



# *The Cathedral of* **SAINT JOSEPH**

521 North Duluth Avenue • Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57104

[www.stjosephcathedral.net](http://www.stjosephcathedral.net)



Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (cir.1767-1769)

*Solemnity*  
*of the*  
*Immaculate Conception*  
*of the*  
*Blessed Virgin Mary*  
**December 8, 2023**

**Holy Day Mass Times**

**(Vigil) December 7 - 6:30 pm**

**December 8 - 12:00 pm**

**December 8 - 6:30 pm**

**Memorare**

*Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother; to thee do I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.*

LITURGY GUIDE – December 3, 2023

First Sunday of Advent

Welcome to the Cathedral of St. Joseph and thank you for joining us for the celebration of Holy Mass today! Please, **silence your cell phones** and **refrain from eating, drinking or chewing gum** in the Cathedral. Help keep our Cathedral tidy by utilizing the waste baskets found near the main entrances.

Please, **do not take pictures during the Mass celebration.**

INTROIT - (At 9:15 and 11:00 AM the Introit is sung by the Choir)

Ad te levavi animam meam: Deus meus in te confide, non erubescam: neque irrideant me inimici mei: etenim universi qui te expectant, non confundentur. (Verse) Vias tuas, Domine, demonstra mihi: et semitas tuas edoce me.

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let not my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame. (Verse) Make your ways known unto me, O Lord, and teach me your paths.

OPENING HYMN (4:00 PM AND 7:30 AM) 489

STUTTGART

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

PENITENTIAL ACT

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, (striking breast three times) through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; Therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Musical score for the Introit with lyrics: right hand of the Fa - ther, have mer - cy on us. For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord, you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men. A - men.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7

You, LORD, are our father, our redeemer you are named forever. Why do you let us wander, O LORD, from your ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage. Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before you, while you wrought awesome deeds we could not hope for, such as they had not heard of from of old. No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God but you doing such deeds for those who wait for him. Would that you might meet us doing right, that we were mindful of you in our ways! Behold, you are angry, and we are sinful; all of us have become like unclean people, all our good deeds are like polluted rags; we have all withered like leaves, and our guilt carries us away like the wind. There is none who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to cling to you; for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us up to our guilt. Yet, O LORD, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalms 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

(Refrain sung first by cantor, then congregation repeat)

Musical score for the Responsorial Psalm with lyrics: Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Text: Refrain trans., Lectionary for Mass, © 1969, 1981, 1997, ICEL; verses, New American Bible, © 1970, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine; Massier Michel Guimont, © 1994, 1998, GIA Publications, Inc.

O shepherd of Israel, hear us, enthroned on the cherubim, shine forth. Rouse up your might and come to save us. R

GLORIA

Musical score for the Gloria with lyrics: Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and on earth peace to peo-ple of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we a - dore you, we glo - ri - fy you, we give you thanks for your great glo - ry, Lord God, hea - ve - nly King, O God, al - migh - ty Fa - ther. Lord Je - sus Christ, On - ly be - got - ten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Fa - ther, you take a - way the sins of the world, have mer - cy on us; you take a - way the sins of the world, re - ceive our prayer; you are sea - ted at the

God of hosts, turn again, we implore; look down from heaven and see. Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted, the son of man you have claimed for yourself. **R**

May your hand be on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have confirmed as your own. And we shall never forsake you again; give us life that we may call upon your name. **R**

**SECOND READING**

**1 Corinthians 1:3-9**

Brothers and sisters:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, that in him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge, as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*Please Stand*

*(Sung first by cantor, then congregation repeat)*



Music: A. Gregory Murray, OSB, © 1958, The Grail, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

Show us Lord, your love; and grant us your salvation. **R**

**GOSPEL**

**Mark 13:33-37**

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Be watchful! Be alert!

You do not know when the time will come.

It is like a man traveling abroad.

He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with

his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch.

Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the

house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight,

or at cockcrow, or in the morning.

May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.

What I say to you, I say to all: ‘Watch!’”

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

*Please Stand*

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,

maker of heaven and earth,

of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,

the Only Begotten Son of God,

born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,

begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, *(bow here)* and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried,

and rose again on the third day

in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead

and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,

who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR AND GIFTS

**OFFERTORY HYMN (4PM & 7:30AM)**

**KINGSFOLD**

**572**

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

**OFFERTORY MOTET (9:15 & 11:00AM)**

Alessandro Scarlatti

*Ad te Domine levavi*

(1660-1725)

*Ad te Domine levavi animam  
meam: Deus meus in te confido,  
non erubescam: neque irrideant me  
inimici mei: etenim universi qui te  
expectant, non confundentur.*

To you, I lift up my soul, O  
my God. In you, I have  
trusted; let me not be put to  
shame. Nor let not my  
enemies exult over me; and let  
none who hope in you be put  
to shame.

**Celebrant:** Pray brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

**R.** May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

**SANCTUS**



**MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION**

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Re-sur-rec - tion un-til you come a-gain.

**AGNUS DEI**

A-gnus De - i, qui tol-lis pec-ca-ta mun-di: mi-se-re-re no - bis.  
A-gnus De - i, qui tol-lis pec-ca-ta mun-di: do-na no-bis pa - cem.

**ECCE AGNUS DEI**

**Celebrant:** Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**R.** Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

**HOLY COMMUNION**

**All Catholics who have prepared themselves to receive Holy Communion are invited to come forward. Our brothers and sisters of other faiths are invited to approach with arms crossed over the chest to signal their desire to receive a blessing.**

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON (4PM)**

The Lord will be-stow his boun-ty, and our earth shall yield its in-crease.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON (9:15AM AND 11AM)**

*Dominus dabit benignitatem: et terra nostra dabit fructum suum.* The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

**COMMUNION MEDITATION (9:15AM)**

*Ave Verum Corpus* William Byrd (1540-1623)

*Ave, verum corpus natum de Maria Virgine: vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine: cuius latus perforatum unda fluxit sanguine: esto nobis praegustatum, in mortis examine.* Hail, true Body, born of the Virgin Mary, who having truly suffered, was sacrificed on the cross for mankind, whose pierced side flowed with blood: May this be for us a foretaste of the Heavenly banquet in the trial of death.

*O dulcis, O pie, O Jesu, Fili Mariae. Miserere mei.* O sweet, O holy, O Jesus Son of Mary, have mercy on me.

**HYMN OF THANKSGIVING**  
497

**CREATOR ALME SIDERUM**  
Creator of the Stars of Night

**CLOSING HYMN (4 PM & 7:30 AM)** VENEZ, DIVIN MESSIE  
651 O Come, Divine Messiah

**RECESSIONAL (9:15AM & 11:00 AM)**

*Alma Redemptoris Mater*

*Alma redemptoris mater, quae pernia caeli porta manes, et stella maris succurre cadenti surgere qui curat populo. Tu quae genuisti, natura mirante, tuum sanctum Genitorem.*

*Virgo prius, ac posterius, Gabrielis ab ore, summens illud ave, peccatorum miserere.*

Nourishing mother of the Redeemer, thou who remains the open gate of heaven and the star of the sea, help the fallen people who strive to rise again. Thou who gave birth, to the wonder of nature, to thy holy Creator. Virgin before and after, From Gabriel's mouth accepting that Ave, Have mercy on sinners.

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# Great Gift Ideas

**SUPPORT THE SISTERS**



The Adoration Sisters invite you to visit their gift shop of religious articles and gifts at **Mater Ecclesiae Monastery**. The Monastery and gift shop are located in the parking lot behind St. Joseph Cathedral. Great ideas for Christmas gifts.  
**Open Monday through Saturday 9:30am to 5:30pm.**

**Silent Retreats: 2024**

**Women's:** Feb. 1-4/Feb.29-Mar. 3/  
Apr.18-21/July 25-28

**Men's:** Feb. 15-18/April 4-7

**Day of Recollection: Retreats:**

Jan. 16, 2024/Feb. 13, 2024

**Special Retreats 2024:**

**Healing Retreat:** Feb 23 -25

\*Register at [www.broom-tree.org](http://www.broom-tree.org) or call 605-263-1040\*



**The 27th Annual Christmas at the Cathedral**

will be performed with six concerts December 14-17 at the Cathedral of St. Joseph. This year's theme, "**The Heavens Declare,**" is a first-hand account of the monumental events surrounding Jesus' birth and His miraculous mission and impact through the experience of one of the magi. For information and/or tickets call **605-988-3765** or email: [www.ccfesd.org](http://www.ccfesd.org).

**Many volunteer opportunities are available.**

# COMMUNITY NEWS

**Holiday Grief Program**-The Lourdes Center is honored to host: "He is Stable" - A Night of Grieving Hearts to Find Rest in His Peace - **December 5, 2022 (6:30 pm)** at **St. Therese Catholic Church** in Sioux Falls. The evening will include presentations from individuals who have experienced grief along with a beautiful candle lighting ceremony. Christmas cookies and hot chocolate to follow! Children are welcome! Free will offering accepted. Register by calling **605-988-3775** or [tlc@sfcatholic.org](mailto:tlc@sfcatholic.org).



**Camp Sydney**-The Lourdes Center will be offering a Grief Camp for youth and their families at Broom Tree Retreat

Center, beginning at 6:00 p.m. June 21, 2024 until 11:00 a.m. June 23, 2024. This two-day camp will include fun activities, discussion and support. The Grief Camp is offered free of charge. Please register at [www.thelourdescenter.com](http://www.thelourdescenter.com) beginning **January 15, 2024 at 8:00am**. For more information please call The Lourdes Center at **605-988-3775**.

**Join Fr. Mike Wensing for his Spring Pilgrimage to Italy** -Venice, Padua, Florence, Assisi, and Rome, **April 15-25, 2024**. Price is \$4299. Registration deadline is **December 14, 2023**. For more information, please contact: Mrs. Lisa Lane at **605-520-7700** or Fr. Michael Wensing at **605-868-4348** or by email: [fr.mikeholylnd2015@gmail.com](mailto:fr.mikeholylnd2015@gmail.com)

**Risen Savior Music Ministry presents: Glorious Light of Christmas**, A Christmas Cantata with performances on: **December 17th** at Risen Savior Church, Brandon 5:30 pm (potluck to follow) **December 20th** at St. Rose of Lima Church, Garretson 7:30 pm. No admission fee. Donations are welcome.

**Harmony South Dakota's** - Christmas Concert will be presented on **December 9, 2023 at 10:30 am**, in the Cathedral School Gym. **Harmony** is a free after-school music program for children in Sioux Falls that teaches social transformation through music. Check their site to learn more at: <http://www.harmonysouthdakota.org>

**'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'**

Advent begins **today, December 3rd**. The Catholic Daughters of Ct. St. Patricia invite you to join them **today** for an afternoon of **Reflection and Preparation**, conducted by Archbishop Thomas Gullickson in the Fireside Room at Holy Spirit Parish, 12:30-3:30 pm.



Confession will be available.  
Call Mary Althoff with questions @ **605-665-5617**.

1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



## Liturgical Roles



**December 9/10**

### Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

- 4:00 pm Carolee Weber, Mark Weber
- 7:30 am Carl Eisenberg, Robert Renner
- 9:15 am Abigale Bauer, Jeff Heron, Don Rahn
- 11:00 am Susan Albers, Bev Earley, Bill Earley
- 4:00 pm Ministers as Scheduled

### Lectors

- 4:00 pm Suzanne Bradford, Denise Rotert
- 7:30 am Barbara Lockwood
- 9:15 am John Moneke, Emily Young
- 11:00 am Max Boyum, Eva Boyum
- 4:00 pm Readers as Scheduled

### Altar Servers

- 4:00 pm Pontifical Servers
- 7:30 am Thomas Mogle
- 9:15 am Charles, Nathaniel & Greg Myers
- 11:00 am Dominic Ostermann, Quintin Rasmussen, Leo Rutten
- 4:00 pm Servers as Scheduled

### Mini-Bus Driver

- 4:00 pm Mitch Brandner
- Dow Rummel** Tonia & Ryan Groenweg
- Good Sam** Betty Barto-Smith

### Readings for the week of December 3, 2023

- Sunday:** Is 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 (4)/1 Cor 1:3-9/Mk 13:33-37
- Monday:** Is 2:1-5/Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9/Mt 8:5-11
- Tuesday:** Is 11:1-10/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17/Lk 10:21-24
- Wednesday:** Is 25:6-10a/Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6/Mt 15:29-37
- Thursday:** Is 26:1-6/Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a/Mt 7:21, 24-27
- Friday:** Gn 3:9-15, 20/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4/Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38
- Saturday:** Is 30:19-21, 23-26/Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6/Mt 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8
- Next Sunday:** Is 40:1-5, 9-11/Ps 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14 (8)/2 Pt 3:8-14/Mk 1:1-8

## CONGRATULATIONS

The first winner of the 500 Club for December 2023 is **Dan Fettig**. He has received a check for **\$95**. We have given Fr. Morgan a check for **\$412.50** for the Church. Over the last 24 years we have given over **\$95,400** to Cathedral Parish. If you are interested in joining, applications are at the front entrance (Duluth Ave) of the Cathedral. Membership is only \$5.00 a month. Applications received by December 30, 2023 will be in the January 2024 drawings. For details call **605-336-7390**.

## Mass Intentions

<b>Mon. Dec. 04•</b>	<i>St. John Damascene, Priest &amp; Doctor of the Church</i>
12:00 pm	Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist
<b>Tues Dec. 05•</b>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>
12:00 pm	✠ Alan Solem
<b>Wed. Dec. 06•</b>	<i>St. Nicholas, Bishop</i>
6:45 am	CMBF
12:00 pm	✠ Brian Thill
<b>Thu. Dec. 07•</b>	<i>St. Ambrose, Bishop; Doctor of the Church</i>
12:00 pm	✠ Mark Anthony McCoy
6:30 pm	✠ Fr. Antonio W. Ramos
<b>Fri. Dec. 08•</b>	<i>Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>
12:00 pm	✠ Fr. Phil Elmer
6:30 pm	Pro Populo
<b>Sat. Dec. 09•</b>	<i>St. Juan Diego Cuablatoatzin</i>
4:00 pm	Katherine Grode
<b>Sun. Dec. 10•</b>	<i>Second Sunday of Advent</i>
7:30 am	✠ John Sweere
9:15 am	✠ William John Larsen
11:00 am	Jenna Fenske
4:00 pm	Pro Populo

## Sanctuary Candles

This week the five sanctuary candles in the Sacred Heart Chapel have been requested for the following intentions:

- 1.) Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
- 2.) Eucharistic Revival
- 3.) For Holy Souls in Purgatory
- 4.) Peter Lux
- 5.) Simon Walker

## Cathedral Events Calendar

**Monday, December 4 -**

6:30 pm - Young Adults Formation

**Tuesday, December 5 -**

10:00 am - Women's Group

7:00 pm - Knights of Columbus

**Wednesday, December 6 -**

6:45 am - CMBF Mass in Cathedral

6:45 pm - RCIA

**Thursday, December 7 -**

6:30 pm - Vigil Mass for Holy Day (No Reconciliation)

**Friday, December 8 - Solemnity of the Immaculate  
Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

12:00 pm - Mass for Holy Day

6:30 pm - Mass for Holy Day

**Saturday, December 9 -**

12:00 pm & 3:00 pm - Reconciliation in Cathedral

## PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Holy Day Mass Times:

December 7 (Vigil Mass) 6:30 pm

December 8 - 12:00 pm and 6:30 pm

### Celebrate the Lord's many blessings this Christmas



by supporting members of our parish family facing financial challenges. To assist families, we welcome your monetary gift to our annual Christmas appeal project.

Please drop off any cash or check (made payable to "Cathedral of St. Joseph") in the weekly collection within a sealed envelope labeled "**Christmas Project**". You can also mail your gift to: Cathedral of St. Joseph, 521 N. Duluth Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD 57104, Attn: Christmas Project. Please be sure your gift reaches the parish by **December 18<sup>th</sup>**. Father Morgan will distribute your gift to the families in need before Christmas. Thank you! Cathedral's Outreach Ministry



*Anointed by the Holy Spirit  
through the waters of Baptism*

### Nuguse Machu Awrin

**Lyia Tesfay Mae** - Daughter of Tesfay Desta  
& Sofia Hayle Adris

**Deng Kong Dut** - son of Dut Abiem Kong Wol  
& Boll Seleen Sabino

**Anastasia Luthien Nestor** - Daughter of Timothy  
& Alexandra Nestor

**Pierce Henry McDowell** - Pierce & Katherine McDowell


***Congratulations and welcome into our Family of Faith!***

If you are expecting or have a child to be baptized, please call Deacon Bill Radio (605-336-7390) for baptism planning.

### WEEKLY OFFERINGS NOVEMBER 18 / 19

Envelopes	\$	7,761.00
Online/EFT	\$	5,191.00
Visitors/Loose Cash	\$	8,697.38
<b>Total \$</b>		<b>21,649.38</b>

### WEEKLY OFFERINGS NOVEMBER 25 / 26

	Envelopes	\$	8,868.00
	Online/EFT	\$	3,518.85
	Visitors/Loose Cash	\$	5,571.11
<b>Total \$</b>		<b>17,957.96</b>	

Scan the QR code to be directed to our Giving Page

If you donate online or do not wish to have contribution envelopes sent to you, please let us know.

***Thank you for your Support and Prayers!***

## CATHEDRAL INFORMATION

**Parish Office: 605-336-7390**

**Parish Office Email: [cathedral@sfcatholic.org](mailto:cathedral@sfcatholic.org)**

**Office Hours:** 8:30am-5pm M-Th, 8:30am-3pm Friday

**Cathedral Church Hours:**

8am-5pm Monday-Saturday

7am-Noon & 3:30-5:00 Sunday

**Weekend Mass Schedule**

Saturday 4:00pm

Sunday 7:30am, 9:15am, 11:00am,

4:00pm (St. Josephine Bakhita Community)

**Weekday Masses**

Monday - Friday 12pm (Noon)

**Confessions**

Thursday 7:00pm

Saturday 12 Noon & 3:00-3:30pm in Cathedral

(In the Chapel if a Wedding is scheduled)

**Adoration**

Thursdays 7pm-8pm (In the Chapel during Confessions)

First Friday of the month at 11am in the Cathedral

**Self Guided Tours**

1:00 pm Monday-Friday (except Holy Days)

**Guided Tours-By appointment 605-336-7390**

**Parish Staff**

**Rector,** Very Rev. James P. Morgan

**Parochial Vicar,** Rev. Pasquale Armando Francesco

**Deacon,** William Radio

**Deacon,** Tim Dickes (Prison Ministry)

**Administrative Assistant,** Mary Anne Lux

**Director-Operations & Finance,** Heidi Solem

**Director-Liturgical Music,** Dr. Jared Ostermann

**Director-Faith Formation & Social Media,** Abigail Carter

**Tour Docent/Guide,** Susan Albers

**Wedding Coordinator,** Mary Enderson

**Counseling Services**

**The Lourdes Center** (Formerly Catholic Family Services)

Counseling and Grief Programs **605-988-3775**

**Sacraments**

**Baptism** The sacrament of Baptism is celebrated for our parishioners on Sundays after the 11AM Mass. Parents must attend a Baptism preparation meeting. To schedule preparation, contact the parish office.

**Matrimony** Six months preparation required. Registered parishioners, please contact the parish office. All others, contact the pastor of your home church. For wedding information, go to [www.stjosephcathedral.net](http://www.stjosephcathedral.net), under Sacraments.

**Anointing of the Sick**

Please call the parish office to request this Sacrament if you have been diagnosed with an illness, in preparation for surgery or in case of serious illness.

**Catholic Cemetery - St. Michael's Cemetery 605-338-3376**

## CLERGY REFLECTION

Each August I take the parish staff to Broom Tree for a one-day "staff retreat." For my homily on All Saints Day, I described one of the exercises we did during the retreat. Each member of the staff was to pick a saint that they would like to meet if that saint were alive today. But there was more to it: When you met your saint, what question would you like to ask them? I deviated a bit from the exercise because it reminded me of a similar exercise I did as part of a 30-day Ignatian retreat on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my priesthood. On that retreat, I had to pray five hours a day, mostly meditating upon the Gospel stories of Jesus. The idea was to insert myself into the picture, put myself into the stories themselves, so I could viscerally experience what was taking place. The practice is called "Lectio Divina" in our Catholic faith. One of the most vivid meditations I had was walking with Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. It was a part of a meditation on Christ's birth. Here I was, seeing myself as the camel driver, or the servant, which ever, helping them along the journey. I pictured myself in the evening setting up my own camp some distance away from them. I could see myself sitting by a fire, looking over at Joseph and Mary and wondering what they were talking about, knowing all along, that something miraculous would happen once we arrived in Bethlehem. Both Joseph and Mary became very personal to me in this prayer encounter. Now, back to the retreat: What would I ask Joseph if I had a chance to meet him? Exactly. What were you and Mary talking about on the journey to Bethlehem? As we enter the season of Advent, traveling with Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem should be at the heart of our Advent experience, otherwise, we miss out on the surprise of Christmas. Advent is about anticipation and preparation. And it is a season that is separate from Christmas. This year, each of the office staff, including the priests and deacons, received a book of Advent reflections that employs vivid meditation as a way to connect to the Infancy narratives. It's titled, "*Rejoice! An Advent Pilgrimage Into The Heart of Scripture*," from Ascension Press. The author is Fr. Mark Toups, who I know personally from my seminary days in Rome. Perusing it, I find it is essentially Lectio Divina. Each reflection inserts you into the story. For example, the reflections have you speaking to the different Advent characters. Whether we use a meditation guide or not, Lectio Divina is the perfect spiritual practice for Advent. As we enter the Advent season, be sure to make it a journey. Concentrate on walking with Joseph and Mary. Meditate...and put yourself within the story, not outside of it.

*Fr. James Morgan*

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