

CHURCH OF SAINT MONICA



DECEMBER 22, 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/
ParishofStMonica/](http://www.facebook.com/ParishofStMonica/)

Masses

Mon. to Thurs. 9 am

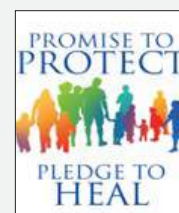
Saturday 4 pm

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.



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 22, 2024

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, December 21

4:00 pm Tony Biele (Debiak Family)

Sunday, December 22

9:00 am Grace Finnerty
(Janet & Thomas Noordzy)

11:00 am Jonathan Lanteri
(Dominick & Betty Dessino)

Monday, December 23

9:00 am Available

Tuesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

4:00 pm Christmas Mass Remembrances

10:00 pm Christmas Mass Remembrances

Wednesday, December 25 - Christmas Day

9:00 am Christmas Mass Remembrances

11:00 am Christmas Mass Remembrances

Thursday, December 26

9:00 am No Mass

Saturday, December 28

4:00 pm Intentions of Zia Gould

Sunday, December 29

9:00 am Frances Panicola
(Carle Family)

11:00 am Anne M Berardone
(Arlene Toth)

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 Gibblock, 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 22, 2024

Monday, December 23, 2024 Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14 Lk 1:57-66

Tuesday, December 24, 2024 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29 Lk 1:67-79

Wednesday, December 25, 2024 Is 52:7-10 Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 Heb 1:1-6 Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Thursday, December 26, 2024 Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17 Mt 10:17-22

Friday, December 27, 2024 1 Jn 1:1-4 Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Saturday, December 28, 2024 1 Jn 1:5-2:2 Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8 Mt 2:13-18

Sunday, December 29, 2024 Sir 3:2-6, 12-14, Ps 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10 Col 3:12-21 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24 Lk 24:1-52

PASTOR'S CHRISTMAS LETTER

*My Dear Parishioners,
This year as we once again welcome Christ into our lives, I offer this blessing for all of you:*

God our Father, help us to say "Yes" to you, like Mary and like Joseph, and allow your Son to find a home within our hearts.

May your word resonate within us, helping us to become Holy, as you are Holy.

May we, too, be wise and give our best to you, revealing your presence in this world, first and foremost to our families and to those around us, and then to the world.

And may the parish and families of the Church of St. Monica always find your favor and blessings. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Lord.

Amen!

Fr Alex



**FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP COLLECTIONS
DECEMBER 2 - 8, 2024**

Total \$7,489.18

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

Separate collection to Retired Religious \$ 629.00

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

†

Fourth Sunday of Advent (Sunday Obligation)

Saturday, December 21- 4:00 pm
Sunday, December 22 - 9:00 & 11:00 am

Monday, December 23

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

**The virgin will
conceive a child!
She will give
birth to a son
and will call him
Immanuel.**

ISAIAH 7:14



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 22, 2024

WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER



Christmas Gift?

Are you looking for the perfect Christmas gift for your spouse?

® Why not give yourselves a **Marriage Encounter Weekend!**

A Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend gives you the time and tools to enrich your marriage, deepen communication, and nourish the spirituality in your marriage.

The next Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend will be held:

**February 14 – 16, 2025 at
APA Hotel - Woodbridge
120 South Wood Avenue
ISELIN, NJ 08830**

Please apply ASAP as space is limited. Phone 1-732-904-9636 for application and information (Tom & Ruth DeFalco). Visit us at: www.wvme.org for more information.

ONLINE GIVING

Online Giving is a way to simplify your giving and provide steady, consistent support that helps St Monica be ready with programs, services and ministries for families in our community and the maintenance of our facilities. Your recurring gifts help strengthen our parish and sustain our ministries through the year. It's easy to get started. Here are the ways to sign up:

- Visit our website: www.saintmonica.com
- Scan the **QR code** below or
- Contact Liz Hills in the parish office **732-928-0279** or email: parishoffice@saintmonica.com



Thank you and may God bless your generosity.

SALT FOR BLESSINGS

There is a renewed interest today in the ancient sacramental of blessed salt. As in the case of all sacramentals, its power comes not from the sign itself, but by means of the Church's official prayer of blessing—a power the Church derives from Christ himself (*see Matt. 16:19 and 18:18*).

Blessed Salt is a sacramental. Bottles of salt for blessing to become Blessed Salt are for sale after all Masses during Advent. Jesus said to the disciples, "You are the salt of the Earth," in Matthew 5:13.

Blessed Salt can be used to: create a spiritual barrier in your home to ward off evil spirits; bless those in your charge; be sprinkled on your threshold or foundation; as food; or spiritual protection while traveling.

Each bottle is \$10. If you choose to purchase Blessed Salt or order several bottles to be used as gifts, AFTER its purchase, Father Alex or the Deacons will bless it.

This is a fundraiser to assist in church maintenance. What a great gift this would make for just about anyone! For questions, please contact Caroline White or the Parish Office.



CALENDAR

Saturday, December 21

Little Church Unavailable
 3:15 pm Confessions
 4:00 pm Mass
 6:30 pm Simbang Gabi Rosary/Mass

Sunday, December 22

Little Church Unavailable
 9:00 am Mass
 11:00 am Mass
 12:00 pm Decorate Church
 7:00 pm Adult Choir

Monday, December 23

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

Tuesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

No Religious Ed Classes
 4:00 pm Mass
 10:00 pm Mass
 Parish Offices Closed

Wednesday, December 25 - Christmas Day

9:00 am Mass
 11:00 am Mass
 Parish Offices Closed

Thursday, December 26

No 9:00 am Mass
 Parish Office Closed

Friday, December 27

8:30 am - 12:30 pm Little Church Unavailable

Saturday, December 28

3:15 pm Confessions
 4:00 pm Mass

Sunday, December 29

9:00 am Mass
 11:00 am Mass

Monday, December 30

9:00 am Mass
 No Rel Ed Class

Tuesday, December 31

9:00 am Mass
 No Rel Ed Class
 Parish Offices Closed

**Wednesday, January 1 - Solemnity of Mary
 Holy Day**

9:00 am Mass
 7:00 pm Mass
 Parish Offices Closed

Abr
 aham
 was the
 father of
 Isaac, and
 Isaac the
 father of Jacob,
 and Jacob the
 father of Judah and
 his brothers, and
 Judah the father of Perez
 and Zerah by Tamar, and
 Perez the father of Hezron,
 and Hezron the father of Ram,
 and Ram the father of
 Amminadab, and Amminadab the
 father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the
 father of Salmon, and Salmon the father
 of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of
 Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,
 and Jesse the father of David the king. And
 David was the father of Solomon by the wife of
 Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and
 Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father
 of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and
 Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of
 Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the
 father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah
 the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and
 Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his
 brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and
 Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and
 Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the
 father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud,
 and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan
 the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph
 the husband
 of Mary, of
 whom was
 b o r n

JESUS
who is called Christ.

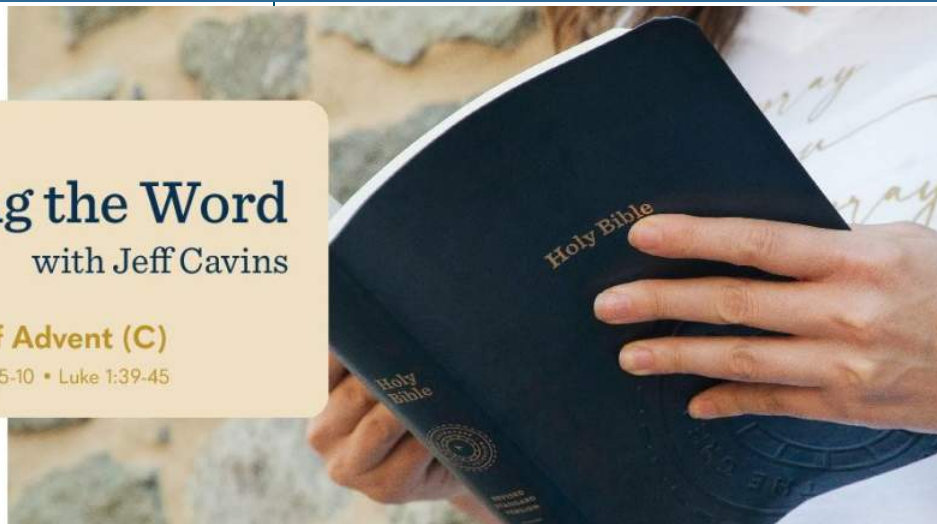
sacredsandwich.com

Encountering the Word

with Jeff Cavins

Fourth Sunday of Advent (C)

Micah 5:1-4a • Hebrews 10:5-10 • Luke 1:39-45



Blessed Are You!

We cannot completely understand the coming of Jesus if we don't comprehend the role his mother played. We see that the Blessed Virgin Mary is cast as the new Ark of the Covenant. The Ark, located in the Holy of Holies, was the center of Israel's worship. It was made of acacia wood with gold overlay. On top of the Ark was the mercy seat, with two cherubim looking at each other and their wings pointed toward one another. Inside the box were three important things: manna symbolized God's provision, the Ten Commandments represented God's Word, and Aaron's staff pointed to the high priestly line. God met with Israel right there, at the Ark of the Covenant.

In 2 Samuel 6, King David brings the Ark into Jerusalem, and we notice three things. One, they go into the hill country of Judea on the way in. Two, David dances joyfully before the Ark. Three, the king wonders how he is worthy enough for the Ark to come to him.

Now we come to today's Gospel and see the Visitation. Luke—using language identical to 2 Samuel 6—tells us that Mary is the new Ark of the Covenant. Like David, “Mary traveled to the hill country” to Judah, where she greeted Elizabeth. Her cousin heard Mary's greeting, and her child, John the Baptist, leaped, resembling David's dancing. Elizabeth's question—“How does this happen ... that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”—parallels King David's.

These biblical stories from the Old and New Testaments reveal powerfully that Advent is about us, the adopted sons and daughters of God, receiving the Word at Christmas. Jesus, the mighty one, blesses us. Merry Christmas!



The visitation scene from the life stories of Mary, by DeAgostini

Live the Gospel

Jeff Cavins says, “Elizabeth tells her cousin Mary, ‘Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.’ Blessed are *you* if you believe what the Lord has said to you. He gives us three beautiful gifts in the Messiah: the Word of God, the Eucharist, and access to the Father through Jesus, the great high priest. Advent is about receiving those gifts through Our Lord, thanks to the yes of Our Blessed Mother.”

Dive Deeper

Scan this code to watch:



Or go to:

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

Ponder and Pray

» Do I realize that the connections between the Old and New Testaments reveal that God had the plan for my salvation since the beginning of time?

Three horizontal lines for writing a response to the first question.

» Can I appreciate how blessed I am for the gift of receiving Jesus in the Eucharist?

Three horizontal lines for writing a response to the second question.

» How can I carry the gift of Jesus to others?

Three horizontal lines for writing a response to the third question.

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.

Five horizontal lines for writing a personal reflection.

“ Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. —Luke 1:42 ”

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.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 22, 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 Arber, 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 dcnjohnw@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 4th Sunday of Advent - December 22, 2024

SERVICE AND HUMILITY

Many Catholics are familiar with the story of Mary coming to greet Elizabeth—a scene known as “the Visitation.” But do we really understand its meaning? A simple recounting of two expectant mothers greeting each other is also a great lesson for us in both service and humility. Mary, newly pregnant after accepting the angel’s announcement that she would bear the “Son of the Most High” who would “reign over the house of Jacob forever,” ignores the demands of her own situation and travels in haste to assist her older relative Elizabeth, who is six months along in her pregnancy. Despite all the things that had to be on her mind, including the astonishing news that she was to bear the Messiah, Mary’s first action was to serve. When we are faced with things that are troubling or overwhelming, are we willing to look outside of ourselves and serve as Mary did?

Then there is Elizabeth. At six months, most mothers would be aware of sudden movements in the womb. But Elizabeth, on hearing Mary’s greeting, responds to the movement of the Holy Spirit, interpreting her child’s stirring as a leap of joy.

And she perceives why. Mary is the one “who is to give birth” to him who “shall be peace,” in the prophet Micah’s words. She is the one “who believed that what was spoken to [her] by the Lord would be fulfilled.” Elizabeth is immediately aware of her younger cousin’s privilege; significantly, though, Elizabeth is not jealous or envious, but accepts her role in the story of salvation with humility. Filled with the Holy Spirit, she greets Mary as “blessed among women” because of the child Mary carries. Mary’s visit is, for Elizabeth, a personal privilege, a pure joy: The mother of her Lord has come to her.

Two pregnant women. Two examples for us as we enter the fourth and final week of Advent.

PRAYER

Put yourself in today’s Gospel reading. Imagine that you are one of Elizabeth’s neighbors. You are at the well, drawing water for the day, when you see Mary, Elizabeth’s cousin, coming towards you on the road. You listen as Elizabeth greets Mary and exclaims, “How is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” You then realize that Mary is with child and is carrying the Lord himself in her womb! How do you feel knowing that the Lord is in your midst and has come to us even as a baby in the womb of Mary? What does this tell us about God’s love for us?

RESOLUTION

This week, take some time to reflect upon the reality that the Son of God became a baby and was really carried in Mary’s womb. What can you do this week to be Christ’s loving and humble presence to others? | [formed.org](https://www.formed.org)



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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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