



Jerusalem, take off your robe  
of mourning and misery;  
put on forever the splendor  
of glory from God.

BARUCH 5:1



## Coming Home

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

**C**oming home can take place in many varied ways. Sometimes it's at the end of a long day when we come home to where we can be ourselves without any pretensions. Sometimes it's going back to the neighborhood we grew up in, to the old haunts that remind us of the dreams we had and how they now seem tucked in every niche. Sometimes coming home is what happens after many wanderings, after we've sown our oats and harvested little and now have nowhere else to go. That too is a coming home, back to where it all began, back to where we dare to hope that life might begin again.

All of this is how the Hebrew people found themselves coming home to Jerusalem after eighty years of exile, coming back to start anew with the hope that their God would once again be proud of them, back to where they could be as God intended them to be. All of that is what we do when we decide we will try to be the sort of person we'd always hoped to become. It's when we attempt a second effort at making a marriage work, or a job productive, or maybe simply putting the pieces of our lives back in some sort of order. It's all about coming back home to God's dream for us, a kind of second Advent, when God comes into our lives and is born once again. ●

### Reflect

***Have you wandered too far from the values of your true home? Can you find your way back?***



**Holy Trinity**

Holy Trinity Catholic Church  
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HolyTSP@gmail.com

**Pastor of the Three Churches**  
Fr. Thaddeus Tran

**Main Office: Holy Trinity Rectory**  
Pastoral Assistant: Julie Hollinger  
Email: JulieHTC@outlook.com  
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Email: Melissahtc@outlook.com

**Office Hours at Holy Trinity**  
Tuesday - Friday 9 am - 1 pm



**St. Thomas More**

St Thomas More Catholic Church  
302 Chestnut St.  
Dalzell, IL 61320  
Phone 815-663-6201  
Email  
thomasmore32@gmail.com

**Adoration Room at STM**  
Open Monday - Sunday  
Regular Hours  
9 am - 6 pm

**Rav/Tort Group** taking orders now  
To place your order, call 815-252-2215.  
Leave name, phone number, & your order  
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**St. Patrick**

St. Patrick Catholic Church  
106 Church St.  
Arlington, IL 61312  
Phone 815-894-2006  
Mail: PO Box 159 Cherry IL 61317

**Website for the Three Churches**  
www.bureaucatholic.org  
and on Facebook at  
"Bureau Catholic Churches"

**Facebook for the Three Churches**  
Use Link on Home Page  
www.bureaucatholic.org

**Emergency Number for all 3 Churches 779-248-2164**

**CCD Classes**

Sunday, December 8th - K thru 5th graders  
Children's Mass for K-7th at Holy Trinity - Be there by 8:15 am  
Sunday, December 15th - 6th & 7th grade



**Daily Mass Intentions for the Week of December 9, 2024**

Monday	12/9	9:00 am	STM (Immaculate Conception)	+ Denise Mini
Tuesday	12/10	9:00 am	STM	+ Richard Mariani
Wednesday	12/11	5:30 pm	HT	+ Special Intention
Thursday	12/12	9:00 am	HT	+ Ann Tastad Montgomery
Friday	12/13	9:00 am	STM	+ Derek Baird

**Mass Intentions for the weekend of December 14 - 15, 2024**

Saturday	12/14	4:00 pm	St Thomas More	+ Julie Taliani
Sunday	12/15	8:30 am	Holy Trinity	+ Don & Virginia McNally
		10:30 am	St Patrick	+ For the Parishioners

# Immaculate Conception - What A GREAT GIFT!

On Monday, December 9th, 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 His 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)*

## Immaculate Conception Mass

This coming Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, is the feast of The Immaculate Conception. There will be a 9:00am Mass at STM. Although due to the date that this feast falls on, the bishop has granted a dispensation from attending this Mass. Nevertheless, parishioners are greatly encouraged to go to church on this day so that we may pay honor to our Beloved Mother.

## Church Office Change

Please take note as of December 16th all church related questions should be directed to Melissa Pasillas, our new parish secretary by calling 815-894-2006, or email melissahtc@outlook.com. Until Melissa gets to know all of you, keep in mind to leave your full name and specify church location especially requests for Mass intentions.

## Christmas Decorating

It's that time of year again for volunteers to come together to help decorate our churches for Christmas. Decorating may begin after December 16th. People who would still like to make a Christmas flower donation, please don't forget to take a Christmas flower envelope at the back of each church.

## Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve Masses      4 pm at STM and 8 pm at SP  
Christmas Day              9:30 am at HT



## LATEST OFFERING'S

DEC 1ST WEEKEND

HT - \$1,024.00

\$500 HUMAN DEV/\$500 RETIRE/\$124 SEMINARIAN

SP - \$556.00

STM - \$864.00

\$133 SEMINARIAN



## CONFESSIONS

CONFESSIONS WILL BE ON

SAT. DEC 14TH

10:30 AM-11:15 AM AT

ST. PATRICK

IN THE CHAPEL

# Dear Padre,

***If Christmas is on December 25, why is the Immaculate Conception on December 8, rather than sometime in March?***

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception asserts that Mary was free of the stain of original sin from the time she was conceived in her mother's womb. Jesus was also free of the stain of original sin and his conception by Mary is referred to as the Incarnation of Christ. Mary's Immaculate Conception is often confused for Christ's Incarnation.

In the Church's liturgical calendar, Mary's conception is celebrated on December 8; her birthday is celebrated exactly nine months later on September 8. Likewise, Christ's conception is celebrated on March 25 on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord; his birthday is celebrated exactly nine months later on December 25.

Mary's Immaculate Conception was celebrated many centuries before Pope Pius IX defined it as dogma on December 8, 1854: "The doctrine that maintains that the Blessed Virgin Mary in the first instant of her conception, by a unique grace and privilege granted to her by Almighty God, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ the Savior of mankind, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful" (*Ineffabilis Deus*). In fact, eight years before, in 1846, the bishops of the United States had already adopted the Immaculate Conception as the patronal feast for Catholics in this country.



Fr. Byron Miller, CSSR / DearPadre.org

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
December 9 <i>Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> Gn 3:9-15, 20 Eph 1:3-6, 11-12 Lk 1:26-38	December 10 <i>Advent Weekday</i> Is 40:1-11 Mt 18:12-14	December 11 <i>Advent Weekday</i> Is 40:25-31 Mt 11:28-30	December 12 <i>Our Lady of Guadalupe</i> Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47	December 13 <i>St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr</i> Is 48:17-19 Mt 11:16-19	December 14 <i>St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church</i> Sir 48:1-4, 9-11 Mt 17:9a, 10-13	December 15 <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i> Zep 3:14-18a Phil 4:4-7 Lk 3:10-18



## A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

***By calling us to conversion, John urges us to go "beyond" where we presently are; to go beyond what our instincts tell us.... Let us ask for the grace to believe that with God things really do change, that he will banish our fears, heal our wounds.... Let us ask for the grace of hope....***

HOMILY, ATHENS, DECEMBER 5, 2021