



Be watchful! Be alert!
You do not know when
the time will come.

MARK 13:33

How Has God Shaped You?

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

Sometimes it seems as if life is a laboratory of designed experiments on how to become human, all of them allotted ten-year blocks.

Have you noticed how nine- and ten-year-olds can be easy to be around? Then about the time we've gotten being a kid down to a science, life begins to move us into adolescence. We want to be independent and responsible, but we don't yet have all the skills. We have sexual feelings, but we're expected not to act on them. About the time we reach adulthood and move into our twenties, it seems we can finally do what we want, but then we might drink too much, spend too much, drive too fast, and party too long. Once we begin to settle down around year thirty, we have to learn how to live with another person. One likes it warm, the other cool. One seeks to save, the other spends. One is a homebody, the other enjoys going out on the town. By the time we've gotten to our sixties and seventies, we may have figured out life, but by then we've used up most of our energy.

What's going on?

Faith suggests it's the hand of God shaping us into the sort of persons we're meant to be. "Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you our potter: we are all the work of your hand" (Isaiah 64:7). Advent may be a time to figure out how God is acting in your life now and look back to see that God was shaping you all along. ●

Reflect

What did you learn in your last ten-year block of life?



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St. Thomas More

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Adoration Room at STM
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Website for the Three Churches
www.bureaucatholic.org
and on Facebook at
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www.bureaucatholic.org

Emergency Number for all 3 Churches 779-248-2164



9:45 am - 11:00 am at Cherry Church Hall
Sunday, December 3rd - 5th thru 8th Grade
Sunday, December 10th - K thru 4th grade & Confirmation class

Daily Mass Intentions for the Week of December 4, 2023

Monday	12/4			† No Mass
Tuesday	12/5	9:00 am	STM	† Judy Guerrini
Wednesday	12/6	5:30 pm	HT	† John & Phyllis Hanck
Thursday	12/7	5:00 pm	HT (Immac. Concept. Vigil)	† Daisy Kopek
Friday	12/8	9:00 am	STM (Immac. Concept.)	† For The Parishioners

Mass Intentions for the weekend of December 9-10, 2023

Saturday	12/9	4:00 pm	St Thomas More	† Julie Taliani
Sunday	12/10	8:30 am	Holy Trinity	† Don & Virginia McNally
		10:30 am	St Patrick	† The Joseph Flanagan Family
		5:00 pm	St Thomas More	† For The Parishioners

The Solemnity of Immaculate Conception - What Does It Mean?

Today, we honor the glorious and miraculous Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother, and it is fitting that we see it as an act of God's profound mercy. Why is that so? What is it about this solemnity that is so closely linked to mercy?

Mercy is a gratuitous gift of God. By "gratuitous" we mean that it is not merited or earned. Mercy is not owed to us by God. If it were, it would not be mercy, it would be our right. But we have no right to mercy. It is freely given by God and it is given in abundance.

As for this glorious Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, it's important to look at it as a gratuitous gift from two perspectives. First, the "Immaculate Conception" means that when God created the Blessed Virgin Mary, He created her without sin. This was done through what we call a prevenient grace. This grace given her is an act of God's perfect and gratuitous mercy. She did not earn it or merit it; rather, God in His goodness chose to create her without original sin so as to have a suitable instrument by which the Son could come into the world. Mary, for her part, embraced this gift and chose to remain sinless throughout her life by a continual act of her free will.

Second, in creating our Blessed Mother immaculately, God did not keep her to Himself. He was not selfish with her. Instead, He chose to make this perfection of His creation our own mother. The Immaculate Mother Mary is now our spiritual mother in the order of God's grace and mercy. This, also, is an act of perfect gratuitous mercy on the part of our loving God. We do not deserve such a spiritual mother and protectress, but we have her and she is always there interceding for us and bestowing many graces from God upon us as a perfect mother would.

Blessed Mother, who was conceived without Original Sin, pray for us. *(Excerpted from catholic-daily-reflections.com)*



Advent – A Time to Get Ready for Christmas

The season of Advent is a special time for God's people to get ready for His Son's birthday on December 25th. We should do our best to be well prepared for Jesus to enter our hearts and souls at Christmastime, and the best way to get ready is by going to confession.

Daily Mass Time Change

There will be no morning Mass on Thurs, Dec. 7th at HT due to the fact that it is the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, which is a holy day of obligation. For Mass time and location please read the Mass Intentions section in the bulletin.

***Church Christmas decorating may begin at all three parishes the week of December 11th**

Inclement Weather Information

It is that time of the year to be sure you are signed up to receive BCR Alerts on your cell phone. We utilize textcaster to send out any cancellations or changes to Mass times. Please be cautious when coming to church in inclement weather, we care about your safety. Mass can be watched online by clicking "watch the Mass" or Facebook link on bureaucatholic.org. If you need help getting signed up, please contact Julie in the office at 815-894-2006 and she can help you. Instruction sheets are in back of the churches on how to sign up. We now have a direct link on our website home page.

Christmas Toy Drive – Last Minute Reminder

The Toy Drive volunteers will be coming to collect all the donated toys on Tuesday, December 5th. Therefore, if you still want to donate toys to this meaningful project, please bring your toys to the church office Tuesday morning or they can be dropped off at STM by entering the Adoration doors.

LATEST OFFERING'S

NOV 26TH WEEKEND

HT – \$623.00
HUMAN DEVELOP \$10 FLOWERS \$70
SP – \$460.00
HUMAN DEVELOP \$5 FLOWERS \$25
STM – \$633.00
FLOWERS \$57

**FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT:
HOPE**

It is sometimes called the "Prophecy Candle" in remembrance of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. It represents the expectation felt in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

CONFESSIONS

CONFESSIONS WILL BE
SAT. DEC 9TH
10:30 - 11:15 AM AT
ST THOMAS MORE
IN THE HALL

Dear Padre,

Why are the Gospels Matthew and Mark so alike? Why did the Church keep both Gospels when so much of Mark seems to be a mirror image of Matthew?

The Gospels were written over time and used by the faithful when they gathered for worship. They read the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) and accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus collected by Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

The Christian communities were often great distances from one another. A community may have had access to only one of these accounts. There is considerable similarity because the Gospel writers depended on one another. All three Gospels include some of the same incidents. Each also has incidents or details unique to that Gospel.

These were not the only accounts written about the life and ministry of Jesus. At some point, the Church had to decide which should be considered the inspired word of God. There were four accounts that were widely used: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. With their similarities and differences, the Church accepted these four accounts as Gospel—the Good News. ●

This first page of the Gospel of Mark is from a fourteenth-century Armenian illuminated manuscript painting by Sargis Pitsak.



The Redemptorists / DearPadre.org

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
December 4	December 5	December 6	December 7	December 8	December 9	December 10
<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church</i>	<i>Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Second Sunday of Advent</i>
Is 2:1-5 Mt 8:5-11	Is 11:1-10 Lk 10:21-24	Is 25:6-10a Mt 15:29-37	Is 26:1-6 Mt 7:21, 24-27	Gn 3:9-15, 20 Eph 1:3-6, 11-12 Lk 1:26-38	Is 30:19-21, 23-26 Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8	Is 40:1-5, 9-11 2 Pt 3:8-14 Mk 1:1-8

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A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

[Jesus] ...is at the door to our heart. He knocks. Do you know how to listen to the Lord...who has come today to visit you...? He came to Bethlehem, he will come at the end of the world, but every day he comes to us. Be attentive, look at what you feel in your heart when the Lord knocks.

ANGELUS, ROME, NOVEMBER 29, 2020