



# St. Joseph's Messenger

A BULLETIN FOR INSPIRING SCHOOL FAMILIES

"GROUNDED IN THE TRADITION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL IS A COMMUNITY DEDICATED TO FORMING DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST THROUGH FAITH, ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, AND SERVICE TO OTHERS."

## FATHER BLAKE'S FILES

I took part in last year's School Christmas program. I not only had the role of welcoming everyone and saying the opening prayer, but I also had the role of innkeeper and shepherd. It was fun because a lot of the kids did not notice it was me. The additional roles came together at the last minute. In fact, I think some of the adults did not notice. After the program, a few adults approached me and said that they did not recognize me undercover right away.

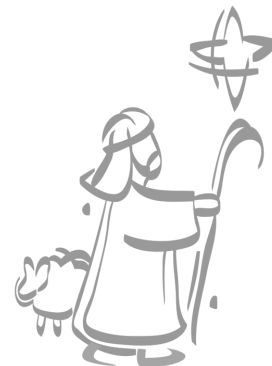
Though it was a fun experience, it was also a spiritual experience. When we hear the Christmas story every year and we hear many of the same songs, our meditation can be lacking because we mentally recall that we know how the story proceeds. It can be easy to check out. When I took the role of one of the shepherds, it put me in a position to easily enter the meditation. Can you imagine looking after sheep in a field and then you see the heavenly host of angels? Then you approach the holy family. The awe and wonder of this moment! The realization that God desires to intervene in our lives. The extraordinary amid the ordinary! The School Christmas program inspired me to meditate more deeply. It put me in a position to realize the transcendent

love of God. God not only desires to intervene in the shepherds' lives but also in my life and your life. He meets us in our ordinary circumstances to lead and guide us, to shepherd us, to a realm much greater than the one we normally see with our eyes.

I hope and pray that you put yourself and your family in a position to meditate upon the Salvation of our amazing God this Advent and Christmas season. God wants to bless all of us, without exception. He is the Light in the darkness. He is the Hope this world cannot give. Run to Jesus, my friends, like the shepherds! These are sacred days. I am sure our school kids will aid us again in entering this blessed time at this year's School Christmas program, December 17. The kids are a blessing!

May the peace of the Lord be with you always.

-Fr. Blake



## December Feast Days and Special Days

3 - St. Francis Xavier  
 7 - St. Ambrose  
 9 - Solemnity - Immaculate Conception  
 12 - Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
 13 - St. Lucy  
 14 - St. John of the Cross

25 - **Christmas**  
 26 - St. Stephen  
 27 - St. John, Apostle & Evangelist  
 28 - Feast of the Holy Innocents  
 29 - Feast of the Holy Family

## Upcoming Parish/School Events

 <h1>Bible Story Time</h1> <p>Join us for songs, children's Bible story and fun craft</p> <p>Saturdays:          Nov. 30th, Jan. 4th,          Feb. 1st, Mar. 1st,          &amp; Apr. 5th</p> <p>9am-10am          St. Joseph's School Library          Park &amp; enter at school entrance</p>   <p>Parent/child activity          focus on ages 0-5 but all ages are welcome!</p>	<p><b>December 1</b>          First Day of Advent</p> <p><b>Wednesday Evenings</b>          Family Faith Formation:          December 4th, 11th, &amp; 18th</p> <p><b>December 6</b>          First Friday Rosary and Adoration at 1pm</p> <p><b>December 9</b>          Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception          Mass at 9am, St. Joseph's          Mass at 5:30pm at St. Augustine's</p> <p><b>December 14</b>          First Reconciliation for second grade          St. Joseph's Church at 9am</p> <p><b>December 23rd-January 1st</b>          Christmas Break!</p>
<p><b>Save the Dates!</b></p> <p><b>January 1st</b> - Solemnity of Mary          Mass times: 9am St. Augs &amp; 5:30pm St Joe's</p> <p><b>January 2nd</b> - School Resumes</p> <p><b>January 26 - Feb 1</b> - Catholic Schools Week!</p>	<p><b>Sing with Us the Christmas Story</b>          St Joseph's School Christmas Program          Tuesday, December 17th          6:30pm at St. Joseph's Church</p> <p><b>Extra Advent Confession Time</b>          Area priests will be available for confession          Friday night, December 20th, at 6 pm          St. Joseph's Church</p>



Please follow St. Joseph's Church events by signing up for Flocknote. [www.itascacatholic.org](http://www.itascacatholic.org)

## December Virtue is Purity

### December Saints

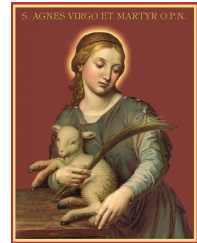


#### PreK-2 Grade will study: **SAINT DOMINIC SAVIO** (1842-1857, Italy)

On the day of his First Holy Communion, Dominic Savio told God that he would rather die than commit a sin, and this became his motto. He was very smart, athletic, and popular, and he used these talents to help lead all the rough boys at Don Bosco's school to Jesus. He invited them to Confession, talked them out of fights, and changed the subject when they were being unkind. **His feast day is March 9.**

#### Grades 3-5 will study: **SAINT Agnes** (3rd century, Rome)

Saint Agnes lived at a time when it was illegal to be a Christian. When she was about 12 years old, a wealthy young man fell in love with her and asked her to marry him. She told him that she had already given her heart to Jesus as His bride. The young man was upset and reported her to the government for being a Christian. Agnes was arrested, and everyone begged her to deny her faith and worship the Roman gods. She refused, and was sentenced to death. Saint Agnes went joyfully to martyrdom. Agnus means "lamb", and a spotless lamb is the symbol of her pure love for Christ. **Her feast day is January 21.**



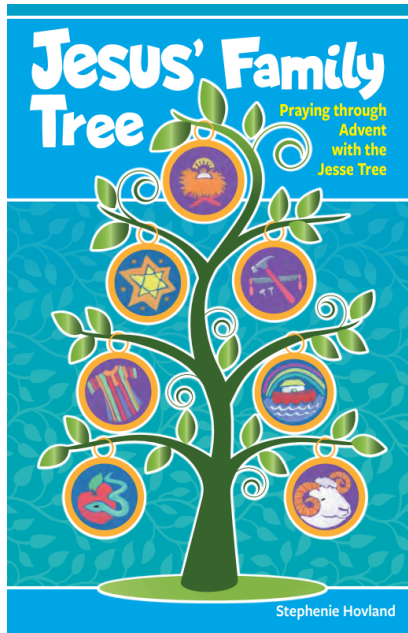
#### Grade 6 will study: **SAINT MARIA GORETTI** (1890-1902, Italy)

Maria's family moved from their small farm in Corinaldo Italy to become tenant farmers in the Pontine Marshes. They shared the rent with Mr. Serenelli and his son, Alessandro, because they could not afford their own home. Alessandro Serenelli saw how beautiful Maria was becoming, and he tried to approach her several times. Each time Maria rebuked him. On July 5, 1902, Maria's mother was working in a nearby field while Maria was near the house watching her younger sister. Alessandro had been working in the field too, but he came back to the house. He called Maria inside, but she would not come. He then dragged her back into the building. As she fought him, she screamed, "No! No! No! What are you doing? Do not touch me! It is a sin- you will go to Hell!" Suddenly he pulled out a knife and began to stab Maria. Maria survived long enough to receive the Anointing of the Sick and Holy Communion for the last time. Before she died, her parish priest asked her if she forgave Alessandro. She responded, "Yes, I too, for the love of Jesus, forgive him, and I want him to be with me in Paradise." She was only 11 years old. **Her feast day is July 6.**

# Advent 2024

## Jesse Tree: A Family Activity for Advent

Learn about the ancestry of Jesus and connect the custom of decorating your Christmas tree as you count down the days to Jesus' birth!



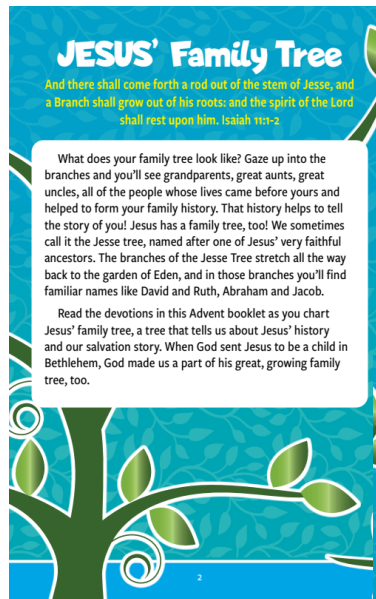
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During the Advent season, a Bible story is read which relates to Jesus' family. After the Bible story is read and discussed, an ornament is placed on a tree - the Jesse Tree. This is done from the beginning of Advent to Christmas Day.

For more information and additional activity resources:



[www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/advent/the-jesse-tree/](http://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/advent/the-jesse-tree/)



A Jesse Tree represents the family tree of Jesus Christ. Each ornament represents a story from the Bible that tells about God's people before Jesus was born.



<https://catholicinspired.design/product/printable-jesse-tree-ornaments-free-and-easy-pdf-download/>