

NOVEMBER 29, 2009

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH
ST. JOHN, TEXAS

ASCENSION OF OUR LORD CHURCH
MORAVIA, TEXAS

DIocese of Victoria in Texas



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MASS SCHEDULE

First Sunday of Advent

Saturday	Nov. 28	6:00 P.M.	John, Mary, John Jr. & Leon Young	St. John
Sunday	Nov. 29	9:30 A.M.	Willie Mae Thompson	St. John

First Friday

Friday	Dec. 4	8:00 A.M.	Mass of Thanksgiving	St. John
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Second Sunday of Advent

Saturday	Dec. 5	6:00 P.M.	Daniel S. Spies	Moravia
Sunday	Dec. 6	9:30 A.M.	Julius Schramek	St. John

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary - (Dec. 8, Holy Day of Obligation)

Monday	Dec. 7	6:30 P.M.	Willie & Albina Barborak & Irene	Moravia
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Third Sunday of Advent

Saturday	Dec. 12	6:00 P.M.	Ludwig & Adela Dittrich	St. John
Sunday	Dec. 13	9:30 A.M.	Henry & Julia Olsovsky & Rebecca Patterson	Moravia

THE WORD OF GOD

First Sunday of Advent

Readings: Jeremiah 33: 14-16 Psalm 25:4-5,8-9,10,14 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2 Luke 21:25-28,34-36

We must be on guard for the Day which is to come when all will be fulfilled. As we await the coming of Christ, let us love one another, observing his covenant and decrees.

Second Sunday of Advent

Readings: Bar 5:1-9 Psalm 126:1-6 Philippians 1:4-6,8-11 Luke 3:1-6

The Lord has done great things, leading his people out of slavery to the glorious splendor of Jerusalem. Let us make ready the way of the Lord by abounding in love and in works of justice.

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Holy Day of Obligation)

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.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Readings: Zechariah 2:14-17 or Revelations 11:19a;12:1-6a,10ab (Ps) Jdt 13:18bcde,19 Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:39-47

A woman, clothed with the sun, daughter of the Most High God, proclaims the greatness of the Lord, the One who comes to dwell with us. She is the servant of the Lord. Today's feast recalls the apparitions of Mary at the hill of Tepeyac from Dec. 9-12, 1531 to the native convert, Juan Diego (Dec. 9).

Third Sunday of Advent

Readings: Zephaniah 3:14-18a (Ps) Isaiah 12:2-6 Philippians 4:4-7 Luke 3:10-18

Rejoice in the Lord always! Great in our midst is the Holy One of Israel, a mighty savior. It is he whom John foretold; it is he who will baptize in the Holy Spirit.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Thank you to all who helped with the 40th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Sacred Heart Church Building. It was a beautiful celebration. Thank you to the choir, the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, the Knights of St. Gregory and those who served in the various ministries during the Liturgy. Thank you to the ladies on the Parish Advisory Council for the beautiful table setting and for serving the meal to the bishop, clergy and religious at the KC Hall. Thank you also to Designs by Donna for the table arrangements and Jo Nell Janecek for the use of her china. A special thank you to the Knights of Columbus for providing the meal for our special guests.

Today is the beginning of Advent and the beginning of a new church year. "How are you?" "Busy." That response cloaks a low spirit, beaten down by many responsibilities, opportunities, and longings. Many people are so busy with the day's work that they lose track of the goal of their lives. Over time, values get lost. Priorities get shifted. Dreams are abandoned. All because people are busy.

The weeks before Christmas are among the busiest of the year. The high expectations of this holiday put stress on relationships and cash flow, your faith and friendships.

Everyone knows the meaning of Christmas. It commemorates the birth of Jesus. But not everyone lives the meaning of Christmas. Not everyone rejoices with its message of salvation for the sinner, its summons to show charity to your neighbor, and its opportunity to adore the Lord. This is a time of hope. But for many it is a time of anxiety.

Advent struggles for attention. You have already been deluged by the sights, sounds, and solicitations of the holiday season. And you still have several weeks to go. By the time Christmas gets here, many people are ready to throw out the tree, box up the decorations, and lock the season back in the attic. Something is wrong with this picture. The impatience that dogs holiday preparations outmaneuvers the patience of waiting for a Savior. Advent gets lost.

Many Christians bristle at the way society has seized Christmas and turned it into the holiday season. School children sing about snow. Merchants greet you with, "Happy Holidays." Nativity scenes are banished from public squares. The start date for the season is pushed ever earlier. Halloween decorations are not down before holiday decorations go up.

Do not let **Advent** get lost. Use this time wisely and prayerfully.

ADVENT PARTY – BEGINNING THE SEASON

You are invited to attend an Advent Party at the home of Adela Grahmann, 2489 C R 226 on Sunday, November 29 from 2:00 – 8:00 p.m. Advent prayers and blessings of the Nativities and Christmas Trees will be held at 3:00, 5:00 & 7:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served. There is no charge; however, a free will offering may be given to help educate seminarians for the Priesthood in the Victoria Diocese. This would be a great way to celebrate the First Sunday of Advent!

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the members of the Trlica-Kopecky Family Reunion for their donation of \$100 to the Moravia Parish Hall.

ITEMS FOR SALE

Advent wreaths & candles are available for purchase at the Sacred Heart Rectory. Also available are Christmas ornaments, Nativities, statues & various other items.

The Youth ConneXion

 **December 13:** Youth meet in church at 5:00 p.m. Firefall begins at 6:00 p.m. High School Youth Christmas Party will be held in the Youth House after Firefall.
Reminder: The youth are selling discount cards to various local businesses. These may be purchased for \$10 from any youth attending NCYC or at the Rectory.
Music Practice: Mondays, 6:00 pm, Youth House.

PRO LIFE CORNER

Life & Family Advocates NEWS recently reported that the Congress of the Mexican state of Oaxaca has voted to adopt a pro-life amendment to the state's constitution. The amendment states that "Every human being from the moment of fertilization enters under the protection of the law and is considered the same as one who has been born for all legal effects until his natural death." More than half of Mexico's 31 states have passed such amendments...

As also has the Dominican Republic-whose amendment stated that "the right to life is inviolable from conception until death. In no case can the death penalty be established, pronounced, nor applied. Pray our government keeps abortion out of health care reform and soon follows with a pro-life amendment to our U.S. Constitution.

MORAVIA ALTAR SOCIETY

The Moravia Altar Society will hold its annual bake sale at the December 5th bingo. All members are asked to donate to the bake sale as well as food for the bingo lunch. Help is also needed in the kitchen. Please bring items by 4:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Christmas flower donations in memory of loved ones can be given to Dorothy Olsovsky for Ascension Church or Joyce Janda for St. John Church Christmas flowers.

ST. JOHN MUSIC REHEARSAL

Music practice for 9:30 a.m. Christmas Mass (and caroling before) is scheduled after 6:00 p.m. mass on Saturday, December 12. We will be singing from the balcony. Be upstairs at 7:00 pm on December 12th for our only rehearsal. Let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord! Putting your name on bulletin board list will help in preparation. For conflicts call Ms. Elsie at 979-562-2159.

ST. JOHN CRIB

The crib in St. John Church will be put up after 9:30 a.m. mass on Sunday, December 20. Stay and help, if you can.

ALTAR SERVER SCHEDULE

Saturday, Nov. 28 - 6:00 p.m. - St. John - James Lofland, April & Clayton Brossmann
Sunday, Nov. 29 - 9:30 a.m. - St. John - Caleb & Jared Krischke, Logan Eckhardt

Saturday, Dec. 5 - 6:00 p.m. - Moravia - Caitlyn Deem, Ashley & Joshua Becan
Sunday, Dec. 6 - 9:30 a.m. - St. John - Blaine & Hayden Besetzny, Seth Eckhardt

Saturday, Dec. 12 - 6:00 p.m. - St. John - James Lofland, April & Clayton Brossmann
Sunday, Dec. 13 - 9:30 a.m. - Moravia - Caleb & Jared Krischke, Logan Eckhardt

ST. JOHN CHURCH DECEMBER CLEANING SCHEDULE

Gladys Besetzny, Sharon Bujnoch & Vicky Kainer



Find the peace of Advent

Many of us look forward to Christmas all year but let Advent pass unnoticed. This quiet season can't compete with the lights, the joy, the excitement, and the preparations for Christmas that can go on for months before the day.

This year, why not use the whole season of Advent to prepare for Christmas? Look beyond what your eyes can see to focus on your inner preparations.

Keep watch. Jesus is coming.

We know this because we celebrate his coming every Christmas. He will also come again in glory but we don't know when that will be. Advent reminds us to always be prepared for the coming of Christ. *"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths (Matthew 3:3)."*

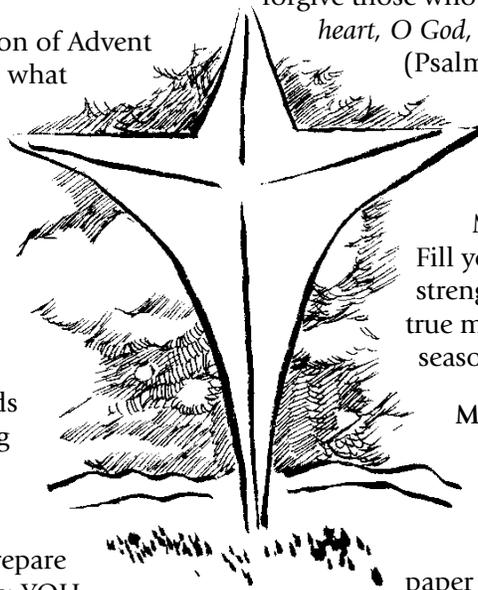
Give the gift of yourself. This year prepare the one gift for Jesus that he truly wants: YOU. Jesus thought each of us was worth love and his life. To him, we are a gift from the Father (John 17:24). Prepare yourself during Advent so that when he unwraps your gift on Christmas morning, it is the very best you have to offer — your love.

Break down barriers. Let go of anything that stands between you and your faith. Perhaps you have a bad habit or a companion who is a poor influence. Take this opportunity during Advent to make things right. Ridding yourself of opportunities for sin will help you be ready to greet the Savior when he comes.

Give gifts from the heart. Instead of buying gifts, give from your heart. If you're a good baker, make treats to share with others. If you sing or play an instrument, create CDs of your favorite songs for friends and family. Jesus showed us that the greatest of gifts come in the simplest form. Remember a gift given

with love is the best gift of all.

Clean house. Just as you would clean your home to prepare for an honored guest, clean your soul of sin through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Remember to forgive those who have hurt you, too. *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10, RSV).*



Decorate with special meaning.

Make every decoration count this year. Fill your home with religious items that will strengthen your faith and remind you of the true meaning of the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Make your own. Look for sacred images of the season that touch your heart and turn them into decorations. One likely source is religious Christmas cards you receive. Even mounting one on colored paper and taping it on your desk or a wall can be a cheerful way to call Christ to mind.

Shine the Light. When you string lights or light Advent candles, let them be a reminder to you throughout the Advent and Christmas season to share the light of your faith with others through your words and actions.

Keep Life Evergreen. In his Angelus (Dec. 19, 2004), Pope John Paul II said that the evergreen fir is a symbol of undying life. *"The message of the Christmas tree is consequently that life stays 'evergreen' if we make a gift of it: not so much of material things but of life itself: in friendship and sincere affection, in fraternal help and forgiveness, in time shared and reciprocal listening."* Give the gift of friendship this season.

Bring your Nativity to life. Place the pieces in your scene at different times. Anticipate the coming of Jesus by keeping his bed empty until Christmas morning. Let the Magi arrive at the Epiphany and follow the Star by looking for signs of the Savior every day throughout the year.





Let Jesus find you.

Jesus came into the world for us. His birth, his death and his rising were meant to save us. He never left us and is looking for each of us. Make sure he can find you.

"Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep (Luke 15:6)."

Invite him in. This is the time to let God occupy a bigger place in your life but he is a gentleman and waits for an invitation. The problem is that we are often too preoccupied by everyday worries to invite him in. Start by ridding yourself of negative thoughts or worries that may take up too much mental energy and keep you from feeling God's love.

Seek him out. Jesus came to us humbly. Look at those in your community who have been humbled due to hardship and reach out with a smile or comforting word. God is in all of us and by showing our love to others, we show our love for God.

Visit him. Try to attend a weekday Mass. Don't miss Mass on the weekend. Spend time at a Perpetual Adoration Chapel or in the presence of our Lord outside of Mass. Take a pilgrimage to different churches to admire their nativity scenes.

Listen for him. Mother Teresa said, "In the silence of the heart God speaks. If you face God in prayer and silence, God will speak to you. Souls of prayer are souls of great silence." Look for ways to practice silence during Advent.

Make room in your "Inn."

When Mary and Joseph reached the inn, there was no room, not even for the King. During Advent, look for ways to make more room for our Savior in your life.

Make room in your prayers. Consider giving fewer gifts and offering spiritual bouquets instead. Use the time you save shopping and wrapping in prayer for the people on your list.

Make room in your mind. God is always with us but it is easier to find him during quiet times. Cut back on social engagements and entertaining. Limit activities other than work or volunteering. Schedule extra prayer time during the season and protect it on your calendar. Don't let anything come between you and God.

Make room in your heart. When they arrived in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph had to rely on the kindness of strangers to provide them even the barest place to stay.

Imagine what it would be like to have no home at all this year. In honor of the Holy Family, seek out a homeless shelter in your area. Find out what the residents may need to help celebrate the coming of the Savior.

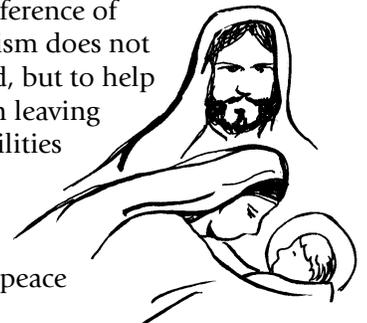
Or, call your parish rectory and find out if there is anyone in your parish who is struggling and in need of special attention during the holiday season. Do what you can to make someone else feel welcome at the "Inn."

Make room in your day. Instead of spending time watching television or on the computer, use the time to enrich your soul. Read scripture. Pray the Rosary. Pick up a good book.

Make room in your home. The holidays can be a lonely time without

family or close friends. Look for someone at work or in your neighborhood who may not be connected and invite her to Mass, or to join in your Christmas celebration.

According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Catholicism does not call us to abandon the world, but to help shape it. This does not mean leaving worldly tasks and responsibilities but transforming them." During Advent this year, try transforming your tasks to acts of prayer, penance, and peace to honor the coming Savior.



O Antiphons

On the last days of Advent, you can add these "O Antiphons" to your evening or bedtime prayers. Each one highlights a title for the Messiah and refers to the prophecy of Isaiah of the coming of the Messiah.

December 17

O Sapientia — O Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love: come to teach us the path of knowledge!

December 18

O Adonai — O Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai: come to rescue us with your mighty power!

December 19

O Radix Jesse — O Root of Jesse's stem, sign of God's love for all his people: come to save us without delay!

December 20

O Clavis David — O Key of David, opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom: come and free the prisoners of darkness!

December 21

O Oriens — O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.

December 22

O Rex Gentium — O King of all nations and keystone of the Church: come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!

December 23

O Emmanuel — O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law: come to save us, Lord our God!