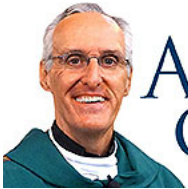


December 3, 2023 | First Sunday of Advent



ALL
OF US

Fr. Larry's
Weekly Letter
#542

BE NOT AFRAID... GOD ALWAYS LOVES YOU

A couple of years ago I met with our 2nd Graders who were preparing to celebrate their First Confession. I reassured them that there was nothing to be afraid of when it comes to confessing your sins because God always loves us and forgives us, no matter what we do. Going to confession is a good thing and we should consider it a great opportunity to celebrate.

I reminded the kids of the classic story of the prodigal son who is welcomed back home by his father who had been waiting for his return every day. Once they are reunited, the father throws a huge party because his son, who was lost, was now found.

I tried to impress upon the young kids that we all need forgiveness in our life. I told them that even Fr. Larry goes to confession. They were not surprised.

I then bravely asked, "Okay... well... what kind of sins do you think Father Larry has?"

One boy raised his hand and said, "You argue with your wife!"

I said, "No, not really. But... I do argue with my older brother." (*I was glad that I didn't have to explain the vow of celibacy to them.*)

The white candles that you see burning in the sanctuary this weekend represent the 27 children who just celebrated their First Reconciliation on Saturday. We are so happy and proud of them. This is their second "Big Sacrament" in their innocent journey of faith.

Relationships are so important in our life. We learn this at a very early age. They have the power to shape and form us. They sustain us and give us life. When they break, we lose part of ourself until they get fixed. Our life is just not right until there is healing and forgiveness. Until forgiveness happens, it is very hard to move on.



This Advent, consider taking advantage of the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Continued on the next page

Fr. Larry McBrady and I will be available to hear confessions next **Saturday, December 9th at Immaculate Conception Church from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon; and from 4:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.** Even if it is has been many years since your last confession, be not afraid. We will help and guide you through it.

Going to confession offers us a wonderful gift of healing and peace that God longs for us to have. It is a great way to relieve the heaviness we feel deep in our hearts especially when we know we hurt the ones that we love the most.

You can also schedule an individual confession. Feel free to contact me at pastor@icsjparish.org, or Fr. Larry McBrady at lmcbrady@yahoo.com to set-up an appointment.

If you feel awkward coming to Fr. McBrady or myself, our neighboring parishes have the following reconciliation schedules.

Holy Name Cathedral
(Chicago Avenue and State Street)
Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

St. Michael's in Old Town
(1633 N. Cleveland)
Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. to 8:45a.m.
and 11:30 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.
Saturdays, 4:15 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

IMMACULATE MARY YOUR PRAISES WE SING

On Friday December 8th we will celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is recognized as a holy day in which we are expected to attend Mass. Masses will be celebrated in our parish as well as our neighboring Catholic parishes.

Holy Name Cathedral at 7:00 a.m.

St. Michael's Church in Old Town at 8:00 a.m.

St. Joseph Church at 9:30 a.m.
Fr. Larry McBrady
(also the Children's Liturgy for ICSJ Students)

Holy Name Cathedral at 12:00 noon

Immaculate Conception Church at 6:00 p.m.
Reception Afterwards
Fr. Larry Lisowski

LOTS TO DO THIS ADVENT

There will be plenty of opportunities for prayer, reflection and service as we journey through Advent. Our parish website: icsjparish.org will have all the details for the following events. Here is a list of some of things coming up.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception
Friday, December 8th

Advent Morning of Reflection
Saturday, December 9th

Advent Individual Confessions
Saturday, December 9th

Children's Liturgy of the Word
at our Sunday 9:30 a.m. Masses

Christmas Giving Tree Program

Christmas Concert
Sunday, December 10th

Visit to our Sharing Parish,
(Mother of the Americas)
for the
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
Tuesday, December 12th

A REAL GOOD MIX

At our Thanksgiving Day Mass in the morning, at St. Joseph's church, I noticed something very beautiful. There was a real mix of parishioners who came to church. The diverse crowd consisted of senior citizens, young adults, young parents with their newborn, school families and visitors from out of town.

It was great to see those who usually attend Mass at Immaculate Conception feel comfortable and flexible to pray in a different pew, in a different church. This is a nice simple sign that we are gracefully striving to be a **"Family of Families."**





Jesus calls to you this Christmas season to “lie down in green pastures” (Psalm 23:1).

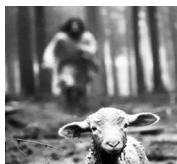
Be Watchful! Be Alert!

Mark 13:33-37 : *A call to action*

Today, we begin the season of Advent in preparation for Christ’s first coming; his birth. Christmastime is a beautiful reminder that Jesus calls each of us home to Him. Especially those who have felt lost, abandoned, confused, angry... Jesus calls to you. Let Him fill you with the promises of peace, joy and love this season.

In our gospel today, Jesus provides the reason we should be alert: we “do not know when the time will come.” He explains further that we are not just waiting passively for his coming; rather, we have been entrusted with work, God’s work, according to each of our abilities. How will we prepare our hearts, using our God-given talents, to seek the Lord?

Christ invites us *individually* to prepare our hearts. In what ways do you feel called to answer this call in your own life? What are the talents unique to you, that you can use to bring yourself and others closer to faith this season? Spend some time in reflection this week (as Fr. McBrady says, “Pause!”) to ask Jesus how you are called to prepare your heart for His coming at Christmas.



Shepherds were different from hired keepers who would abandon their sheep at the first site of danger. In contrast, the shepherd protects and defends the sheep at all cost, even risking his life. **Jesus is our great shepherd.** He calls to you, his wondrous masterpiece, his flock.

Singing praise with childlike wonder

Reflections on preparing our hearts and minds this advent season

It is no secret that so much of the Christmas season brings about nostalgia for sweet holiday memories and time spent with loved ones. It is a time of year that people of all ages are invited to enjoy the childlike things in life: decorating cookies, singing Christmas carols, frolicking in the snow – insert your favorite merry-making activity here. The holiday season allows for a certain level of leniency and good cheer; it’s a free pass to experience the joys of childhood, even as an adult.

This same childlike joy is exactly the kind of mindset that can help prepare our hearts for Christ’s birth. Like the child who patiently awaits Santa Clause to bring the gifts at the top of their wish list, let us humbly bring our deepest desires before Christ. The excitement of gift giving and gathering during this time can also elicit a desire for bigger, better, more. There is pressure to give in to the greed and gluttony of this time. It is St. Thérèse who reflects that we must do the opposite: “For I do not need to grow, on the contrary...I must become smaller and smaller.” (*Saint Thérèse of the Infant Jesus*, Paris, 1998, 244.) Her reflection is a desire to make room for Christ. By “making ourselves smaller”, (humbling ourselves before God), we allow Him to fill us with His great promises.

It may seem as though these two themes are at odds with one another, but there is certainly room to learn from both. As we lean into our childlike wonder and awe of the miracle of Jesus’ birth, let us humble ourselves (“becoming small”) in the ways that we choose to give and celebrate. How can we bring our faith into our own traditions and the lives of others this season?

Scripture Snippet

“Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” Mt 18:3

Immaculate Conception St Joseph Parish First Reconciliation Recipients December 2nd, 2023



**Quinn Anderson
Theodore Bartlett
Marco Berroya
Juliet Brusznicki
Elinor Brusznicki
Morgan Coduto
Erin Courtney
Nash Franz
Katherine Goetz
Andrew Goetz
Delaney Holtrop
Ada Iams
Evelyn Keese
Andrew Lindeke**

**Macie Lomas
Santino Lopez
Angelo Maggioni
Hunter Mickelson
John Pensinger
Avery Perez
Harper Seals
Jacob Shim
Eloise Skawski
Isabella Speh
Colette Tole
Maria Tollinche
David Vieyra**

CELEBRATE



The Feast of the Immaculate Conception

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8TH

6PM MASS IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

REFRESHMENTS & APPETIZERS

AFTERWARDS IN THE JOY ROOM

Advent Morning of Reflection

with Fr. McBrady and Elly Rodriguez
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9TH @9-11AM

How the Birth of Jesus
continues to unfold today

A large, stylized silhouette of a nativity scene is centered in the background. It features a manger with the infant Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, all set within a stable structure. The scene is decorated with several five-pointed stars and a crescent moon in the upper right corner.

**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH
BREAKFAST AND COFFEE AT 8:30AM**

ICSJ's 2023



GIVING TREE

NOV. 18TH - DEC. 10TH

Help make this Christmas merry and bright for the families of the incarcerated via Kolbe House Jail Ministry, our parish refugee families and our sharing parish, Mother of the Americas. With the help of Santa's Volunteers and the Knights of Columbus, we will also be supporting families in need in our neighborhood via Art on Sedgwick, families of Blessed Maria Gabriella Church, families of Union Baptist Missionary Church, and ICSJ's Food Pantry families.

We are utilizing an online sign up system for gifts. Tags will be on trees in both churches, but do not have gifts listed on them. Rather, each tag has the link and QR code listed here, and by following either you are able to review the options and sign up for the gift(s) you'd like to give. Therefore, it is not necessary to have a tag to give a gift; simply sign up online! Please note that while many spots list several gifts, these are simply for ideas and not obligatory for purchase. The recommended amount per spot is \$25-\$50.

When returning your gift(s), please return wrapped and print the confirmation email sent to you by SignUp to attach to your gift. If you don't have printer access, please label the gift with your name and its contents.

Thank you for your generosity this holiday season.

VISIT rebrand.ly/giving-tree



Gifts can be returned at the Masses on 11/25&26, 12/2&3, 12/9&10, or at the SJ Parish Office at 1107 N Orleans M,W, or F from 10-3. **All gifts must be returned by 12/10.** For more information, help signing up for a gift, or with any questions, please contact Allie at aklazura@icjsparish.org

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

at our Sharing Parish, Mother of the Americas
3047 W Cermak Rd., Chicago, IL 60623

Ways to Join in the Celebration:

Novenas - Rosary & Mass

Dec. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11: 6pm

Dec. 10: 5pm

Saturday, December 9th

Feast of San Juan Diego
with Bishop Bartosic

4:00pm - Rosary

5:00pm - Mass

Tuesday, December 12th

5:00pm - Mass

6:30 -7:30pm - Native
Dancers

**If you would like a ride,
please email Allie at
aklazura@icsjparish.org
by 12/8



Saturday, December 16th

2:00pm - Concert

For more information please visit:
motheroftheamericas.org
or call: 773-521-8400

ICSJ MUSIC MINISTRY PRESENTS

Tunes

ON A SUNDAY
AFTERNOON

A CONCERT SERIES

December 10th
Lessons & Carols
for Christmas

The ICSJ Music Ministry presents a *Tunes on a Sunday Afternoon*, a series of free community concerts featuring the talents of our ICSJ choir members and musicians, and other special guests.

JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT PERFORMANCE!



Sunday, December 10th. 2pm
St. Joseph Church

LESSONS & CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS

'Tis the season! Join the Music Ministry team for a sing-a-long of all of your favorite carols



YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE SERIES IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!
SCAN THE QR OR VISIT ICSJPARISH.ORG/TUNES



Thank you all for attending and donating to this year's fundraiser "Raising Up Our Faith". Due to your generosity we netted \$35K and only have \$15K to go for the replacement of the IC church doors and renovation of the entryway. Click **HERE if you would like to help us reach our goal.**

We are currently finalizing vendor bids and will have a construction timeline in place by early January.

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. 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.

**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
July 15 2024
August 19 2024
September 16 2024
October 21 2024
November 18 2024
December 16 2024

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



URGENT SCHOLARSHIP HELP NEEDED for Catholic Schools

**Please make a gift to safeguard the
future of Catholic education.**



With the sunset of the Invest in Kids Tax Credit Scholarship program, thousands of Catholic school families cannot keep their children in school.

Thankfully, supporting scholarships has never been easier. Please visit archchicago.org/scholarships to make an online gift to any school in the Archdiocese of Chicago.





DOLPHIN DAYS

NEWS FROM IMMACULATE CONCEPTION - ST. JOSEPH

COME IN FOR A GROUP ADMISSIONS TOUR

Join us for a group tour to meet our teachers, students, and school leaders, and to hear some of our current ICSJ parents tell you what they love about ICSJ School!

UPCOMING GROUP TOUR DATES

Wednesday, November 29 | 9-10 am
Monday, December 4 | 9-10 am



RSVP

APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

We are currently accepting applications at all grade levels for the 2024-25 school year. The recommended submission deadline is **December 8**.

Applications submitted prior to December 8 will receive priority status with an admissions decision provided before Christmas break. To apply, please scan the QR to get to our website.



APPLY

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

TOT PROGRAM

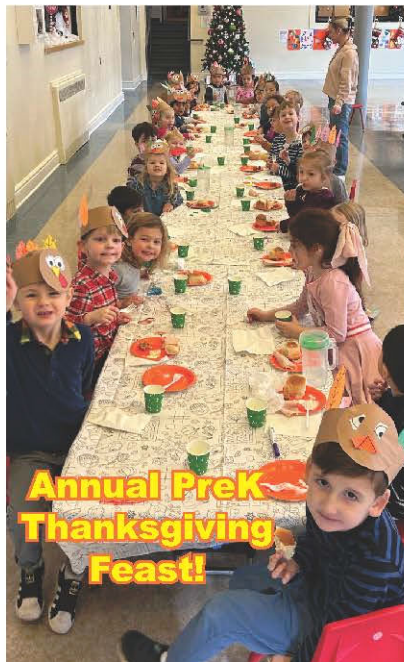
Next 8-week Session Begins November 28

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



Annual PreK Thanksgiving Feast!



3RD GRADE "FORCE AND MOTION" CARNIVAL!



Learn more about Immaculate Conception-St. Joseph School at 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@icsiparish.org or (312) 787-7174 ext 7.

Sign up for eGiving

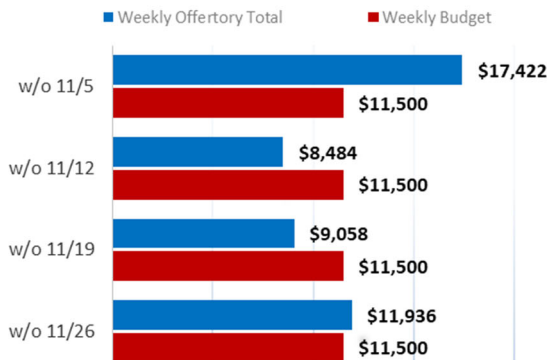
eGiving is a secure and convenient way of giving to Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph parish. It is eco-friendly and cost-saving. Just click **HERE** and to make your one-time, weekly, or monthly donation.

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 or (312)787-7174 ext 4.

Weekly Offertory - November 2023

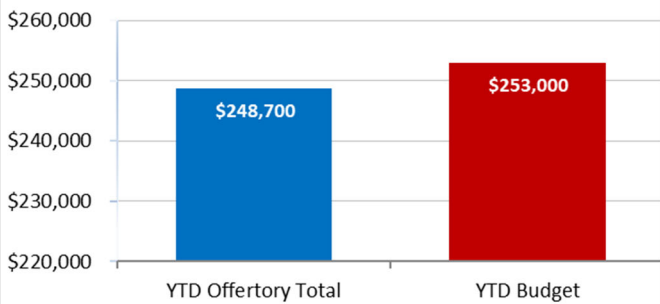


The parish budget requires over one weeks' worth of collections just to cover parish utilities, maintenance, and insurance each month.

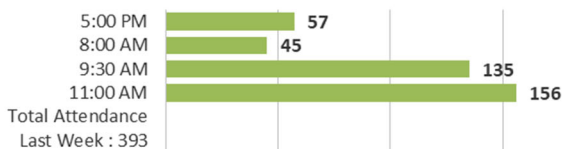
It takes \$3,093 per day to run our parish.

Fiscal Year Budget to Date

Parish Fiscal Year runs from July 1 through June 30



Attendance for 11/22 & 11/23



Mass Intentions

week of December 2-8

Saturday, December 2

5pm at Immaculate Conception with

Fr. Larry McBrady:

Isabella Beatrice Pleyto Feliciano

Sunday, December 3

8am Mass at St. Joseph with Fr. Larry Lisowski:

Dennis Heller

Sunday, December 3

9:30am Mass at Immaculate Conception with

Fr. Larry McBrady: **Michael Murphy**

Sunday, December 3

11am Mass at St. Joseph with Fr. Larry Lisowski:

Isabella Beatrice Pleyto Feliciano

For the well-being of Salema Alli

Monday, December 4

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

Barbara Greenwood

Brigitta Immaculata

Wednesday, December 6

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

Mark Alles

For the well-being of Lis Kasyanto

Friday, December 8

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception

9:30am Mass at St. Joseph with Fr. Larry McBrady:

For the faculty, students and parishioners of our

ICSJ Parish community

6pm Mass at Immaculate Conception with

Fr. Larry Lisowski: **Ernie Peterson**

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 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 to submit a prayer Request. To join our ICSJ prayer ministry, email Angela at 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, 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
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

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

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Outreach Ministries Coordinator

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312-787-7174, ext. 3

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312-787-7174, ext. 0