



Making Room for God

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

The story of John the Baptist is the story of taking a back seat to Jesus, of fading into the background so that Jesus might be the light. Fading out of the picture is something we may find ourselves doing more than once in our lives. Sometimes it's also a choice we have to make, even when it's painful.

Actor Nick Nolte talked about what it was like for him when he turned seventy; how his body would hurt and how painful it was to get out of bed some mornings. He told of how he cried when a longtime friend passed away and of the sadness death brings. But the worst part, he said, is coming to the realization that your children have grown up, are on their own, and don't need you the way they once did. His son has a family, and for him the family comes first, as it should be. That's the painful part, Nolte says, the letting go of your children because they are no longer yours; in reality, they never were.

From the perspective of faith, why do we need to fade into the background? To leave room for the hand of God in life, that's why. So that God can do what God does best, and so that we don't get in the way of it all. That is a task not only at the end of life but for all of life. ●

Reflect

When has it been difficult for you to fade into the background?



[John] was not the light, but came to testify to the light.

JOHN 1:8

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

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Rev. Msgr. John B. McCannPastor
 Deacon Paul J. Hiryak, Deacon James A. Bardi
 Parish Office610 582-2411
 Parish Religious Education/CCD610 582-3880
 Parish Preschool610 404-8645
 Parish Website.....www.icbvm.org

Inmaculate Conception Academy.....610 404-8645.....www.icaberks.org
 Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator: Wendy S. Krisak, M.A. NC, LPC, 800-791-9209
 Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator: Pamela Russo, MSW, MS, 610-871-5200, Ext 2204
 Diocese of Allentown website.....www.allentowndiocese.org
 Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service: If you have an allegation of abuse against a bishop,
 please contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service at www.ReportBishopAbuse.org
 or by calling 800-276-1562

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 17, 2023

*The Sanctuary Lamp Burns in Memory of Josephine, Peter & John Bogus
 In Memory of Herbert Fecera - 12th Anniversary
 In Memory of Helen & Frank Janiszewski*

★★MASS INTENTIONS★★

SAT 5:15 PM Joseph Mucerino, Sr.
 SUN 7:30 AM Kenneth Rumler
 9:00 AM Cody Luke Morris
 11:00 AM Living & Deceased Parishioners
 MON 7:30 AM Bunnie Druzba
 TUES 7:30 AM Josephine, Peter & John Bogus
 WED 7:30 AM Annette Brennan
 THURS 7:00 PM Josie & Gus Fredriksen

FRI 7:30 AM Anthony Volpiccini
 9:00 AM ICA Mass - Linda Bardi
 SAT 5:15 PM Helen & Frank Janiszewski
 SUN 7:30 AM Cecilia Tshudy
 9:00 AM Our Parishioners
 11:00 AM Paul Swisher
 4:00 PM Christmas Memorial Envelopes
 7:00 PM Christmas Memorial Envelopes
 MIDNIGHT Our Parishioners

Second Collection Next Week is for Debt Reduction

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Advent Confessions

December 18 7-8pm
 December 19 7-8pm
 December 20 7-8pm

Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve

December 24 4:00pm, 7:00pm, Midnight

Christmas Day

December 25 9:00am, 11:00am

New Year's Masses

New Year's Eve

December 31 7:30am, 9:00am, 11:00am

New Year's Day

January 1 9:00am

Remember in your prayers the sick of our parish: Madge Butto,
 Deb Petras, Fannie Hunter, Pat Fessler, Rita Ferry, Sonny Motta,
 Curt Miller, Loretta Hitchens, Baby Lucas, Linda Domergue,
 Dante Stetina, Arlene Shirley, George Ruby, Harriet Yeager,
 Marjorie Hansen, Mark Vignone, Jason Leman, Ann Washko,
 Geri Barth, Brianna, Dominic Strock, Anthony Scaglione, Aaron
 Gulla, Maryanne Emery, Pam Amos, Miriam Leman, Marianne
 Sutton, John Mingione, Henry J. Wade, Lois Muldowney, Terry
 Swisher, Arlene Schaeffer, Shelly Weiler, Christopher Shirk, Joe
 Nowotarski, Stephen Blanyar, Jennifer Gazda Gruber, Adele
 Nieckoski, Shawn Kaeser, Catherine Mueller, Regina Marie
 Brown, Tanya Sanders, Louis & Renee Cutillo, Ralph Rapposelli,
 Joe Dantas, Debbie Watson Simcock, Judy Jones, Wanda Palmieri,
 Msgr. Nevin Klinger, Barbara Wright, Charlotte Glacken, Beppy
 McGee, David Mollura, Mary Louise Myers, Mary Ann Uivary,
 Michael Bobb, John Kuszniar, Msgr. Aloysius Callaghan, Joseph
 Ondo, Rose White, David Hoagland, Nova Puszczkowski, Karl
 Husbands, Magdalene Babiarz, Dante LaScala, Michael Gulla
 Congratulate the baptized: Jackson Robert Reeser
 Welcome Parishioners: Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Kingsbury
 Pray for the deceased: Martha David, Jacob Lovera, Judith Diffendal

Christmas Eve Mass to be livestreamed - For the benefit of our parishioners at Immaculate Conception who are homebound due to illness, the 7pm Mass on Christmas Eve will be livestreamed on our parish Facebook Page. At all of our Christmas Masses we will be praying for those who are sick, hospitalized and homebound that God will bless them with healing and lasting good health. We pray too for their families and their caregivers. Please join us virtually to celebrate Christmas if the circumstances of your health do not allow you to attend Mass in person.

Our parish office is open **Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 11am-3pm**. If you call the parish office and no one is available to answer your call, please leave a detailed message and your call will be returned in a timely fashion 610-582-2411.

Daily Mass Schedule - Please note that on Tuesday, December 19th the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered at 7:30am as opposed to the usual evening hour. Thank you very much for your kind consideration in this regard.

Order for Christian Initiation (OCIA - formerly RCIA) Expand your knowledge of our Catholic faith or encourage someone who is curious about it to attend. Visit our website at www.icbvm.org for program information or contact the church office.

December 18th - Prayer

Church Office Lower Level Meeting Room, 7-8:30pm

Eucharistic Adoration - Come spend time with the Lord every Wednesday evening 7-9pm through the year's end.

Our parish Knights of Columbus are generously providing a copy of *Beautiful Eucharist*, a book published by Dynamic Catholic as a Christmas gift to the families of our parish community. Please take one to read and share. The books will be available the weekend of December 16-17. "Beautiful Eucharist is an invitation to encounter the life-giving presence of Jesus in the Eucharist so you can be a life-giving presence in the world." We thank the Knights of Columbus for their goodness in making this book available to our parishioners and friends during the Christmas season.

**WE LOVE HAVING YOU AS
a part of our
Flock!**



Keep in touch with us via email and text!



**TEXT
ICBVM
TO 84576**



or connect with us online at:

immaculateconceptionbvmc.flocknote.com

Text STOP to 84576 to stop text notifications at any time. Text HELP for help. There is no charge for this service, but your carrier message and data rates may apply. View full privacy policy & terms at flocknote.com/txt.

OPLAKTY, Blessed Christmas Wafers, are available in the narthex. This custom is many centuries old and finds its origins in the countries of Eastern Europe, particularly Slovakia, Poland and Lithuania. The breaking and sharing of the Christmas wafer at the holy supper on Christmas Eve was a sign of friendship, love and forgiveness among family members and friends. At the holy supper an extra place setting was placed on the table symbolizing that Jesus Christ was the unseen Guest in the home. As you prepare to celebrate Christmas this year, be mindful of the many customs and traditions which remind us of the true meaning of Christmas – the birth of Jesus Christ, the Savior.

The Women's Society thanks all of the bakers and those who supported us by purchasing the delicious and beautifully wrapped Christmas cookies last weekend. It was a great success with all profits going directly to the church. We wish everyone a merry and blessed Christmas and New Year.

John Paul II Center for Special Learning Help Needed **Instructional Assistants** are needed in classrooms for children with Intellectual Disabilities. This is a perfect job for retired teachers, empty nesters and recent graduates looking for a vocation to serve the Lord through service to others. Monday to Friday, 8:15-2:45, Summers Off.

Full Time Speech/Language Therapist needed for school age students with Intellectual Disabilities. Perfect opportunity for retired SLP, recent graduates or an SLP looking for a fresh start in a small, family oriented, caring, Christian community. For info and request an interview call 610-777-0605.

The beautiful religious art calendars for 2024 are a gift to the parishioners of Immaculate Conception Church from the Dengler Funeral Home.

Lifeline of Berks County is seeking a registered nurse or physician's assistant who has a passion for life and a willingness to focus on the life-saving work of providing options information to women, STI testing and treatment, and connecting health history information to protecting future reproductive health. This position is initially part time with the possibility of learning to provide ultrasound and/or grow into full time. Contact Stephanie at sconrad@lifelineofberks.org or 610-374-8545 for an application.

Check our website at www.icbvm.org for up-to-date information about activities and Mass times. Also, if you are leaving the parish, please contact the office at 610-582-2411.

Dear Padre,

Was Jesus born in a stable or a cave? The Christmas scene in our church has Jesus born in a little shed, but in my friend's church it looks more like a cave. The Bible says Jesus was born in a manger, so just where was Jesus born?

The Christmas scenes, sometimes called Nativity scenes or crèches, vary from church to church. In Scripture, we find more details about the Nativity in Luke's Gospel, but even he simply says that Mary wrapped Jesus in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because the inn was full (Luke 2:7).

In none of the Scriptures do we have any details about what the place looked like, but since a manger is a place where caregivers feed livestock, we can assume that Jesus was born in a stable of some kind. At that time, small caves sometimes were used as stables.

Nativity scenes, though, are not an attempt to present a historically accurate picture of where Jesus was born. Rather, scenes of the birth of Jesus remind us of the special love that God shows for us in sending the Son to us. We do not care so much about creating an exact picture of what took place as we do of beholding the beauty and wonder of God born among us. ●



THE OFFICE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, ATTRIBUTED TO JACOBUS COEN

The Redemptorists / DearPadre.org



DETAIL OF THE ISENHEIM ALTARPIECE BY MATTHIAS GRÜNEWALD WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

The Baptist is a model for those in the Church who are called to proclaim Christ to others: they are able to do so only by detaching from themselves and from worldliness, by not attracting people to themselves but directing them toward Jesus. This is joy: directing toward Jesus. And joy must be the characteristic of our faith.

ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 13, 2020

MONDAY

December 18
Advent Weekday
Jer 23:5-8
Mt 1:18-25

TUESDAY

December 19
Advent Weekday
Jgs 13:2-7,
24-25a
Lk 1:5-25

WEDNESDAY

December 20
Advent Weekday
Is 7:10-14
Lk 1:26-38

THURSDAY

December 21
Advent Weekday
Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a
Lk 1:39-45

FRIDAY

December 22
Advent Weekday
1 Sm 1:24-28
Lk 1:46-56

SATURDAY

December 23
Advent Weekday
Mal 3:1-4,
23-24
Lk 1:57-66

SUNDAY

December 24
Fourth Sunday of Advent
2 Sm 7:1-5,
8b-12, 14a, 16
Rom 16:25-27 Lk 1:26-38

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