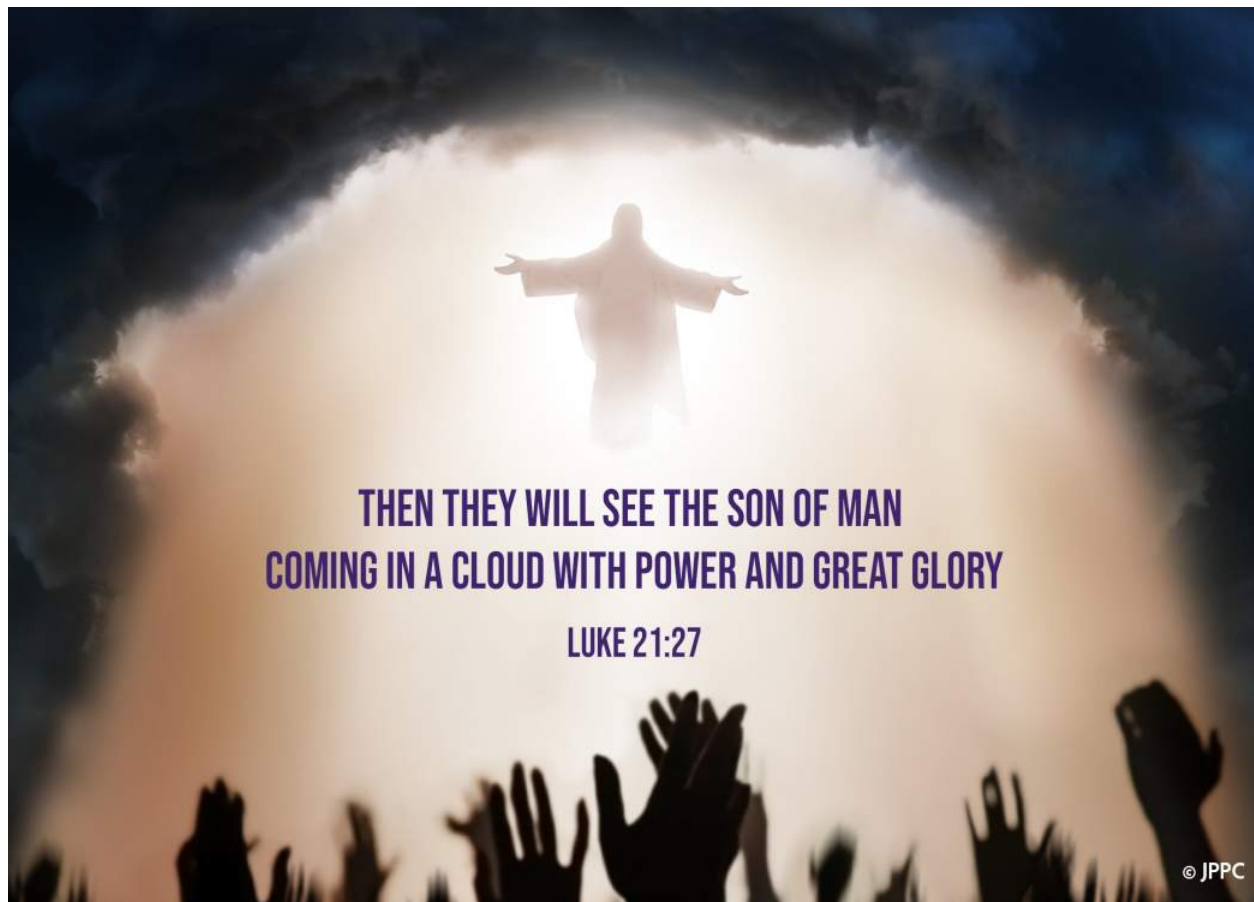


CHURCH OF SAINT MONICA



DECEMBER 1, 2024

Our Parish is Served by:

Reverend Alex Enriquez, Pastor
Deacon Christian Knoebel
Deacon John L. White

We invite you to celebrate with us

website: www.saintmonica.com

Parish Office: 732-928-0279

Email: parishoffice@saintmonica.com

Fax: (732) 928-1853

Religious Education: 732-928-4038

Email: stmonicacd@yahoo.com

Confessions

Saturdays

3:15 pm

to 3:45 pm

1st Thursdays 7pm

or by appointment

Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/ParishofStMonica/)

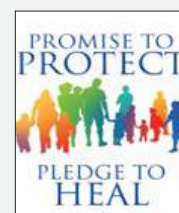
[ParishofStMonica/](http://www.facebook.com/ParishofStMonica/)

Masses
Mon. to Thurs. 9 am
Saturday 4 pm
Sunday 9 am & 11 am

679 W. Veterans Highway
Jackson, NJ 08527



The Church of St. Monica is a warm, accepting, and caring parish that worships God, teaches and lives the message of Christ, seeks to support and strengthen family life, and serves those in need through parish ministries and organizations.



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 1, 2024

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, November 30

4:00 pm Joseph Orost (Kaba Family)

Sunday, December 1

9:00 am Frances Panicola
(Linda & Ed Thompson)

11:00 am Harold Hubers (Mary Boyd)

Monday, December 2

9:00 am Available

Tuesday, December 3

9:00 am John & Margaret Piacentino
(Piacentino Family)

Wednesday, December 4

9:00 am Irene DelBalso
(Fran Hackett & Family)

Thursday, December 5

9:00 am Pasquale Fallone
(Gerarda Fallone)

Saturday, December 7

4:00 pm Sylvester Cascio & Joseph Anzalone
(Anzalone Family)

Sunday, December 8

9:00 am Anthony Sasso (Karen Badach)
11:00 am Madison Gross
(Dcn John & Caroline White)

To secure your Mass Intentions, contact the Parish Office.

IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Micki Smith, Joyce Picon, Carol Atherton, Beth Kujawski, Chuck Smith, Toni Hetteroth, Dianne Smith, Andy Sabine, Elaine Giblock, Marie Gould, Steve Andolora, Doris Garbarino, Melissa Staiger, Bonnie Holton, Arlene Toth, Judy Bocchicchio, Leo Diaz, Glory D'Acunto, Josephine Brennan, Frank Trimboli, Gabrielle D'Acunto, Anthony Pelle, Jr, Joey Brune, Phillip Wenz, Robin Trombino, Mary Miniscalchi, Lane Morell, Frank Falesto, Jean Stein, Ann Rosetto, Elaine Stemmler, Tom Martin, Dorothy Palumbo, Jacob Rivera, Jaxson Rivera, Jennie D'Angelo, Paul Hetteroth, Cheryl Vega, Carol Spezzano, Michael Seiler, Shannon Hubert, Ronald Nuzzola, Ray Kijowski, Nicholas Biddle, Matthew Biddle, Dennis Shwiner, Laura Stoyer, Mike Scott, Andrew G Sabine, A.J. Sabine, Stephen Alexander, Angela Belmont

Contact the Parish Office to let us know of anyone to be remembered in prayer, so we may include them or, if they can be removed.

Readings for the Week - December 1, 2024

Monday, December 2, 2024 Is 2:1-5 Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9 Mt 8:5-11

Tuesday, December 3, 2024 Is 11:1-10 Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17 Lk 10:21-24

Wednesday, December 4, 2024 Is 25:6-10a Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6 Mt 15:29-37

Thursday, December 5, 2024 Is 26:1-6 Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a Mt 7:21, 24-27

Friday, December 6, 2024 Is 29:17-24 Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14 Mt 9:27-31

Saturday, December 7, 2024 Is 30:19-21, 23-26 Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8

Sunday, December 8, 2024 Bar 5:1-9 Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 Phil 1:4-6, 8-11 Lk 3:1-6

**Advent/Christmas/New Year
Schedule of Services**

†
First Sunday of Advent
Saturday, November 30 Mass 4:00 pm
Sunday, December 1 9:00 am & 11:00 am Mass

Advent Parish Penance Service
Wednesday, December 4
7:00 pm

Second Sunday of Advent
Saturday, December 7 Mass 4:00 pm
Sunday, December 8 9:00 am & 11:00 am Mass

Monday, December 9
Immaculate Conception (Holy Day)
9:00 am & 7:00 pm Mass

Daily Masses:
Monday – Thursday
9:00 am (through December 19)

Simbang Gabi – Christmas Novena, Rosary & Mass
Saturday, December 21
Rosary 6:30 pm
Mass 7:00 pm

Fourth Sunday of Advent (Sunday Obligation)
Saturday, December 21- 4:00 pm
Sunday, December 22 - 9:00 & 11:00 am

Monday, December 23
No 9:00 am Mass

Christmas Eve - Tuesday, December 24 (Holy Day)
4:00 & 10:00 pm

Christmas Day - Wednesday, December 25 (Holy Day)
9:00 am & 11:00 am

New Year's Eve - Tuesday, December 31
9:00 am

Solemnity of Mary - Wednesday, January 1
(Holy Day)
Mass 9:00 am & 7:00 pm

**FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP COLLECTIONS
NOVEMBER 11 - 17, 2024**

Total \$5,686.00

Thank you for your contributions as we support the ministries, programs and facilities of our parish.



Saturday, December 7 at 9:00 am
St Monica Parish Hall

All are invited to this wonderful event
hosted by our Knights of Columbus

Activities include:

- Christmas Pageant
- Hot Breakfast
- Raffles, Games, Activities
- Visit from Santa

So bring your family (and camera) to enjoy.

All are welcome.



Happy Birthday, Fr. Alex!

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Romans 15:13

December 1

CHRISTMAS MASS INTENTIONS

Intentions for the living and deceased will be remembered at all Christmas Masses. Intention envelopes were mailed in our Christmas mailing. Additional envelopes are available at the entrances to the church and from the Parish Office. Intentions may be returned in the collection basket or dropped off at the Parish Office no later than Dec 15.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 1, 2024

YOUTH CHRISTMAS SINGERS

The Youth of the parish will once again sing at the 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass!

**The remaining Rehearsal Schedule
Tuesdays @ 7 pm:**

- Dec. 3
- Dec. 10
- Dec. 17

Direct your questions to the Parish Office at
732-928-0279 or to
parishoffice@saintmonica.com



SOCIAL CONCERNS

St. Monica Social Concerns Ministry is displaying a **Christmas Giving Tree** with tags to help our local families in need. **Please return unwrapped gifts with their tags no later than Sunday, December 15.**

We are also looking for anyone wishing to **Adopt-a-Family** by donating a box of food for Christmas. Please see signup sheets at the back of the church for details.

Grocery gift cards are also welcome and may be placed in the collection baskets marked "Social Concerns Ministry." For questions, please contact the Parish Office. Thank you in advance for your generosity in helping these families.



ADVENT ACTIVITIES

In this double header, **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** will take place after the 9:00 a.m. Mass on Wednesday, December 4th.

In the evening on Wednesday, December 4th, parishioners will return to church for the **Advent Penance Service** to be held at 7:00 p.m.

Maybe you could think about your sins and transgressions in the morning during Adoration, and then confess your sins in the evening. No one is perfect all the time. Come clean up for Christmas.



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE SALES

The Knights of Columbus will be holding its annual **CHRISTMAS TREE FUNDRAISER** in support of St. Jude's Children's Hospital and other local charities.

Please visit us at our **new location Premier Design located at 138 N. County Line Rd. in Jackson**. Quality, freshly cut trees, grave blankets, and wreaths are available for purchase beginning November 29th while supplies last.

**Hours are weekdays 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm
and weekends 10:00 am to 8:00 pm**

New this year: a **HOLIDAY PHOTO STATION** & an **appearance by SANTA!** Please come out and support those in need this Christmas Season!

CALENDAR

Saturday, November 30

- 10:00 am Altar Server Training (Church)
- 3:15 pm Confessions
- 4:00 pm Mass

Sunday, December 1 - First Sunday of Advent

- 9:00 am Mass
- 11:00 am Mass
- 12:00 pm Women of St Monica Mtg (LC)
- 7:00 pm Adult Choir

Monday, December 2

- 9:00 am Mass
- 4:30 pm Rel Ed Class
- 6:15 pm Rel Ed Class

Tuesday, December 3

- 9:00 am Mass
- 5:30 pm Rel Ed Class
- 7:00 pm Yth Christmas Choir (Church)
- 7:30 pm Legion of Mary (LC)

Wednesday, December 4

- 9:00 am Mass
- 9:30 am Adoration
- 5:00 pm OCIA (Grp B - Parish Foyer)
- 5:30 pm OCIA (LC)
- 7:00 pm Advent Penance Service

Thursday, December 5

- 9:00 am Mass
- 10:00 am Grief Share Mtg (LC)
- 5:00 pm Bethlehem Practice (Church)

Friday, December 6

- 5:00 pm Bethlehem Practice (Church)
- 6:00 pm Youth Group Mtg (LC)

Saturday, December 7

- 9:00 am Breakfast with Santa (Parish Hall)
- 12:00 pm Baptism
- 3:15 pm Confessions
- 4:00 pm Mass

Sunday, December 8

- 9:00 am Mass
- 11:00 am Mass
- 7:00 pm Adult Choir

**Monday, December 9 - Immaculate Conception
Holy Day of Obligation**

- 9:00 am Mass
- 7:00 pm Mass
- No Religious Ed Classes
- Parish Offices Closed

The Diocese of Trenton
presents

George Frideric Handel's
Messiah
Part One

featuring the combined
choirs of the Diocesan Festival Choir &
the Choir of the Red Bank Oratory
with the Orchestra of St. Cecilia
under the direction of Shawn Mack

Sunday December 8, 2024 3:30 p.m.

Admission: Adults \$20
Seniors & Students \$15
under 8 free

(Tickets may be purchased
at the door or in advance online at
[https://dioceseoftrenton.org/
diocesan-festival-choir](https://dioceseoftrenton.org/diocesan-festival-choir))

For Further Information contact
St. Aloysius Church
935 Bennetts Mills Road,
Jackson, NJ 08527
Phone: 732-370-0500

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RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Aging religious need your help. "Your support acknowledges we continue the mission of Christ even in our retirement," say Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart Sister Celeste Burgos, 80.

Donations provide for the care, medicine and daily needs of over 24,000 senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests who have dedicated their lives to service.

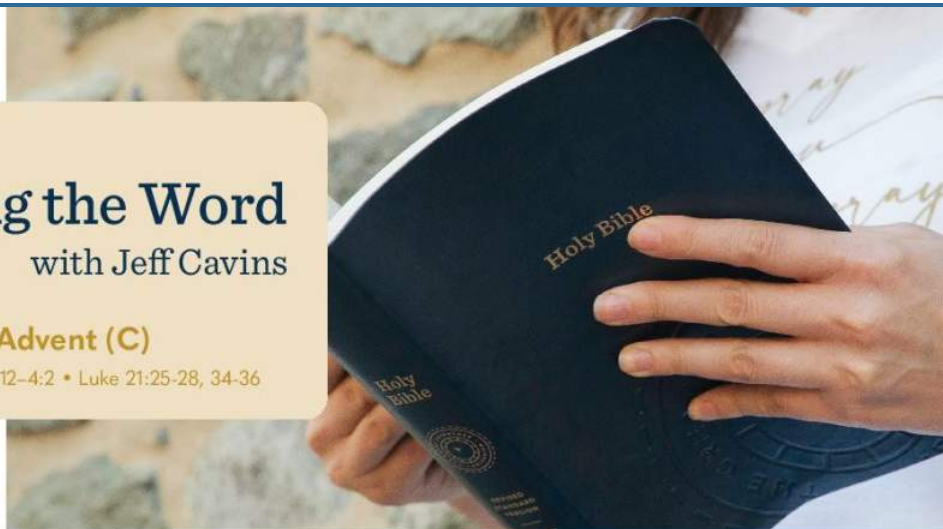
Please give to the Retirement Fund for Religious in the December 7 - 8 collection.

Encountering the Word

with Jeff Cavins

First Sunday of Advent (C)

Jeremiah 33:14-16 • 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2 • Luke 21:25-28, 34-36



An Advent like No Other

“Coming.” That’s the meaning of Advent. Today’s Scripture readings relate to the imminent arrival of the Lord. The Lord will come at Christmas, and further, he will come again at the end of time. Therefore, we must prepare for his sudden appearance.

The worries of life can cloud our thoughts, keeping us from paying attention to the days ahead. When I was growing up, my dad would invite me to the opening of fishing season. It seemed like it was forever, seven or eight months away, but before I knew it, the day was upon me. That’s what we see in today’s readings.

“The days are coming,” announces Jeremiah 33, while Luke 21 alerts us to signs in the heavens that the Lord is near. Anytime Scripture talks about the sun, moon, and stars, it is using figurative language. When Luke writes about time in this reading, he means time will be up at the end, and we will “see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” The Hebraic meaning of that biblical passage is “judgment.” To prepare for the arrival of the Lord, we must, Luke advises us to “be vigilant at all times,” lest our hearts be weighed down with dissipation and what one Bible translation calls “the anxieties of daily living.”

Luke says if your eyes are open and don’t allow the things of this world to cloud your judgment, you can begin to prepare to open your heart for the Lord this Christmas *and* at the end of time. I encourage you to make this an Advent like no other.



Adoration of the Child by Gerard van Honthorst

Live the Gospel

Jeff Cavins says, “As you enter the Advent season, to prepare your heart and separate yourself from distractions—for ‘the days are coming’ at Christmas and the end of time—I encourage you to pray a Holy Hour, go to Mass more regularly, and read Scripture. These activities will help you follow Luke’s advice and get ready to welcome the Lord. For, when the Lord comes, he has something very, very special for you. God bless you.”

Dive Deeper

Scan this code to watch:



Or go to:

<https://media.ascensionpress.com/video/first-sunday-of-advent-c/>

Ponder and Pray

» How am I preparing my heart for the coming of Our Lord?

Three horizontal lines for writing.

» Am I aware of the signs the Lord has put in my life to follow him?

Three horizontal lines for writing.

» Do I distract myself with worldly worries and excesses?

Three horizontal lines for writing.

“ Be vigilant at all times. ”
-Luke 21:36

Make It Your Own

You and others in your household may use this space to write anything about today’s Mass. Your view of Jeff Cavins’s reflection, your priest’s homily, your answers to the questions on this page—anything to help you and your household get the most out of today’s Mass.

Multiple horizontal lines for writing.

Jeff Cavins is the author of *The Bible Timeline: The Story of Salvation* and the creator of the video series *Sundays with Ascension*, from which this reflection was adapted. © 2024 Ascension Publishing Group, LLC. This product is intended for reproduction in parish bulletins in either electronic or printed form. Excerpts were taken from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, Second Typical Edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of the *Lectionary* may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner. This work is not for resale.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 1, 2024

PILGRIMAGE TO FINLAND, SWEDEN, DENMARK, NORWAY, ICELAND



Helsinki, Stockholm, Linköping, Varnhem Abbey, Gothenburg, Copenhagen, Tivoli Gardens, Oslo, Reykjavik

DAILY MASS WITH FR. ALEX ENRIQUEZ

September 01-13 2025, for 13 days. Tour Cost: \$4,899.00 LAND ONLY Plus Airfare \$1,000.00=\$5,899.00

Early Registration Discount \$200.00 if Registration & Deposit Submitted before January 10, 2025

Tour Price Includes

Hotel accommodation at tourist-class hotels. 2 nights on cruise. Daily breakfast and dinner, except Reykjavik. Round trip transfers from Airport to Hotel. All entrance fees in the itinerary. Touring in the itinerary with a deluxe air-conditioned motor coach. Daily Mass arrangements. Baggage handling at hotels. Only one piece of luggage per person. Hotel taxes and service charges. Not included: Lunches, gratuities for guides and driver and anything not mentioned.

ITINERARY

Day 1, September 01, Monday, Departure to HELSINKI (FINLAND)

Our pilgrimage begins as we leave our hometown for an overnight flight to Helsinki, Finland. Dinner and breakfast are served on board.

Day 2, September 02, Tuesday, Arrival to HELSINKI

Upon arrival, meet your driver and transfer to your hotel in Helsinki. Dinner and overnight in Helsinki.

Day 3, September 03, Wednesday, HELSINKI – STOCKHOLM (SWEDEN)

After breakfast, we will have a city tour of Helsinki. Famous sights include the Senate Square, Uspenski Cathedral, Parliament House, Finlandia Hall, Sibelius Park & Monument, and Underground Temple. Late afternoon, we will board an overnight cruise ship to Stockholm. Dinner and overnight on board.

Day 4, September 04, Thursday, STOCKHOLM

Scandinavian buffet breakfast is being served on board. After disembarkation, we will celebrate Mass at Saint Eugene or Saint Eric Church. After mass, we will start the 4-hour guided tour of Stockholm. Famous sights on the tour include the Royal Palace, the Parliament Buildings, the island of Djurgården, and the Old Town (Gamla Stan), with its narrow streets and numerous antique shops. The highlight of the tour is a visit to City Hall with its famous Blue and Golden Halls, where the Nobel Prize Banquet is held each year. After visiting the unique Vasa Ship Museum, free time for shopping in Stockholm.

Day 5, September 05, Friday, STOCKHOLM, LINKÖPING, VRETA ABBEY, MOTOLA

After breakfast, we will drive to Linköping to visit the Cathedral, located where a small church in the form of a cross was built in the 12th century. Then we will continue to drive to Vreta Abbey, founded at the beginning of the 12th century by King Inge the Elder and Queen Helena, at Pope Paschal II's request. The next visit is to Vadstena Abbey, Motherhouse of the Bridgettine Order, located on the shores of Lake Wetter. We will celebrate Mass at Vadstena Abbey. Dinner and overnight in Motola.

Day 6, September 06, Saturday, MOTOLA, VARNHEM ABBEY, GOTHENBURGH

After breakfast, we will drive to Sweden's oldest Christian place, Varnhem Abbey, where you'll find a churchyard from the Viking era, evidence of their conversion to Christianity over 1,000 years ago. We will continue to drive to Gothenburg to visit the splendid Botanic Gardens, one of the largest and best in Europe, with over 16,000 species of plants in different greenhouses and areas like the rock garden and herb garden. Dinner and overnight in Gothenburg.

Day 7, September 07, Sunday, GOTHENBURG – COPENHAGEN (DENMARK)

After breakfast, we will drive to Copenhagen. On the way, we will visit Lund Cathedral. The Cathedral was consecrated in 1145 and contains many well-known artifacts and features of considerable historical interest. Then, we will drive to Ystad to visit the Franciscan Ystad Monastery. Founded in 1267, this is the oldest medieval monastery in Sweden and, together with Vadstena Abbey, one of the best preserved. Dinner and overnight in Copenhagen

Day 8, September 08, Monday, COPENHAGEN

Today, we will explore Copenhagen; Meet Hans Christian Andersen's Little Mermaid gazing wistfully across the harbor, then visit the Christiansborg Palace, the seat of the Danish Government. Celebrate Mass at Saint Ansgar's Cathedral. Saint Ansgar is known for his missionary activities in Scandinavia, bringing the message of Christ to the people of these lands. After dinner, we will visit the world-famous Tivoli Gardens. Dinner and overnight in Copenhagen.

Day 9, September 09, Tuesday, COPENHAGEN – ROSKILDE – COPENHAGEN - OSLO (NORWAY)

After breakfast, we travel to Roskilde to visit the Cathedral, the earliest major ecclesiastical building in northern Europe. It is noteworthy for successive architectural styles used in the ancillary chapels and porches added over many centuries, during which it has served as the mausoleum of the Danish royal family. Then we will visit the fascinating Viking Ship Museum. At the end of the tour, we will return to Copenhagen to board our overnight cruise to Oslo. Enjoy a delicious Scandinavian buffet dinner on board on the way to Oslo.

Day 10, September 10, Wednesday OSLO

Scandinavian buffet breakfast is being served on board, as you sail up the exciting Oslo Fjord to reach the Norwegian capital. After disembarkation, We will celebrate Mass at Saint Olav's Cathedral, the primary Catholic sanctuary in Oslo. Pope John Paul II visited the Cathedral in 1989. After Mass, proceed for an Oslo tour to visit Frogner Park, Akershus Fortress, founded in 1299 during the reign of King Håkon V. The medieval castle was modernized and converted into a Renaissance royal residence. Dinner and overnight in Oslo.

Day 11, September 11, Thursday, OSLO – REYKJAVIK (ICELAND)

After breakfast transfer to Airport. Upon arrival at Keflavik Airport, transfer to the hotel in Reykjavik. Dinner on your own. Overnight in Reykjavik.

Day 12, September 12, Friday, REYKJAVIK

After breakfast, we will have a city sightseeing tour of Reykjavik including the town of Hafnarfjörður where we visit the Fish Market, the Open-Air Museum Arbær, one of the open-air swimming pools, and the towering Hallgrím's Church, old town, the harbor, the summit meeting house Höfði, and the House of Parliament. Afternoon visit the majestic waterfalls at Gullfoss and the famous erupting hot springs at Geysir with its colorful pools and leaping hot springs. Dinner on your own. Overnight in Reykjavik.

Day 13, September 13, Saturday, DEPARTURE -HOME

After breakfast, we will go to the Blue Lagoon, a mineral-rich azure lake where you can luxuriate in the warm, rejuvenating waters before we take our flight

For more information and reservations please contact

MARLENE & JUN OSMA (973) 953-5033 Email: marleneosma426@gmail.com

FR. ALEX ENRIQUEZ : (908) 902-7671 EMAIL: alexce101@msn.com

The Eucharist - St Monica**Masses & Reconciliation**

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am--3:30 pm
 Saturday 4:00 pm
 Sunday 9:00 & 11:00 am
 Holy Days As Noted
 Reconciliation: Saturday 3:15 - 3:45 pm
 1st Thursday of the month 7:00 pm
 or by appt.

Exposition of the Holy Sacrament & Benediction

1st Wednesday of each month 9:30 am
 1st Thursday of each month 7:00 pm with
 Confessions

Parish Office Hours

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Baptisms

Celebrated outside of Mass. Parents and godparents are required to attend our Baptism preparation program. Please call the Parish Office to register.

Visits to the Sick and Homebound

May be arranged by calling our parish office.

Knights of Columbus Council #11529

The Knights of Columbus were founded in 1882 by Blessed Father Michael McGivney. It an international order of more than 2 million Catholic men who are called to lead with faith, protect our families, serve others, and defend Catholic values in a busy changing world. St Monica Council #11529 has a long history of support for the parish and many local charities. If you would like to join, simply scan the QR Code or go to KofC.org/join and enter council #11529.

**St Vincent de Paul Society**

Emergency Assistance Helpline: 732-370-0098

Bereavement Ministry

Please contact the parish office for more information.

Grief Support

For those grieving the loss of a loved one or close friend. This is a Catholic centered Support Group offering a caring, compassionate, and confidential environment to support your journey from grieving to healing. For registration and details contact Deacon John White 848-992-1652 or dcjohnw@gmail.com

Youth Group

Open to all children of St Monica registered families and we would love to have you join us. For more information, call Theresa Calsetta 732-299-0261.

RCIA/OCIA*Rite/Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*

For those who are seeking full membership in the Catholic Faith, please contact the parish office.

New Parishioners

Welcome to our parish family! Registration forms may be downloaded at www.saintmonica.com Please contact the parish office for further info.

Adult Faith Formation Core Team

Our mission is to encourage and support parishioners in their lifelong learning in the faith in order to grow closer to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit through discipleship and evangelization.

Marriages

The Catholic Dioceses of New Jersey request a one year period of preparation for marriage in The Church. Contact the Parish Office to make arrangements.

Religious Education

Children are expected to receive a Catholic-Christian upbringing in their family life, to worship regularly at Sunday Mass, and to participate in on-going Religious Education classes. Our program includes grades 1-8. Please contact Karen Badach, Coordinator of Religious Education 732-928-4038 or stmonicaccd@yahoo.com

Legion of Mary

Members participate in the life of the parish through a program of prayers and service. The Legion of Mary is open to all Catholic men and women over 18 years of age who have the good will to want to serve God through Mother Mary. Meetings are at St. Monica every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. The Legion is always looking to recruit new members. If you discern a divine connection to the Blessed Mother, and feel she is calling you to join, please contact the Parish Office.

Women of St Monica

A Ministry of Catholic women of the parish striving to fulfill their spiritual needs, sharing their faith, promoting community, and conducting fundraisers throughout the year and enhance parish life in a variety of ways. Please contact the parish office for more info.



If you have been sexually abused as a minor by a member of the clergy or anyone representing the Catholic Church, or if you know someone who was, you can report that abuse through the diocesan ABUSE HOTLINE: 1-888-296-2965 or via email at: abuseline@dioceseoftrenton.org

Reflections on the Readings for the 1st Sunday of Advent - December 1, 2024

A NEW BEGINNING

The first Sunday of Advent is a new liturgical year and also a beginning for our own lives. So why does the Gospel reading for this day focus on endings, talking about the sun and moon darkening and the stars falling from the sky? These don't seem like very positive images, especially coming as they do right at the holiday season. Just when we are supposed to be preparing to celebrate Jesus's birth as the Messiah, we hear about what many Christians interpret as signs of the end of the world. What's going on here?

What we need to understand is that inherent in every beginning is also an ending. The Jewish believers who first heard Jesus make this prophesy would have understood its deeper metaphorical meaning, not that the literal End of Days was at hand, but that the world was about to experience an ending to an old way of life and the beginning of new life marked by hope and encouragement. They would have heard these words and remembered their own salvation history, how God brought down mighty kingdoms and raised up his people. They would have seen them as a sign of God's power and rejoiced, not just in what God has done in the past, but also in what he is doing in the present time.

That's the message we are supposed to get from these readings as well. Yes, we are told, we will have to endure suffering in this life, but the Son of Man, Jesus himself, has come into the world to transform and rescue us. The images we are shown are intended to give us encouragement, to bolster our faith and restore our confidence that God is working through the trials of our lives to set all things right. They are meant to give us hope that the Son of Man, who came once in the fullness of time, will come again in glory to make all things new.

PRAYER

Prayerfully consider the deepest worries and fears you carry in your heart. What are you most anxious about? Maybe it's something at work or in your family. Maybe it is a health or financial situation. In prayer, tell Jesus about your worries. Then imagine Jesus speaking to you the words from today's Gospel reading about him coming "in a cloud with power and great glory"—an image that reminds us that God is in control and he will come to set all things right. How might these words be a source of comfort for you in your troubles?

RESOLUTION

Reflect on one way you can live a more hope-filled existence this Advent season. Perhaps you need to trust more in God's goodness in your life, or maybe you need to make more time for prayer amidst the busyness of the season. Pay particular attention to the symbol of the Advent wreath, with three purple candles indicating sorrow and waiting, but one pink candle that is the reflection of the hope we have even in the midst of the trials of the world. |formed.org



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**Knights of
Columbus***

Daniel McGeehan
732-597-3832
daniel.mcgeehan@kofc.org



Contact me today to learn more.

*Knights of Columbus and its partners, Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors and Knights of Columbus Charitable Fund, are entities that each provide separate and distinct products and services. Financial retirement planning, life and disability income insurance, and personal philanthropy entail certain risks. Learn more at kofc.org/liveyourfaith
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& 2024
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