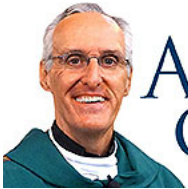


December 17, 2023 | Third Sunday of Advent



ALL  
OF US

Fr. Larry's  
Weekly Letter  
#544



"Father, can I buy you a Christmas cigar?"

That's what Teddy Merkle, my friend from childhood, asked me when we stepped into the downtown tobacco shop. The manly aroma wrapped around us like a straitjacket as we approached the main counter.

"Thanks, but I have to pass. I have 3rd Grade confessions today at 1:00 p.m. The kids will know right away if I come in a 'little smokey'."

Teddy smiled and suggested, "Just tell them you had a funeral in the morning, and that you had to incense the casket at the end of Mass."

When we were in grammar school, back in the 70's, Teddy and I were often called out of class by Sister Francine to serve a weekday funeral. We were her "A+ Altar Boys." Even back then I noticed that Teddy loved throwing in a ton of incense in the burner. I thought Teddy was trying to make us disappear in the thick smoke, or that he was trying to get Fr. Ed, our pastor, to turn green. This was the beginning of many bad habits for Teddy.

"It wouldn't be good to lie during Advent," I reminded him.

"Sorry, your right," he said. Then Teddy politely asked the girl behind the counter to slice a V-cut on the tip of the \$20 cigar he picked out. We then sat done in the puffy leather chairs in the small lounge. He gracefully fired up his thick stick.

"So... Father. Let me ask you." Teddy took a deep long drag on his cigar. The end of his cigar flashed brightly like Rudolph's nose. "This year, with Christmas Eve falling on a Sunday, does this mean I have to go to church twice on one day? Do I have to go in the morning for it to count for Sunday, and then again at night for Christmas Eve? Or... are you offering a '2 for 1' deal this year?"

I knew he was serious by the expression on his face.

I said, "Well...I can give you a '2 for 1.'" Just go to one of the Masses on Christmas Eve, but make sure you put two envelopes in the basket."

*Continued on the next page*

## *A family of families*

He silently sucked on his cigar. I could tell he was mulling over my answer, and thinking about how he would explain this to his family. I'm not quite sure this was the dispensation that he was looking for.

I decided to move onto another topic. I asked, "So, how's your Advent been going?"

"Good," he said. "I feel like I have been able to really get into it this year. I purposely made a commitment to slow down a little and try to be more attentive to what's going on around me."

"Has it worked," I asked.

"Yes," he said.

"How so?" I pushed him.

"Well. I really felt the Holy Spirit tugging at my heart this Advent," he said as he flicked his first set of fresh ashes into the clean tray. I sensed that he had something important to share.

"Sunday morning I went to Jewel to get some stuff. As I was entering the store, there was a young family from Venezuela standing outside looking for handouts. There was a mother and father in their mid-20's, and their baby girl who was no more than a year old bundled up in a stroller. At their feet was a simple cardboard sign that they made. It said, 'Please help.' I saw them, but I just walked right past them. I tried not to make eye contact. I just wanted to get in and out of the store."

Teddy paused to take another big puff on his cigar. He continued, "As I was walking through the aisles, I couldn't stop thinking about them. I thought to myself, here you have a young family, standing out in the cold, with hardly anything to their name. I suddenly felt a whole bunch of guilt come over me. I realized, I am here loading my cart with a bunch of stuff for the week, knowing that I'll easily spend probably a couple of hundred bucks with no problem. I also thought about how much money I had in my wallet. I was embarrassed when I remembered I had over \$100 in my pocket. I knew I had to give them something after checking-out."

"Did you?" I asked.

"I slipped them 30 bucks, knowing that it wouldn't phase me at all."

I was glad that Teddy gave more to them than his \$20 cigar. Sometimes a good dose of Catholic guilt is a good motivator.

Teddy continued, "They spoke no English. The father, Emilio, used an App on his phone to help translate my English into his Spanish. We went back and forth for a few minutes. I asked

them if they had a place to live. They said that they were staying at a hotel a few blocks away that was turned into a shelter. They had been in the country since July and have been living day to day since. I felt sorry for them. I realized I have everything I need in my life. I have so much, and here they are with practically nothing."

"That's great that you did that," I affirmed him, but he humbly ignored the compliment.

Teddy went on to say, "When I got home, I could not stop thinking about them. The image of them begging haunted me. I felt I had to do more. So I grabbed three cans of chicken soup. I heated them up nice and hot. I put them into glass jars and went back to the Jewel parking lot. They were surprised when I returned.

I tried to tell them to drink the hot soup right away so that they could stay warm. 'Pronto! Pronto!' I said. I even included a few gestures from the chicken dance to help them understand that it was chicken soup in the jars.

At first Emilio must have thought I was 'muy loco.' Finally, he started to laugh. I knew then that he got what I was saying.

I tell you Father, when I got home, I felt a whole lot better. This made my Advent. And the best thing is that I never told my family what I did. This was my little secret between me and God."

Teddy's encounter reminded me of the old scripture passage that says that, "God loves a joyful giver."

I bet every Christmas, we all get gifts that we don't really want, or need or can use; like an ugly sweater, another keychain, chocolates from a brand no one has heard of, and maybe a self-help book.

But remember, it's not so much about the gifts we get, it's more about the giver. When giving comes from our heart, it can truly be priceless- like 30 bucks and two jars of hot chicken soup on a cold Sunday.

Don't give until it hurts. Give because it feels good.

I was proud of Teddy, because in his own way, just for a brief moment, he made room in the inn for this family. He saw them as holy people.

May there be plenty of room in our hearts this Christmas!

*Fx. Larry*



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND ST. JOSEPH PARISH

# *2023 Christmas Season* MASS SCHEDULE

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## CHRISTMAS EVE – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH

4:00 p.m. Mass (Children's Liturgy) at St. Joseph Church – Fr. Larry Lisowski  
preceded by a Christmas Music Concert at 3:15 p.m.

5:00 p.m. Mass at Immaculate Conception Church – Fr. Larry McBrady

## CHRISTMAS DAY – MONDAY, DECEMBER 25TH

8:00 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph Church – Fr. Larry McBrady

9:30 a.m. Mass at Immaculate Conception Church – Fr. Larry Lisowski

11:00 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph Church – Fr. Larry McBrady

## FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31ST

5:00 p.m. Mass (Saturday night) at Immaculate Conception Church – Fr. Larry Lisowski

8:00 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph Church – Fr. Larry McBrady

9:30 a.m. Mass at Immaculate Conception Church – Fr. Larry Lisowski

11:00 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph Church – Fr. Larry McBrady

## NEW YEAR'S DAY – MONDAY, JANUARY 1ST

9:30 a.m. Mass at Immaculate Conception Church – Fr. Larry McBrady

11:00 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph Church – Fr. Larry Lisowski

## EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD – SUNDAY, JANUARY 7TH

5:00 p.m. Mass (Saturday night) at Immaculate Conception Church – Fr. Larry McBrady

8:00 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph Church – Fr. Larry Lisowski

9:30 a.m. Mass at Immaculate Conception Church – Fr. Larry McBrady

11:00 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph Church – Fr. Larry Lisowski



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION  
AND ST. JOSEPH PARISH

# Your holiday giving is important.

God calls us to be good and faithful stewards. Sharing our blessings helps us to build the Kingdom of God. As we approach Christmas and the year end, please review your parish contributions. Your financial support at this time is important, helping our parish pay its bills and continue the mission and ministry of Jesus.

There are many easy ways to give:

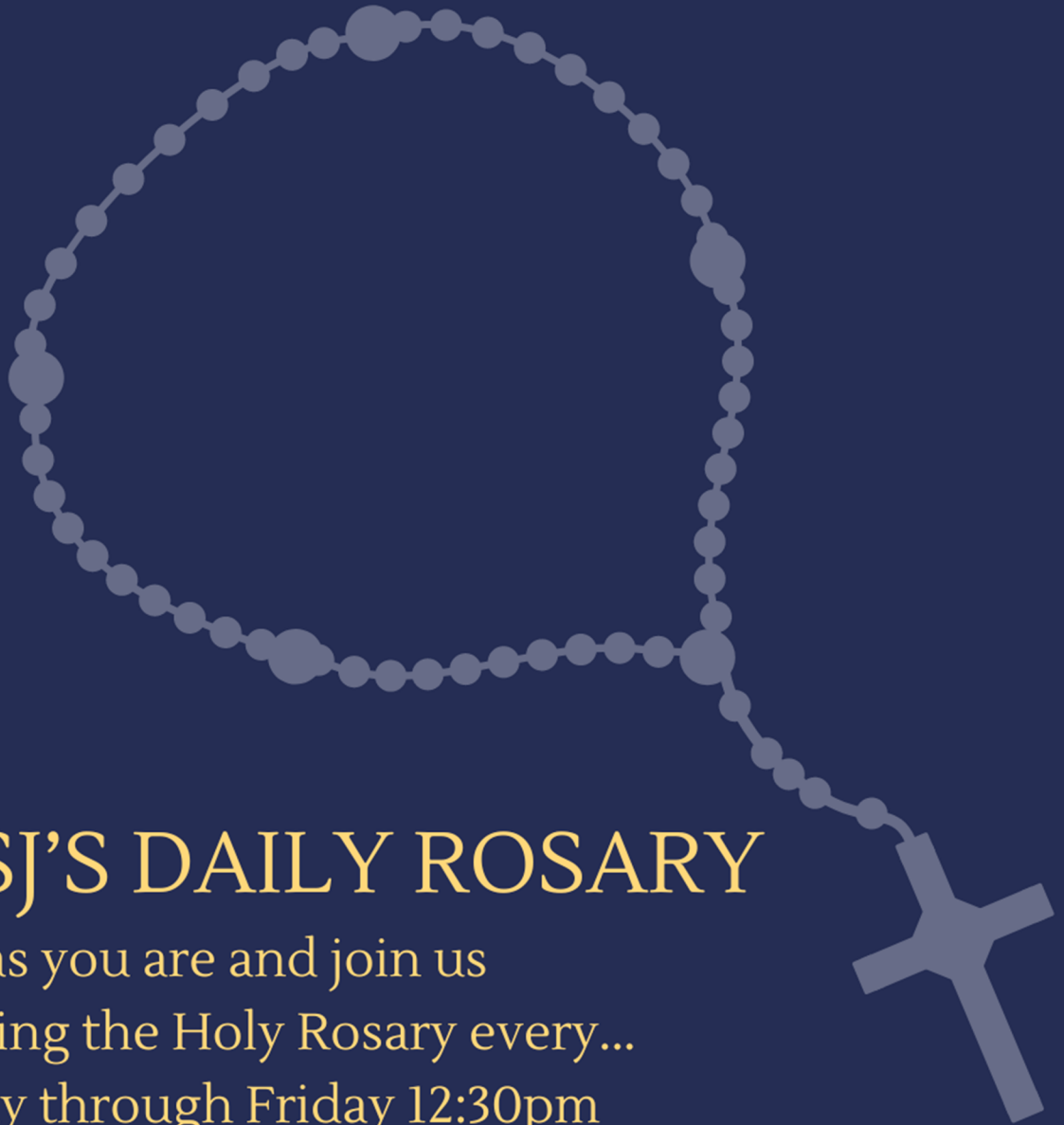


- 1. Make one-time or recurring contributions** on our GiveCentral page by using this QR code above or by visiting [www.rebrand.ly/GiveToday-To-ICSJ](http://www.rebrand.ly/GiveToday-To-ICSJ)
- 2. Send your gift with Venmo** to either [venmo@icsjparish.org](mailto:venmo@icsjparish.org) or the username ICSJ-Chicago.
- 3. Send a gift check my mail** to ICSJ Parish, 1107 N. Orleans Street, Chicago, IL 60610.
- 4. Take advantage of tax deductions** for this tax year if your gift is made on or before December 31st.
- 5. Gifts of stocks and other securities**, held more than one year, are excellent gifts. You may be able to deduct the stocks' fair market value and avoid paying capital gains tax on the appreciation of the stock.
- 6. Consider gifts from an IRA** as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).
- 7. Gift annuities** are an option for parishioners wishing to donate to their parish over a long time frame.
- 8. A matching gift donation from your employer** is an easy way to multiply your giving. Check to see if they offer this option.
- 9. Consider donating your time, talent and resources to the church or school!**  
Visit [www.icsjparish.org/mission](http://www.icsjparish.org/mission) for ideas on how you can "be the face of Jesus in today's world."

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Thank you for your loyalty and support!





## ICSJ'S DAILY ROSARY

Come as you are and join us  
in praying the Holy Rosary every...  
Monday through Friday 12:30pm  
Saturday and Sunday at 7:30am

**\*\*No experience needed. We will guide you.\*\***

**Pick up a card in the back of church that looks like  
this page for the zoom meeting ID and password or  
email Angela at [agore@icsjparish.org](mailto:agore@icsjparish.org) or  
call (312)787-7174 ext 1**

# The Feast of the Immaculate Conception CELEBRATION!



A good time was had by all at the festive reception following our

Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass on Friday, December 8th.



# C.L.O.W. in Advent!

*Children's Liturgy of the Word*



*Ages 4- 3rd Grade*

During the beginning of Mass, Children will hear the Word of God, pray with friends, and do a small craft related to the Gospel.

Children return to their parents' pews after the Prayers of the Faithful.

**December 3rd, 10th, and 17th**  
**9:30 Mass at Immaculate Conception**  
**led by ICSJ teacher, Kendra Yocom**



## Wisdom, Women & Wine Updates

### SERVICE PROJECT

Please join ICSJ's Wisdom, Women & Wine group share Christmas joy by donating something from the list below to support our neighbors at MADO Healthcare. MADO Healthcare partners with people who live with mental illness to offer hope in recovery and wellness.

We will be assembling 50+ Christmas gift bags for MADO residents. Donations can be dropped off at IC or SJ in boxes marked MADO by Sunday, December 17. The gift bags will be assembled on **Sunday, December 17th from 1:30pm-3:30pm** at St. Joseph Church.

#### **Suggested Donations:**

- **Toiletries: TRAVEL sized shampoo, body wash, deodorant, lotion, etc.**
- **Individually wrapped snacks or candy**
- **Men's socks**
- **Women's gloves**
- **Dollar store treasures**

### BOOK CLUB

The next WWW Book Club is on **Friday, January 26th at 3:30pm**. We will be discussing *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride.

To RSVP for either of these events or for any questions, please email Colleen at [cm.424.svd@gmail.com](mailto:cm.424.svd@gmail.com)

## KnitWits

We are a group of knitters and crocheters who have been getting together for several years. Our purpose is to make baby blankets, hats and/or 8x8 squares for an organization called Children's Place



[www.childrens-place.org](http://www.childrens-place.org). One of their many services helps newborns who are brought to this facility if their parent(s) cannot care for them. The babies either go into the foster system, or are adopted. In some cases, they do go back to their birth parent(s).

If you enjoy knitting and/or crocheting (or would like to learn), join us! We get together at St. Joe's once a month. Our next KnitWit gathering is

**Monday, December 18th 10AM-1PM.**

You can come for a half hour, a couple hours or for the entire time...whatever fits your schedule. Or, you can make a blanket, a hat or 8x8 squares at your convenience and drop off at IC or SJ. If you have any questions, please leave a message for me at ICSJ or send an email to me, Kathy at [kmust1@yahoo.com](mailto:kmust1@yahoo.com).

**Mark your calendar  
with our future dates...**

January 15 2024  
February 19 2024  
March 18 2024  
April 15 2024  
May 20 2024  
June 17 2024

## WARNING - SPAM EMAIL ALERT

Fr. Larry, Fr. McBrady and the parish staff do not solicit individuals for gift cards or money via email or text. We have had several reports from parishioners receiving spam emails from Fr. Larry. The emails look legitimate with a picture and full signature but they're not! Please mark them as "Spam" or "Phishing."





# DOLPHIN DAYS

NEWS FROM IMMACULATE CONCEPTION - ST. JOSEPH

## COME TOUR OUR STELLAR SCHOOL!

Prospective families are invited for a personal tour of our school to meet teachers, students, and school leaders, and to hear what everyone loves about ICSJ School!

### CALL OR USE THIS QR TO CONNECT

Jodi Thyen, our Director of Marketing and Admissions can be reached at 312-944-0304!



### APPLICATIONS STILL BEING ACCEPTED

We are currently accepting applications at all grade levels for the 2024-25 school year. The online application can be found on our website or by scanning the QR code to the right.



APPLY

### INTERESTED IN COACHING?

We are currently looking for volunteers to coach Co-ed Track & Field as well as Girls Volleyball. These are both spring sports and the students range from 4th-8th grade. Contact Jared Sterenberg at [jsterenberg@icsjschool.org](mailto:jsterenberg@icsjschool.org).

## ST. NICHOLAS CAME FOR A VISIT...AND, CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2ND GRADERS!

On Wednesday, December 6, St. Nicholas paid our North Park Campus friends a visit, bringing goodies and telling stories about how he lived his life putting others ahead of himself and donating to those in need. Here is is with our 2nd graders who also celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation last Saturday! Congratulations and blessings to 2nd Grade!



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION  
ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

## TOT PROGRAM

**TRY A FREE CLASS!**  
Contact Jodi  
at 312-944-0304  
Ext. 312

A fun, social, and learning experience for Toddlers ages 2+ along with their caregiver

**TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS**

9:30 – 11 am

**ICSJ NORTH PARK CAMPUS**

1431 N. North Park Avenue

**REGISTER TODAY!**

[www.icsjschool.org](http://www.icsjschool.org)



Learn more about Immaculate Conception-St. Joseph School at [www.icsjschool.org](http://www.icsjschool.org)!



## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Nancy Gies  
Parish Business Manager



# Have you considered a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)?

A QCD gift (a.k.a. IRA charitable rollover) allows individuals age 70½ or older to authorize their IRA administrator to make a direct transfer of funds from their IRA to qualified charities, tax-free. This way of giving does not generate taxable income, which may lower your annual income level. If you are age 72 or older, the amount you transfer may count towards your required minimum distribution.

If you would like more information on how to make a QCD gift to Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph Parish please contact: Nancy Gies at [ngies@icsjparish.org](mailto:ngies@icsjparish.org) or (312) 787-7174 ext 7.

## Sign up for eGiving

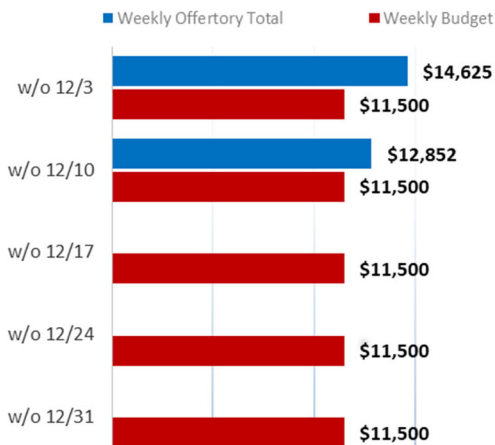
eGiving is a secure and convenient way of giving to Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph parish. It is eco-friendly and cost-saving. Just click **HERE** and to make your one-time, weekly, or monthly donation.

To all our faithful parishioners who give their time, talent and treasure— thank you for your generosity!

## Get Involved

Check out all the opportunities here at ICSJ parish, click **HERE**. Or let's set up a coffee so we can get to know each other, your talents and strengths and where they might be used best here at ICSJ. Contact Elly Rodriguez at [erodriguez@icsjparish.org](mailto:erodriguez@icsjparish.org) or (312)787-7174 ext 4.

### Weekly Offertory - December 2023

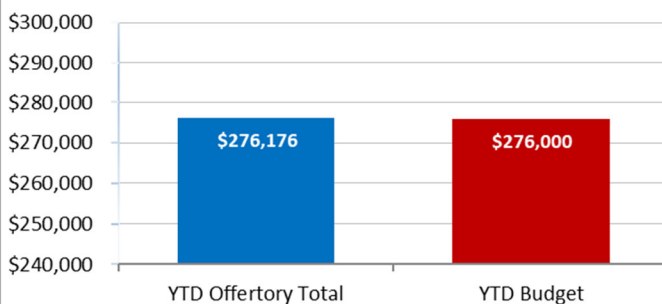


The parish budget requires over one weeks' worth of collections just to cover parish utilities, maintenance, and insurance each month.

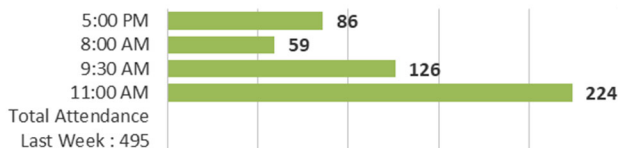
**It takes \$3,093 per day to run our parish.**

### Fiscal Year Budget to Date

Parish Fiscal Year runs from July 1 through June 30



### Attendance for 12/9 & 12/10





# Mass Intentions

week of December 16-22

## Saturday, December 16

5pm at Immaculate Conception with

Fr. Larry McBrady:

**Karen Carpino**

**Bijan Rafie**

## Sunday, December 17

8am Mass at St. Joseph with

Fr. Larry Lisowski:

**Charles "Stormy" Keller**

## Sunday, December 17

9:30am Mass at Immaculate Conception with Fr.

Larry McBrady:

**Brent Laso**

**Sharon Mocerri**

## Sunday, December 17

11am Mass at St. Joseph with

Fr. Larry Lisowski:

**Kathy Marconi Kane**

## Monday, December 18

9am Mass at St. Joseph with Fr. Larry Lisowski:

**Mary Fran Brennan**

## Wednesday, December 20

9am Mass at St. Joseph with Fr. Larry Lisowski:

**Shirley Appleget**

## Friday, December 22

9am Mass at St. Joseph with Fr. Larry McBrady:

**For the well-being of Janet Lyman**

# What is a Mass Intention?

Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph parish offers the possibility for you to request that a Mass be celebrated for a particular intention. Requesting a Mass intention means that you are asking that the grace of Christ's sacrifice in his death and resurrection be applied for a particular purpose, for example, for a deceased person or a living person who is ill or in thanksgiving for a favor received. An intention can also be made for an occasion of a birthday, anniversary or special need, or it can be directed to a cause, such as an increase of vocations or respect for life. Usually, a single intention is attached to a given Mass. But it is also possible to gather several intentions in one Mass with exactly the same effect.

To request a Mass Intention, please visit [www.icsjparish.org/mass-intentions](http://www.icsjparish.org/mass-intentions) or call Angela at the parish office (312)787-7174 ext 1.

# Prayer Request

Every month, we receive dozens of prayer requests on our website. No matter where you live in the world, you are invited to share your needs with those who have committed to pray on your behalf. Please visit [www.icsjparish.org/the-prayer-connection](http://www.icsjparish.org/the-prayer-connection) to submit a prayer Request. To join our ICSJ prayer ministry, email Angela at [agore@icsjparish.org](mailto:agore@icsjparish.org)

# Sacrament of Reconciliation

Consider taking advantage of celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Going to confession is great for one's soul. Receive the wonderful gift of healing and peace that our God longs for us to have in our life.

Contact Fr. Larry, at [pastor@icsjparish.org](mailto:pastor@icsjparish.org), to schedule a time to meet.



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION  
AND ST. JOSEPH PARISH

*A family of families*

## OUR VISION

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

Inspired by God's great love,  
we are called to be the  
face of Jesus in today's world,  
welcoming all to  
our Family of Families,  
and walking as disciples  
through our works of  
compassion and mercy.

## OUR MISSION

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

We will be  
disciples on a joyful mission,  
constantly committed  
anew to praying,  
serving, growing, sharing  
and belonging  
in Jesus' name.

Be the  
Face of Jesus  
and change  
the world!



PRAY

Imagine having a deep, rich prayer life  
which brings clarity, comfort, hope and joy  
into your life and to others!



GROW

Imagine feeling really close with God,  
who loves you always!



SERVE

Imagine being God's hands and feet in  
this world, that desperately needs  
help and healing!



SHARE

Imagine brimming with faith and God's love  
so that it spills over into every relationship  
and aspect of your life!



BELONG

Imagine creating a diverse, loving community  
where everyone is welcomed and  
appreciated for who they are!

Visit [icsjparish.org/mission](http://icsjparish.org/mission)  
for ideas on taking the next step!





# Welcome

Inspired by God's great love, we are called to be the face of Jesus in today's world, welcoming all to our Family of Families, and walking as disciples through our works of compassion and mercy.

## Our Two Places of Worship



### Immaculate Conception Church

1431 N. North Park Avenue, Chicago, IL 60610



Free parking available in church parking lot; street parking also available.

### St. Joseph Church

1107 N. Orleans Street, Chicago, IL 60610



Street parking available; free parking available across the street at ICSJ School, 363 W. Hill St.

## Mass Schedule

### Sunday

8:00 a.m. – St. Joseph Church

9:30 a.m. – Immaculate Conception Church

11:00 a.m. – St. Joseph Church

### Saturday

5:00 p.m. – Immaculate Conception Church

### Monday • Wednesday • Friday

9:00 a.m. – St. Joseph Church

## Contact Us

Parish Office: 312-787-7174 • Visit Us Online: [www.icsjparish.org](http://www.icsjparish.org)

### Main Office

1107 N. Orleans Street, Chicago, IL 60610

### Main Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday  
9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (closed Thursday)

### North Park Office

1431 N. North Park Ave, Chicago, IL 60610

### North Park Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday 4:00-8:00 p.m.,  
Saturday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

For questions regarding Weddings, Registration, Mass Intentions, Baptisms, Giving, volunteering, and other general information, please visit our website or call the Parish Office.

## Follow ICSJ Parish on Social Media



@icsjparish (Parish)



@i.do.at.icsj (Weddings)



@icsjparish

## Staff Directory

### Pastor

Rev. Lawrence Lisowski  
[pastor@icsjparish.org](mailto:pastor@icsjparish.org)  
312-787-7174, ext. 5

### Senior Priest

Rev. Larry McBrady  
312-787-7174

### Deacon

Neil Rogers  
[nrogers@icsjparish.org](mailto:nrogers@icsjparish.org)  
312-787-7174, ext. 6

### Business Manager

Nancy Gies  
[ngies@icsjparish.org](mailto:ngies@icsjparish.org)  
312-787-7174, ext. 7

### Sacramental Coordinator

Kevin O'Connell  
[koconnell@icsjparish.org](mailto:koconnell@icsjparish.org)  
312-787-7174, ext. 2

### Director of Music

Kate Ryan  
[kryan@icsjparish.org](mailto:kryan@icsjparish.org)  
312-787-7174, ext. 9

### ICSJ School Co-Principal

Katie Sullivan  
[ksullivan@icsjschool.org](mailto:ksullivan@icsjschool.org)  
312-944-0304, ext. 3

### ICSJ School Co-Principal

Heather Lux  
[hlux@icsjschool.org](mailto:hlux@icsjschool.org)  
312-944-0304, ext. 4

### Maintenance Supervisor

Colm Murphy  
[cmurphy@icsjschool.org](mailto:cmurphy@icsjschool.org)  
312-787-7174

### Parish Coordinator, Bulletin Editor

Angela Gore  
[agore@icsjparish.org](mailto:agore@icsjparish.org)  
312-787-7174, ext. 1

### Director of Evangelization & Events

Jutta Keenan  
[jkeen@icsjparish.org](mailto:jkeen@icsjparish.org)  
312-787-7174, ext. 8

### Assistant to the Pastor

Elly Rodriguez  
[erodriguez@icsjparish.org](mailto:erodriguez@icsjparish.org)  
312-787-7174, ext. 4

### Outreach Ministries Coordinator

Allie Klazura  
[aklazura@icsjparish.org](mailto:aklazura@icsjparish.org)  
312-787-7174, ext. 3

### Assistant to the Director of Music

Josephine Stracek  
[jstracek@icsjparish.org](mailto:jstracek@icsjparish.org)  
312-787-7174

### Evening/Weekend Receptionist

Sherrine Manning  
312-787-7174, ext. 0