

Dear Padre,

Does God call me, like God called Mary? Can the angel Gabriel speak to me as he did to Mary?

Perhaps God has already spoken to you! In the great calls in Scripture, God doesn't seem to care about age. God doesn't care about gender, race, talents, poverty or wealth, strengths or weaknesses. God calls each of us because we are God's daughters and sons. God's call is personal (to you and no other!), and this call is to always be Christian and serve the Lord. Most often



the call won't be dramatic, like it was for Moses. More likely, your call will be quiet and personal. Remember what God said: "Be still, and know that I am God!" (Psalm 46:11).

In these hectic days before Christmas, find a peaceful place and quiet time. Be still and say to God, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:9). In this place, God will reveal your call to you, a call that was present long before your birth.

God has already spoken to us in our life's vocation. We are planted in friendships, relationships, marriages, jobs, families, a community, and a nation. In each place, we listen to hear what God is calling forth from us.

Then, like Mary, we say yes! We reach into our most generous spirit and proclaim "yes" to even the most difficult, mundane, or boring aspects of our vocation.

—Fr. Paul J. Coury, CSSR
Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org



A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

The angel Gabriel calls Mary "full of grace": in her there is no room for sin, because God chose her from eternity to be the mother of Jesus and preserved her from original sin....We too are asked to listen to God who speaks to us, and to accept his will....The Lord is always speaking to us!

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, DECEMBER 8, 2014

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Calendar

Monday

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

Tuesday

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

Wednesday

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

Thursday

DECEMBER 24
Advent Weekday
2 Sm 7:1-5,
8b-12, 14a, 16
Lk 1:67-79

Friday

DECEMBER 25
Christmas
Is 52:7-10
Heb 1:1-6
Jn 1:1-18 or
Jn 1:1-5, 9-14

Saturday

DECEMBER 26
St. Stephen, First Martyr
Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59
Mt 10:17-22

Sunday

DECEMBER 27
The Holy Family of
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph
Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or
Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3
Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17
or Heb 11:8, 11-12,
17-19
Lk 2:22-40 or
2:22, 39-40



Our Parish COMMUNITY

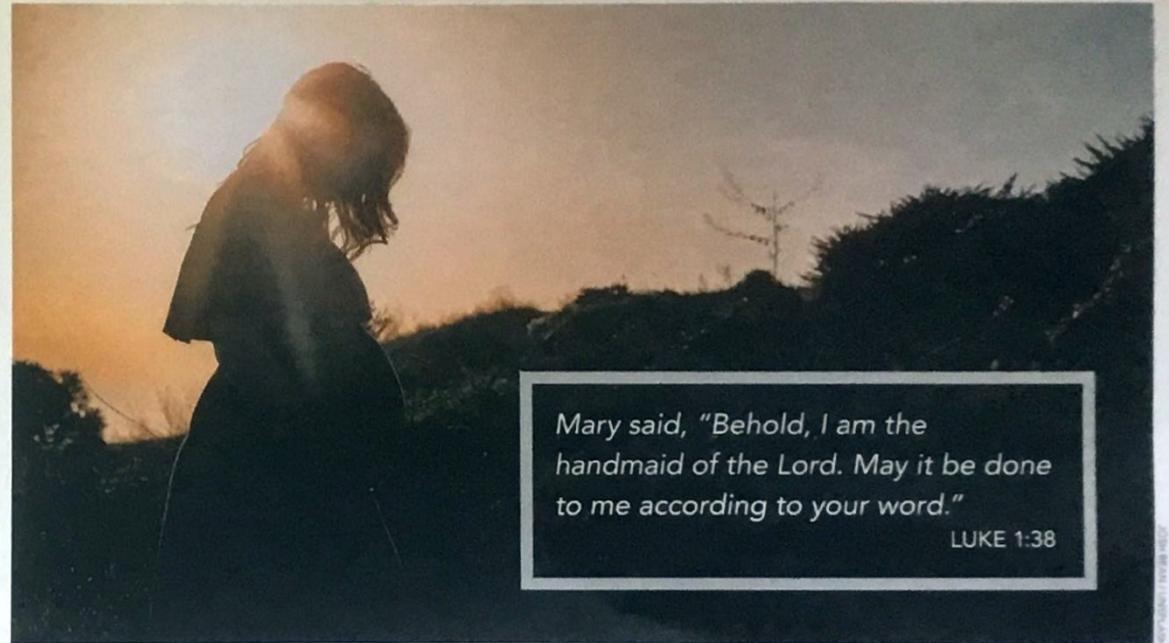
December 20, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Advent (B)

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

Rom 16:25-27

Lk 1:26-38



Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

LUKE 1:38

How Can This Be?

The reading from Samuel assures us that the leader we are awaiting will be of the royal house of David. We presume this means personal power and political leadership, and recognition of this from others.

The Gospel turns us in a different direction. In it Mary asks, "How can this be?" (Luke 1:34) This question can be understood in two different ways. One means: How is it going to happen? The other suggests: You've got to be kidding! When told she will bear a child, this virgin asks: How is this going to happen? Her visitor

explains the unfolding of an unbelievable event. While stories in pagan religions described how gods took on human form, such wondrous events supposedly happened in royal families—not in the life of an unassuming girl promised to a modest carpenter. In the Incarnation, a singular historic event, Mary did not say: "You've got to be kidding!" She replied: "If that's what you want, I'm willing."

Advent readings have traced God leading the people to salvation and a new way of living, to an outline of an individual chosen by God to lead them, to the realization that this leader will be a descendant of David. However, none of this happens as we might expect. Rather, it unfolds in such an unpretentious way that many people did not even realize it was happening. Who could blame anyone for saying: You've got to be kidding! But God was not kidding. Now we are ready for Christmas.

FOR *Reflection*

- Advent readings show God working in mysterious ways. Where is God working in your life?
- How prepared are you for the deeper meaning of Christmas?

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA



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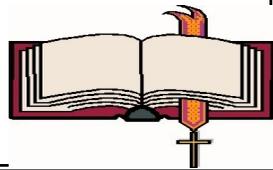
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MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Monday, Dec. 21	8:00 a.m.	LaVera Strecker
Tuesday, Dec. 22	8:00 a.m.	Guebelle Families
Thursday, Dec. 24	4:00 p.m.	For the Parishes' People
Friday, Dec. 25	9:00 a.m.	Mass at Deerfield
Saturday, Dec. 26	4:00 p.m.	For the Parishes' People
Sunday, Dec. 27	9:00 a.m.	Pastor's Intention

December 19, 4:00 p.m.	Gwen Waechter
December 20, 9:00 a.m.	K of C Members
December 24, 4:00 p.m.	Volunteer
December 26, 4:00 p.m.	Debbie Frederick
December 27, 9:00 a.m.	Steve Sullivan
December 31, 6:00 p.m.	Volunteer
January 2, 4:00 p.m.	Tom Bachman
January 3, 9:00 a.m.	Karen Burden

Thank you so much for your ministry!



VOCATION VIEW

Mary was called to be open to the extraordinary. What do you need to say “let it be” in response to God’s call to you? Trust that the Lord is with you and will guide you always. (Luke 1:26-38)

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

In the first reading, God promises King David that his house and his kingdom will endure forever. It is through Mary’s “Yes” - “I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say.” – that the promise finds fulfillment.

A FEW WORDS FROM THE PASTOR



“And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, Full of grace and truth.” (Jn9: 4)

My Dear Parishioners and Friends:

I hope and pray this note finds you and your families in good health.

Christmas Season remind us of God’s abundant love for us.

In the midst of all our current challenges and concerns, the love of God the Father is made manifest to us in the wonderful gift of Jesus, His son. Join with the angels in Bethlehem, our faith moves us to sing, “Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth.” Yes. We recognize that true peace on earth flows our recognition and praise of God in our lives.

At this special and sacred time of the year, I wish to extend to you and your loved ones Christmas greetings and best wishes for the New Year. While we might recall difficult times and frustrations in 2020, we continue with faith, love, joy and hope in 2021. I pray for you and for your family that this Christmas Season will be joyful and will be filled with all of the blessings that our loving Father has planned for us.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you, to your family, and to all of your love ones.

Fr. Peter Tran

COLLECTION for December 13, 2020: Envelopes: \$245.00; Loose: \$179.00; Online Giving: \$1441.12; Total \$1,865.12; Average Weekly Expense: \$1,989.55. Income over/under (1124.43) *Thank you so much to our faithful stewards for supporting our parish, diocese, and worldwide Church.*

ADVENT –SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION Due to the spreading of the Covid-19, our parish penance service will not be held this year, instead Fr. Peter will be available to hear confessions every Saturday from 3:00 pm – 3:50 p.m.; every Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:50 a.m.; and every Thursday from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. If those times do not work for you, please call parish office number (355-6405) for an appointment. Please make an effort to be reconciled with God and with others in this sacred time in order to celebrate the birth of the Lord.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE If you would like to donate flowers in memory of A LOVED ONE FOR CHRISTMAS, please put your donation in envelope marked to whom you want them to go to, plus your name and put in with the regular collection or send it to our office. Deadline date is December 22.

LOOKING AHEAD

Christmas Eve Mass, December 24, 4:00 p.m. in Lakin and 5:30 p.m. MT in Syracuse

Christmas Day Mass, December 25, 9:00 a.m. in Deerfield and 12:00 p.m. Vietnamese in Garden City

New Year's Eve mass - Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, December 31, 6:00 p.m in Lakin, 6:30 p.m. MT

New Year's Day Mass—Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, January 1, 8:00 a.m.

MASKS AT MASS & CHRISTMAS MASS Due to spread of Covid –19 and possible more attendance at Christmas Eve Mass we would like to encourage you, if you are physically capable, to wear your mask during this time of an upswing in reported cases of Covid-19 in our community. Please do whatever you be able to help us reduce the anxiety level of people entering our parish church. Thank you.

UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL OF THE WEEK (Luke 1: 26-38)

Favored one In Jesus' day wealthy people typically acted as benefactors to those who were then expected to honor their patron in some way. Here God assumes the role of a patron, but Mary is an unlikely person to receive God's attention. Because she's poor, young, and a woman there's little she can do publicly to honor God, which might be why she's greatly troubled.

Mary's encounter with Gabriel introduces a major theme of Luke's Gospel: God favors the least among us. The people who seem the least able to honor God in any notable way become the very people God elevates.

Extraordinary conceptions At the time of Gabriel's announcement to Mary, Elizabeth is six months pregnant with John the Baptist. Elizabeth and her husband, Zechariah, were past the age of bearing children, but God enabled them to conceive a child. Their story is similar to Abraham and Sarah, Manoah and his wife (Judges 13:2f), and Hannah and Elkanah (1 Sam 1:1f).

There are, however, no biblical stories in which a virgin becomes pregnant solely through God's power. Mary's conception shows that God intervened in human history in a startling and unique way. A whole new stage of salvation history has begun.

Son of God It's clear from our first reading that many Jews expected the messiah to be a descendent of David. Jesus fulfills this expectation since his mother is betrothed to Joseph, of the house of David (v.27). Gabriel emphasizes this ancestral link in verses 32-33. Jesus is the son to whom God will be especially devoted, as God promised in 2 Sam 7:14a. More significantly, Jesus is also God's Son in that he hasn't been conceived in the usual human way but through divine agency. In the Old Testament God's Spirit was readily shown to be with someone, including David (see 1 Sam 16:13), but the Spirit is present in Jesus in a radically new way <https://oursundayreadings>

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

SERAPHIM (By the Most Rev. Ronald M. Gilmore)

We hear much about 'Angels' in late September and early October of each Liturgical Year. What are we hearing about these first of God's creation, these spirits-without-bodies, these 'messengers' from on high?

Every created thing loves both 'order,' and 'surprise,' so why would it be any different for their Creator? Loving them too, there is 'order' in his angels: in their groups, or levels, or ranks. Our tradition speaks of the 'nine choirs of angels.' Let's look at the highest of these groups, at some of the surprises in these who see and adore God directly. Some in this group are called "Thrones," an odd name for a sub-group, admittedly. These are the angels who gaze on God's power and judgment, fascinated by what they see, unable to take their eyes from what he does. Think of the two women and the one baby in Solomon's time (I Kings 3: 16-28), and of how his judgment cuts through the clouding emotion to the truth. The 'throne' is suggestive of all things 'judicial,' the power and the judgment, from the place of judgment.

Some in this group are called the "Cherubim," a name high-jacked long ago by artists of the Hallmark persuasion. These are the angels who gaze upon God, less in himself, than in his Providence, in his wise plan for all creation. The mechanics of the plan fascinate them, and they cannot take their eyes from its unfolding. Think of the fires, and the earthquakes, and the five hundred year floods; think of Providence's uncanny ability to draw good from the destruction. 'Cherubim' is a Hebrew word that was borrowed from their neighbors, and has meant the 'blessed fullness of wisdom.'

Some in this group are called the "Seraphim," another borrowed name in early Hebrew. These are the highest of all the angels. They gaze upon God directly, and with maximum clarity: they are transfixed by him, his wondrous beauty. Because they see with such clarity, their love flames the brightest: they are lost in wonder at what they see and love. Think of the old gentleman in the Adoration Chapel, known for his courtesy and gentleness to others, but oblivious, just now, of those around him ... a moth alone circling the flame. 'Seraphim' means the 'burning ones.'

And an unsettling side note: 'Lucifer,' as he was called, was one of these, the 'Seraphim.' When he rebelled and fell from heaven, he remained what he had been, a most powerful angel, now become dangerous to us. 'Freedom' ... whether human, or angelic, or divine: this side of heaven we shall never understand it.

FIFTEEN WAYS TO GAIN AN INDULGENCE IN THE YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH

Pope Francis has decreed a Year of St. Joseph in which Catholics will have the opportunity to obtain a special plenary indulgence. Until December 2021, there are many new ways that Catholics can receive an indulgence, including entrusting their daily work to the protection of St. Joseph the Worker or reciting the rosary with their families.

These acts must be accompanied by sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the pope's intentions, the usual conditions to obtain any plenary indulgence.

Plenary indulgences remit all temporal punishment due to sin and must be accompanied by full detachment from sin. According to the decree issued by the Apostolic Penitentiary on Dec. 8, there are 15 ways to receive an indulgence in the Year of St. Joseph:

- 1) Participate in a spiritual retreat for at least one day that includes a meditation on St. Joseph.
- 2) Pray for St. Joseph's intercession for the unemployed that they might find dignifying work.
- 3) Recite the Litany of St. Joseph for persecuted Christians. Byzantine Catholics have the option of an Akathist to St. Joseph.
- 4) Entrust one's daily work and activity to the protection of St. Joseph the Worker.
- 5) Follow St. Joseph's example in performing a corporal work of mercy. These include feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the imprisoned, visiting the sick, and burying the dead.
- 6) Perform one of the spiritual works of mercy, such as comforting the sorrowful, counseling the doubtful, instructing the ignorant, admonishing the sinner, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving injuries, and praying for the living and the dead.
- 7) Pray the rosary together with one's family in order that "all Christian families may be stimulated to recreate the same atmosphere of intimate communion, love and prayer that was in the Holy Family."
- 8) Engaged couples can also receive an indulgence from praying the rosary together.
- 9) Meditate for at least 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer, because St. Joseph "invites us to rediscover our filial relationship with the Father, to renew fidelity to prayer, to listen and correspond with profound discernment to God's will."
- 10) Pray an approved prayer to St. Joseph on St. Joseph Sunday, the Sunday after Christmas in the Byzantine Catholic tradition.
- 11) Celebrate the feast of St. Joseph on March 19 with an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph.
- 12) Pray an approved prayer to St. Joseph on the 19th of any month.
- 13) Honor Joseph with an act of piety or approved prayer on a Wednesday, the day traditionally dedicated to St. Joseph.
- 14) Pray to St. Joseph on the Feast of the Holy Family on Dec. 29.
- 15) Celebrate the feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1 with an act of piety or prayer.

"All the faithful will thus have the opportunity to commit themselves, with prayers and good works, to obtain with the help of St. Joseph, head of the celestial Family of Nazareth, comfort and relief from the serious human and social tribulations that today afflict the contemporary world," the decree signed by Cardinal Mauro Piacenza said.

The elderly, the sick, and the dying who are unable to leave their homes due to the coronavirus pandemic also have special permission to receive an indulgence by "offering with trust in God the pains and discomforts" of their lives with a prayer to St. Joseph, hope of the sick and patron of a happy death.

The decree noted that in this instance the person must have the intention of fulfilling, as soon as possible, the three usual conditions for an indulgence, as well as a detachment from sin.

The Apostolic Penitentiary permits any prayer to St. Joseph approved by the Church, mentioning in particular the "To you, O blessed Joseph" prayer composed by Pope Leo XIII:

"To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our tribulation, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also. Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities."

"O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle 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 by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen."

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT UNLOCKING EVERY DOOR

Those who have been incarcerated know exactly what it means to face a locked door. So do folks who have been institutionalized with mental illness. But even those of us who have not been behind a literal door may find ourselves living under a sentence of fear, bitterness, depression, or unforgiveness. We may be locked out of relationships that are important to us because of resentment or past actions. Poverty is often a prison that keeps opportunity and hope out, while also fostering despair within. O Jesus, Key of David, unlock every door that keeps us from experiencing your freedom! (Prepare the Word)

CUARTO DOMINGO DE ADVIENTO ABRIR TODAS LAS PUERTAS

Los que han estado en prisión saben exactamente lo que significa enfrentarse a una puerta cerrada. También lo saben los que han estado internados por enfermedades mentales. Pero incluso quienes no hemos estado detrás de una puerta real, podemos vivir bajo una sentencia de miedo, amargura, depresión o falta de perdón. Podemos estar excluidos de relaciones que son importantes para nosotros debido a acciones pasadas. La pobreza es una prisión que mantiene fuera la oportunidad y la esperanza, mientras alienta la desesperación interior. ¡Oh Jesús, Llave de David, abre cada puerta que nos impide conocer tu libertad!