



The Season of Advent marks the start of a New Year in the Church. It is a season of increased prayer, penance, and good works. It is a time to renew our love of Jesus and through Him our love of others. It is a time in which we ask God's mercy and rededicate ourselves to His joyful service. In this way, even as we mark the birth of Jesus, we ourselves are making a new beginning as children of God.

## ADORATION WITH CONFESSION ~

**Thursdays, December 5, 12, & 19, from 7 - 8 PM.** Bring your day to a restful end by basking in the True Presence of our Eucharistic Lord. Clear and quiet your soul from all that has come between you and God by making a good Confession - especially if it has been awhile. Confession is a healing encounter with Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. The Lord's mercy, healing and grace are given to us through this encounter. In it Jesus also strengthens us to resist future or ongoing temptation. The Sacrament of Confession is a moment of accountability for us and before the Lord. The Lord's forgiveness and mercy is infinite. Nothing we have done or could do can ever separate us from experiencing God's forgiveness through this sacrament. Confession will also continue to be offered each Saturday in the church from Noon to 12:45 PM.



**GIVE A GIFT ~ December 7 & 8, at all Masses.** Once again, we ask the people of St. Mary's to help make Christmas truly a season of sharing. All items go to needy families in Boston, and are distributed through two inner city Catholic parishes. Please bring an article of new clothing and a new toy, unwrapped together in a plain bag or gift bag with a tag stating "Boy" or "Girl" and size or age up to age 18. No adult gifts please. Kindly place your gift in front of St. Mary's altar at any Mass the weekend of December 7 & 8. **Gift bags only please.**

## COOKIE WALK FOR HAITI ~

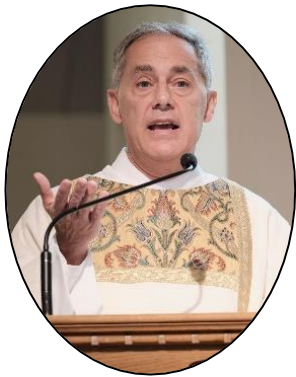
**December 7 & 8, after all Weekend Masses.** Long rows of tables will be set up in Fr. Haley Hall - tables loaded down with over 2,000 delicious homemade cookies baked by St. Mary's Middle School Youth Group Members. For \$8, you may purchase an empty cookie bag, then "walk" down the rows of tables and select a dozen cookies which MSYG youths (wearing plastic gloves) will place in your bag. All proceeds will benefit the poor of Haiti, a deeply impoverished nation rocked by political collapse, horrific gang violence, and multiple natural disasters. *"Whatever you do for the least of my people, so you do unto me."* MT 25





## FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY, A HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION ~

**Monday, December 9, Feast Day Masses at 9 AM & 5:30 PM.** The Immaculate Conception is that sacred moment when Mary was conceived in her mother Anna's womb and specially protected by God from any touch of original sin. In this way, Mary became the new Eve, a new beginning for the human race and a pure vessel to receive the Son of God and bear Him into the world. This is the Patronal Feast of the United States of America, a nation consecrated to Mary under her title as the Immaculate Conception. Since December 8 is a Sunday this year, it is celebrated a day later.



## “THE FOUR THEMES OF ADVENT” ~ A EUCHARISTIC HOLY HOUR

**Saturday, December 14, 10:30 - 11:30 AM.** Advent is a period of anticipation. It encourages time for reflection as we prepare to celebrate the Nativity of Jesus Christ. During this season, we traditionally focus on four central themes: **Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.** Each of these themes guides us along our spiritual journey toward the celebration of Christ's birth. Join us on Saturday, December 14 at 10:30 AM for a holy hour of quiet contemplation and reflection as we prayerfully consider how these themes can enhance our Advent season and prepare us to experience the glory of Christmas.

**LESSONS & CAROLS ~ Sunday, December 15, 5 - 6 PM in the church.** Join us for an evening of beautiful music and scripture, anticipating the wondrous birth of Our Lord Jesus. This year's Lessons and Carols will feature the combined choirs and ensembles of St. Mary's Church, under the direction of Abigail Kelley-Lanser. The program will include familiar carols as well as choral music by Praetorius, Mendelssohn, Rutter, and more. Bring your whole family and fill your Christmas preparations with plenty of holiday cheer. *“Come and see what God has done!”*





## LITTLE BETHLEHEM CHRISTIANS

### OLIVE WOOD OFFERINGS ~ After all Masses

December 21 & 22 in the Parish Center Lobby. In 2003, the Alshouri Family fled the fighting in Bethlehem between Palestinians and Israelis, finding a new home in the United States. Christians used to make up 80% of the population of Bethlehem, but many have been forced to flee. Now less than 10% of Bethlehem's residents are Christian, with 200 of those families supporting themselves by carving religious articles of olive wood. The Alshouri's then sell some of these artworks in Catholic parishes in the United States. We are delighted to welcome them with their beautiful olive wood creations for sale just in time for Christmas!



#### Tuesday, December 24, Christmas Eve

**4:00 PM** Masses in both the Church and Fr. Haley Hall

**5:30 PM** Mass in the Church

**7:30 PM** Mass in the Church

**11:00 PM** Midnight Mass in the Church

#### Wednesday, December 25, Christmas Day

**9:30 AM** Mass in the Church

**11:30 AM** Mass in the Church



**Give yourself and your family the best gifts of all this Advent and every Sunday ...**

- ... the Word of God to encourage and guide you,**
- ... the Holy Eucharist to feed your soul and strengthen God's presence in your life,**
- ... the grace and peace that come when we give thanks to God in worship for all the good things He has given us. Welcome home!**