



ST. MARY'S PARISH
8 CHURCH ST.
HOLLISTON, MA 01746

2024 Christmas Mass Schedule

Return Service Requested

Non-profit
Organization
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paid
Holliston, MA
01746
Permit no. 2

Every Sunday, the
same Jesus born in
Bethlehem comes
down to us anew in
Loving Word and
Holy Communion.



Will you welcome Him?

Advent starts on
Sunday, December 1.

Come and see what
God has done!

Dear Members of the St. Mary's Parish Family,

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I - I took the one less traveled by. And that has made all the difference."

Most of us are familiar with these beautiful words by Robert Frost, and as Christmas now comes rushing upon us they are worth considering. There are in fact two very distinct roads by which we may arrive at Christmas. The wider, more traveled road is paved exclusively with shopping, decorating, socializing and every kind of worldly distraction. It is a road that consumes our time with busyness and the accumulation of things. It is a road that brings us to December 25 feeling stressed and spiritually exhausted for having traveled it.

There is, however, another road - the road of Advent, which when deliberately travelled can bring us closer in love to Jesus, the One Whose birth we are preparing to celebrate. This road is less popular and at times less convenient. But at its end waits a Christmas full of peace and a renewed sense of joy and wonder at God's greatest gift - the gift of His Only Beloved Son.

I encourage you this December to choose the road of Advent. Make a good Confession, especially if it's been awhile. Read completely one of the Gospels, they are shorter and richer than you think. Take home a daily Advent prayer book from the church after Sunday Mass. And if Mass has been missing from your life, know that you are wanted, welcome and that we have been holding your place for you at the Table of the Lord. This Advent perhaps make a special family trip to select items for the poor through Give A Gift. Or come together to add your voices to the magnificent Lessons & Carols Celebration.

Do something **new**, opening up to God in a way you haven't for a long while or maybe even never at all. Take the road less traveled by, the road of faith, the road of sacrificial love that Jesus walked before us. And when Christmas finally comes, you will discover that truly it *"has made all the difference."*

May the Lord of Our Advent Journey bless you and yours,

Under His Mercy,

Rev. Mark J. Coiro





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 ~

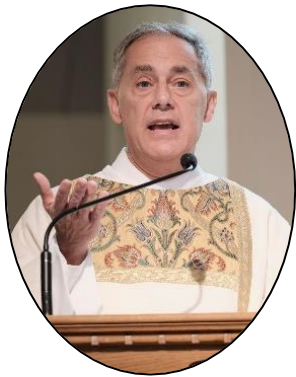
December 7 & 8, after all Weekend Masses. Long rows of tables will be set up in Fr. Haley Hall - tables loaded down with over 2,000 delicious homemade cookies baked by St. Mary's Middle School Youth Group Members. For \$8, you may purchase an empty cookie bag, then "walk" down the rows of tables and 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!**