tradition, a spiritual preparation for the coming of Our Savior, Jesus Christ. Masses are held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 520 Cathedral Dr., Rapid City. Mass times are Dec. 15 at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 16-23 at 5:30 p.m. Dec. 17 the celebrant will be Fr. Jason Marco, a Filipino priest from the Diocese of Cheyenne. Following the Dec. 17 Mass, a traditional Filipino meal will be served. For questions, please call 605-430-7392 or 605-545-0540.



Rachel's Corner

There are many post-abortive women in our churches who live in silent torment. They are slowly self-destructing. They believe that if their friends knew what they had done, they would reject and condemn them. We must reach out in truth, love, and mercy, and bring the good news of Christ's forgiveness and healing to these hurting women.

If you or someone you know has experienced an abortion, we can help.

Plan to attend the next **Rachel's Vineyard Retreat™** and experience the healing forgiveness of God. For more information, contact the national office at 877-467-3463 or www.rachelsvineyard.org. Contact Carol Kling for information about local retreats at 605-374-5639 or ckling@sdplains.com or go to the diocesan website at www.rapidcitydiocese.org/Ministries/FamilyLife.htm.

Consecration to St. Joseph

Diocese of Rapid City + December 8, 2021

To you, O Blessed Joseph, we consecrate our Diocese of Rapid City, and having implored the help of your most Holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage.

You, who through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, and through the paternal love with which you embrace the Child Jesus, we humbly beg: graciously regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by His Blood, and, with your power and strength, to aid us in our needs.

O most loving protector of the Holy Family, assist us in our struggles with the power of darkness. As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity. Shield, too, each one of us here in our Diocese by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live as disciples of Jesus, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven.

Amen.

Attend the Consecration Mass at Cathedral on
December 8, 2021 from 5-7 PM

Attend virtually at:

<https://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/stjoseph/>

December 5, 2021

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Second Sunday of Advent

Bar 5:1-9 | Phil 1:4-6, 8-11 | Lk 3:1-6

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

Today we have blogs and life coaches, Facebook groups and self-help books, all of which can help us become better human beings. These resources come to mind as I read St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians – I think St. Paul would be the ultimate life coach! All of his letters to the early Church offer wisdom, encouragement, and instruction, and the words we heard today are particularly significant as we prepare for Jesus' coming this Advent: "the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus." Unlike some of our modern-day resources, Paul's words go beyond simply helpful advice; they are rooted in faith and prayer, and in the truth of the Paschal Mystery. These words assure us that we are not alone on our journey, that what God has promised in the person of his Son will come to fruition: Christ will come again! And so, as John the Baptist did, we who are disciples are meant to witness to his coming, announcing the Good News and preparing for his – second – coming. Repent. Believe. "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." How do we do this? Engage with Scripture – read it and really hear what the Word of God is saying to you. Pray for insight, that the grace of God might transform you to go forth and announce the Gospel.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Even pre-Google, I spent more time than perhaps I should have hunting down the perfect gifts, especially for my young boys. I'd scour the ads, then get up early on Black Friday and hit the stores in search of deals and hard-to-find items. Perhaps that's why these words from St. Paul stopped me in my tracks: "And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, *to discern what is of value* [italics added], so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ." During Advent, these words can both assure and challenge us – to grow in love, knowledge, and a sense of what really matters during our time on earth. For me the challenge will be to spend less time shopping this season and more time focusing on deepening my relationship with God, who is preparing to turn the darkness into light. This doesn't mean we can't take delight in finding that perfect gift; but we ought also to increase our recognition that all gifts come from God, including our ability to have access to and means to purchase material gifts. We can find joy in God's presence (and presents?) among us.

ACTIONS Re-read today's Gospel, and then consider how Saint Paul followed in John the Baptist's footsteps in his Letter to the Philippians. Think of ways you, like John and Paul, can encourage one another, and be a voice crying out in the desert. Participate in the sacrament of reconciliation and pray that God may cleanse your heart to welcome him at Christmas, and when he comes again.

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

December 2021

Our Lady of the Black Hills

Fr. Andrzej Wyrostek, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

The gift of Advent

The season of Advent began on November 28 and continues until

Christmas Eve.

The Church offers us this time as a gift to slow down, quiet down, and reflect on God's love for us. Consider setting aside quiet time each day to be with Him.



Celebrate birth

December is the month in which we celebrate the birth of the infant King. This has become a time to reaffirm our respect for life from conception to natural death. We pray that all babies are given the gift of life.

"Let not your heart be disturbed. Do not fear that sickness, nor any other sickness or anguish. Am I not here, who is your Mother? Are you not under my protection? Am I not your health? Are you not happily within my fold? What else do you wish? Do not grieve nor be disturbed by anything."

(Our Lady to St. Juan Diego, December 9, 1531)



Make this Christmas your own

Each year at Christmas, we celebrate an amazing truth. God came to Earth, in person, to be with us and, hopefully, bring us to Heaven. Think of it – the Creator of the universe came to be with you and me and promised to remain with us. Try these ways to keep the wonder of Christmas alive the whole year round:

Receive Him

with Mary's open heart.

When the angel Gabriel delivered God's stunning message, Mary accepted God's will completely. She kept her heart open to His will throughout her life. We can imitate her by letting nothing come between us and God. Go to

Confession regularly. Pray daily. Attend Mass at least weekly. Receive Jesus in your heart.

Adore Him like the Magi. After receiving Communion, you are literally heart-to-heart with Jesus. Thank Him, praise Him, or just rest in Him. Give Him the gift of your full attention. Receive the graces of His love.

Proclaim Him like the Angels. Just as the

heavenly host announced Christ's birth to the shepherds with gladness, so we are to proclaim Jesus to those around us. We do this when we join in worship at Mass each Sunday, and give Him credit for our blessings and gifts. His presence in our hearts becomes evident when we live with love and Christmas joy.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics believe Jesus really came?

That Jesus lived in first century Israel is well documented by both Christian sources and non-Christian sources. The Old Testament, which was known to Jews many years before Christ's birth, predicted the coming of the Messiah.



Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection fulfilled those prophecies. The Gospels name eyewitnesses as sources for the miracles Jesus worked. Another compelling argument for Jesus' reality, however, is the witness of the martyrs through the centuries, who remained faithful to Christ even to death.

Develop an Advent frame of mind

The holiday season can seem more like a test of endurance than preparation for a celebration. In the midst of the seasonal stress, we are asked to reach into ourselves and bring out only what is kind, generous, and loving. It may help to remember that the real reason for the season is the celebration of unimaginable Love.

Try to see with a Father's eye. Our Heavenly Father delights in our creation and loves us for exactly who we are. During Advent, try to see yourself through His eyes. Not the flawed human visible to



humanity, but the spectacular product of God's divine love and the reflection of His glory.

Prepare your gift. Make your gift to Jesus an open heart, ready to receive the love He has for you. *"For 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).

Anticipating an eternity of unimaginable love is absolutely the right Advent frame of mind.

from Scripture

Luke 2:41-52, Finding in the Temple

The Feast of the Holy Family (December 26) includes the story of finding Jesus in the Temple, a story of love and obedience. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover, as was the custom for Jews of that time. They traveled in a large group for protection against bandits who infested the hill country. So it wasn't surprising that His parents didn't miss Jesus as they started the return trip. Upon discovering Him missing, they hurried back to Jerusalem.

On the third day of searching, they found Jesus in the Temple. He was

questioning the priests and amazing them with his understanding. However, Mary asked how He could have caused



His parents so much worry and Jesus replied, "Did you not know I must be in my Father's house?"

Though they were puzzled by His answer, Mary and Joseph took Jesus back to Nazareth. He

remained there in obedience to His parents until it was time for his public ministry. We learn from this story to obey not only God but also those in authority over us.

Q & A Do we have to return to Mass in person?

When we love someone, we don't want to just call or send an email. We want to be together in person, growing in love and friendship. Then, too, when we love Jesus, we want to be with Him



in body, blood, soul and divinity in the Eucharist. "It is a substantial presence by which Christ...makes

himself wholly and entirely present" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1374).

The Eucharist is a gift we can only fully receive in person. It is spiritual food for the journey. In it we receive not just graces, but Jesus, Himself. Nowhere else on Earth and in no other way can we be so closely united to Him who loves us most.

It is possible – and required – to attend Mass in person unless there is a grave reason to stay away. Still, let nothing keep you from Jesus in the Eucharist. Go to Confession regularly and never miss Mass. Do whatever you can to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Remember, God is never outdone in generosity.

Feasts & Celebrations

December 2 – St. Bibiana (363). Virgin and martyr, St. Bibiana was the daughter of a Roman official who converted to Christianity and was martyred for his faith. Bibiana was tortured and executed for her Christianity, as well.

December 8 – Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On this day we commemorate that Mary was conceived in St. Anne's womb without Original Sin. In addition to attending Mass for this Holy Day of Obligation, praying a joyful Rosary is a wonderful way

to celebrate.

December 12 – Gaudete Sunday. This Sunday marks the halfway point of Advent. We light the rose candle in the Advent wreath for joy. During the last two weeks of Advent, the Church prepares to celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas.

December 29 – St. Thomas Becket (1170). As Archbishop of Canterbury, King Henry II tried to pressure him and the other bishops into agreeing to unjust laws, but St. Thomas refused to sign his approval for them. He was eventually martyred for his faith.



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