



St. Anthony of Padua Mission

Bulletin for December 2005

SOCIETY OF ST. PIUS X

The Home of
Traditional
Catholicism
in North Jersey™

Mass Location: VFW Hall, 45 Plymouth Street, Fairfield, New Jersey

December Calendar

- 2 St. Bibiana / First Friday
- 3 St. Francis Xavier / First Saturday
- 4 2nd Sunday of Advent / St. Peter Chrysologus / St. Barbara
- 5 St. Sabbas
- 6 St. Nicholas
- 7 St. Ambrose
- 8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception (holy day)
- 10 St. Melchiades
- 11 3rd (Gaudete) Sunday of Advent / St. Damasus
- 12 Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 12-17 *Men's 5-Day Retreat (Ridgefield, Ct.)*
- 13 St. Lucy
- 14 Ember Wednesday
- 16 St. Eusebius / Ember Friday
- 17 Ember Saturday
- 18 4th Sunday of Advent
- 21 St. Thomas the Apostle
- 25 The Nativity of Our Lord (holy day) / St. Anastasia (Comm.)
- 26 St. Stephen
- 27 St. John the Apostle
- 28 The Holy Innocents
- 29 St. Thomas of Canterbury
- 31 St. Sylvester I

To compass the idea of the immense love of God to men in becoming himself a man and feeble child for our love, it would be necessary to comprehend his greatness. But what mind of man or angel can conceive the greatness of God, which is indeed infinite?

—St. Alphonsus de Liguori

Pastor: Rev. Fr. Greig Gonzales

(in residence at: St. Ignatius Retreat House, 209 Tackora Trail, Ridgefield, CT 06877. Telephone: 203-431-0201)

Mass Schedule

Sunday – 10:00 AM
Holy Days – To be announced

Confession

Confessions are heard prior to each Mass.

Other Sacraments, Sick Calls, & Pastoral Visits

Please contact Fr. Gonzales at the Ridgefield retreat house (203-431-0201) for information regarding Baptism, Marriage, Confirmation, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Sick Calls.

Contact Us:

24-hour information: (973) 954-7350
Web: <http://www.latin-mass.net>

Holy Days of Obligation

Mary's Immaculate Conception was the foundation of all her graces. The absence of any stain or spot of sin distinguished her from all the rest of mankind. It distinguished her from the holiest of the saints, since they, one and all, were sinners. Her perfect sinlessness was the source of all her glory and all her majesty; it was this which opened the door to the unlimited graces that she received from God; it was this that qualified her for her divine maternity, and raised her to her throne as Queen of Heaven. Thus, on December 8, we celebrate the *Feast of the Immaculate Conception*. The present form of this feast dates from December 8, 1854, when Pope Pius IX defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

The second Holy Day in December is, of course, *Christmas*. During the season of Advent we long for the coming of Christ. In Christmastide we experience the joy of His coming into the world. The Church is full of the Mystery of the Incarnation of Christ. Jesus as God, begotten of the substance of the Father before all the ages and born of the substance of His Mother in the world, is given to us. During Christmastide, the liturgy shows us the Messiah as the Son of God, clothed with humanity, glorified by the humble, surprised shepherds, and adored by the Magi from the East. Let us fall down before the Child and bless God, for the birth of Jesus is the beginning of our Redemption through grace to the supernatural life.

Christmas is the only day of the year which keeps the old custom of celebrating its feast at midnight. It was at this hour that Mary in her spotless virginity gave to the world its Savior. In the midst of darkness, the Light was born. Therefore, the Church celebrates Christmas (since at least the year 354) on December 25, the time of the year when the days begin to lengthen. The custom of having three Masses originated in Jerusalem. A Mass was said in Bethlehem at a very early hour in the morning. Later, a second Mass was celebrated in the Church of the Redemption in Jerusalem. About midday, a third Mass was celebrated. Each of the three Masses has its identifying characteristic. The midnight Mass celebrates particularly the birth of Jesus; the Mass at dawn commemorates the adoration of the shepherds; the daytime Mass celebrates the eternal generation of the Word and the dignity of the Son of God.

The Feasts of the Immaculate Conception and the Nativity of Our Lord are *holy days of obligation*. Masses will be celebrated as follows:

Schedule for December Holy Days

Dec. 8 12 NOON and 7 PM

Dec. 24 Midnight Mass

Dec. 25 9 AM

All Masses shown are at the VFW Hall.

Administrative Notes

Bookstore

The parish bookstore will be open each month. This month's bookstore dates are **Dec. 4** and **Dec. 18**. Please support our chapel as your source for Catholic books, religious items, and gifts. All proceeds benefit our parish!

Mass Intentions & Stipends

To have Masses offered for the intentions of living or deceased persons, the requestor must contact and contract with the desired priest personally. (The USA District set Mass stipend is \$15 per Mass request, which is only a suggested offering for the priest; more can be given if desired, or if one cannot legitimately afford the set offering, a lesser amount/service can be arranged with the priest.)

Donation Checks

You may make out your donation checks to "St. Anthony of Padua Mission—SSPX."

Envelopes for Cash Donations

If you are making a cash donation, please use a donation envelope (provided at the rear of the VFW Hall) and fill in the lines for name, address, date of contribution, and donation amount. This will allow the accountant to retain your envelope as a "receipt" for the donor records.

NOTE: you do not need to use an envelope when making a donation by check.

VFW Hall

Volunteers (to set up / clean up the hall) are welcome! All who wish to do so are encouraged to help out in the team effort.

Choir

New voices are always welcome in the choir! Boys and girls are encouraged to offer their voices to the praise of God in the children's choir. Please see Mr. Dan Kabana in the "Choir Corner" to lend your voice.

Pastoral Meetings after Mass – December 2005

1st Sunday – Eucharistic Crusaders

2nd Sunday – Altar Servers practice / Holy Name Society

4th Sunday – Women's Sodality of Our Lady of Sorrows / Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers / St. Joan of Arc Society

Eucharistic Crusade — Monthly Intentions

December For the conversion of the pagans

Please remember these holy intentions in your daily prayers and at every Mass.

Sunday School

Religious education classes are divided by age as follows: pre-First Communion; First Communion; post-First Communion; Confirmation; and Apologetics (older children). Please see the sign-up sheets in the back room for new registrations. Classes are scheduled after Mass and commence after the thanksgiving silence.

Remaining classes for Fall/Winter are **December 4 and 18**. Adult conferences will be conducted on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month.

Winter Weather / Phone Tree

In the event that the pastor cannot make it to the VFW because of severe winter weather, he will contact the parish coordinator as soon as possible. The parish coordinator will then activate the Phone Tree, to notify parishioners about the Mass cancellation. (Notification also will be sent via the TrueCatholic e-mail group.)

To be alerted in this event, **you must ensure that your telephone information is updated in the current listing**. Parishioners are encouraged to verify their listings; please see Mrs. Birchler to review your contact information.

Planning Outlook

The following events are "on the horizon" — things to keep in mind as you plan your calendars for the next few months. As events grow closer, detailed announcements will be promulgated either in the bulletin and/or from the pulpit.

Jan. 1: Feast of the Circumcision (holy day)

Jan 16-21: Women's 5-Day Retreat (Ridgefield, Ct.)

Jan. 23: Right-to-Life March (Washington, D.C.)

Feb. 3: St. Blaise / First Friday

Mar. 1: Ash Wednesday



St. Thomas á Becket of Canterbury (Dec. 29)

St. Thomas, son of Gilbert Becket, was born in Southwark, England, in 1117. When a youth he was attached to the household of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, who sent him to Paris and Bologna to study law. He became Archdeacon of Canterbury, then Lord High Chancellor of England; and in 1160, when Archbishop Theobald died, the king insisted on the consecration of St. Thomas in his stead. St. Thomas refused, warning the king that from that hour their friendship would be broken. In the end he yielded and was consecrated.

The conflict at once broke out; St. Thomas resisted the royal customs, which violated the liberties of the Church and the laws of the realm. After six years of contention, partly spent in exile, St. Thomas, with full foresight of martyrdom before him, returned as a good shepherd to his Church.

On the 29th of December, 1170, just as vespers were beginning, four knights broke into the cathedral, crying: "Where is the archbishop? Where is the traitor?" The monks fled, and St. Thomas might easily have escaped. But he advanced, saying: "Here I am — no traitor, but archbishop. What seek you?" "Your life," they cried. "Gladly do I give it," was the reply; and bowing his head, the invincible martyr was hacked and hewn till his soul went to God. Six months later Henry II submitted to be publicly scourged at the Saint's shrine, and restored to the Church her full rights.

Reflection. — "Learn from St. Thomas," says *Father Faber*; "to fight the good fight even to the shedding of blood, or, to what men find harder, the shedding of their good name by pouring it out to waste on the earth."

Meditation on the Immaculate Conception

from Divine Intimacy

by Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is in perfect harmony with the spirit of Advent; while the soul is preparing for the coming of the Redeemer, it is fitting to think of her, the all-pure one, who was His Mother.

The very promise of a Savior was joined to, or rather, was included in the promise of this peerless Virgin. After having cursed the insidious serpent, God proclaimed: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head" (Gen. 3,15). And behold, the Virgin whose coming was foretold, approaches, "white as snow, more beautiful than the sun, full of grace, and blessed above all women."

Precisely in view of the sublime privilege which would make her the Mother of the Incarnate Word, Mary alone, among all creatures, was preserved from original sin. Yet in Mary Immaculate we see not only her preservation from original sin, and the complete absence of the slightest shadow of an imperfection, but we also see the positive side of this mystery which made her, from the very first moment of her existence, "full of grace."

Theologians teach that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary began her spiritual life with grace much more abundant and perfect than that which the greatest saints have acquired at the end of their lives. When we consider also that during her whole life, the Blessed Virgin corresponded fully and most perfectly to every movement of grace, to every invitation from God, we can understand how charity and grace increased in her with incessant and most rapid progress, making her the holiest of creatures, the one most completely united to God and transformed in Him.

St. John of the Cross, in describing the marvels of the state of perfect union with God, presents Mary Immaculate to us as the prototype and model. "Such were those [works and prayers] of the most glorious Virgin our Lady, who, being raised to this high estate of union from the beginning, never had the form of any creature imprinted in her soul, neither was she moved by such, but was invariably guided by the Holy Spirit."

The two essential conditions for achieving divine union are found in their fullness in Mary. The first condition, which is a negative one, is that there be nothing in the soul's will which is contrary to the divine will; that is, no attachment which would cause it to be subject to a creature, so that this creature would rule in its heart in any way, or impel it to act for love of this same creature; all such attachments must be eliminated. The second condition, which is positive and constructive, and is the consequence of the first, is that the human will be moved in all and through all, only by the will of God. This was realized so perfectly in the most pure soul of Mary Immaculate that she never had even the faintest shadow of an attachment to a creature; in her soul there was never any impression of a creature which could move her to act; she was so completely seized by divine love that she could act only under the inspiration and "motion of the Holy Spirit."

Thus we see Mary as the most pure spouse of the Holy Spirit, not only in relation to her divine maternity, but also in relation to her whole life in which she was moved only by His impulse.

The Christmas Crib

The First Christmas Crib

During Advent the whole family will be looking forward to the preparation of the Christmas Crib. Its first use is accredited to St. Francis of Assisi at Greccio in Italy in 1223. The saint asked one of his friends whom he loved with special affection to prepare the crib so all could see how Christ was born at Bethlehem in lowly poverty; how He was bedded in the manger of hay between an ox and an ass.

The joyful day approached. The Franciscan friars were called to meet at Greccio. Peasants living nearby prepared candles and torches to brighten the night. The crib was made ready and hay was brought to line it. The ox and the ass were led to the spot. Crowds drew near rejoicing, and their voices resounded through the field and the woods. The saint stood before the crib, his heart filled with joy, and there at midnight a Solemn Mass was sung.

Modern Cribs

Since the time of St. Francis the Christmas crib has become a familiar sight in Christian lands all over the world. The building of the manger can be a big project for all the family. Those who cannot afford the purchase of all the figures which make up the crib scene may begin very simply with a home-made stable and one or two figures — perhaps only Mary and the Babe. These dear statues can be kept from Christmas to Christmas and added to each year, until the whole scene of Bethlehem is reproduced.

The children will beg to take part in this lovely work, even painting little figures which the father may cut out of plywood. They can fashion the Judean hills with crushed brown paper sprinkled with Christmas snow, with twigs for trees clustering close to the home-made stable. Such scenes are among the dearest memories of childhood, especially if, as Christmas nears, family prayers are said at the crib.

Some parents have the significant custom of teaching the children to prepare the crib for the Holy Infant by placing straws each evening in the manger, as many straws as they have performed little acts of sacrifice during the day. On Christmas eve, the youngest child carries the Infant and places Him in the manger as the family sings carols of welcome. Will children ever forget such a Christmas?

Joseph and Mary on the Road to Bethlehem by St. Alphonsus de Liguori

Let us consider all the devout and holy discourses which these two holy spouses must have held together during this journey [to Bethlehem] concerning the mercy, goodness, and love of the divine Word, who was shortly to be born, and to appear on the earth for the salvation of men. Let us also consider the praises, the benedictions, the thanksgivings, the acts of humility and love, which these two illustrious pilgrims uttered on the way. This holy Virgin, so soon to become a mother, certainly suffered much in so long a journey, made in the middle of winter, and over rough roads; but she suffered with peace and with love. She offered to God all these her trials, uniting them to those of Jesus, whom she carried in her womb.

Oh, let us unite ourselves also, and let us accompany Mary and Joseph in the journey of our life; and, with them, let us accompany the King of Heaven, who is born in a cave, and makes his first appearance in the world as an infant, but as the poorest and most forsaken infant that was ever born amongst men.

The Works of Mercy

Mercy, as it is here contemplated, is said to be a virtue influencing one's will to have compassion for, and, if possible, to alleviate another's misfortune. It is the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas that although mercy is as it were the spontaneous product of charity, yet it is to be reckoned a special virtue adequately distinguishable from this latter. In fact the Scholastics, in cataloguing it, consider it to be referable to the quality of justice mainly because, like justice, it controls relations between distinct persons. It is as they say *ad alterum*. Its motive is the misery which one discerns in another, particularly in so far as this condition is deemed to be, in some sense at least, involuntary. Obviously the necessity which is to be succored can be either of body or soul. Hence it is customary to enumerate both *corporal* and *spiritual* works of mercy.

The traditional enumeration of the *corporal works of mercy* is as follows:

1. To feed the hungry;
2. To give drink to the thirsty;
3. To clothe the naked;
4. To harbour the harbourless;
5. To visit the sick;
6. To ransom the captive;
7. To bury the dead.

The *spiritual works of mercy* are:

1. To instruct the ignorant;
2. To counsel the doubtful;
3. To admonish sinners;
4. To bear wrongs patiently;
5. To forgive offences willingly;
6. To comfort the afflicted;
7. To pray for the living and the dead.

It will be seen from these divisions that the works of mercy practically coincide with the various forms of almsgiving. It is thus that St. Thomas regards them. The word *alms*, of course, is a corruption of the Greek *elenmosyne* (mercy). The doing of works of mercy is not merely a matter of exalted counsel; there is as well a strict precept imposed both by the natural and the positive Divine law enjoining their performance. That the natural law enjoins works of mercy is based upon the principle that we are to do to others as we would have them do to us.

The Divine command is set forth in the most stringent terms by Christ, and the failure to comply with it is visited with the supreme penalty of eternal damnation (*Matt.*, xxv, 41): "Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, in everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink. I was a stranger, and you took me not in; naked, and you covered me not; sick and in prison, and you did not visit me," etc.

Here it is true there is mention directly and explicitly of only the corporal works of mercy. As, however, the spiritual works of mercy deal with a distress whose relief is even more imperative as well as more effective for the grand purpose of man's creation, the injunction must be supposed to extend to them also.

Besides there are the plain references of Christ to such works as fraternal correction (*Matt.*, xviii, 15) as well as the forgiveness of injuries (*Matt.*, vi, 14). It has to be remembered, however, that the precept is an affirmative one, that

is, it is of the sort which is always binding but not always operative, for lack of matter or occasion or fitting circumstances. It obliges, as the theologians say, *semper sed non pro semper*. Thus in general it may be said that the determination of its actual obligatory force in a given case depends largely on the degree of distress to be aided, and the capacity or condition of the one whose duty in the matter is in question. There are easily recognizable limitations which the precept undergoes in practice so far as the performance of the corporal works of mercy are concerned.

Likewise the law imposing spiritual works of mercy is subject in individual instances to important reservations. For example, it may easily happen that an altogether special measure of tact and prudence, or, at any rate, some definite superiority is required for the discharge of the oftentimes difficult task of fraternal correction. Similarly to instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, and console the sorrowing is not always within the competency of every one. To bear wrongs patiently, to forgive offenses willingly, and to pray for the living and the dead are things from which on due occasion no one may dispense himself on the pleas that he has not some special array of gifts required for their observance. They are evidently within the reach of all.

It must not be forgotten that the works of mercy demand more than a humanitarian basis if they are to serve as instruments in bringing about our eternal salvation. The proper motive is indispensable and this must be one drawn from the supernatural order.

Finally it is interesting to note that, for the exercise of the sixth among the corporal works of mercy, two religious orders have at different times in the history of the Church been instituted. In the year 1198 the Trinitarians were founded by St. John of Matha and St. Felix of Valois, and just twenty years later St. Peter Nolasco and St. Raymond of Pennafort established the Order of Our Lady of Ransom. Both of these communities had as their chief scope the recovery of Christians who were held captive by the infidels. In the religious body which owes its origin to St. Peter Nolasco, the members took a fourth vow to surrender their own persons in place of those whom they were not otherwise able to redeem from slavery.



Directions to St. Anthony of Padua Mission (VFW Hall, 45 Plymouth Street, Fairfield)

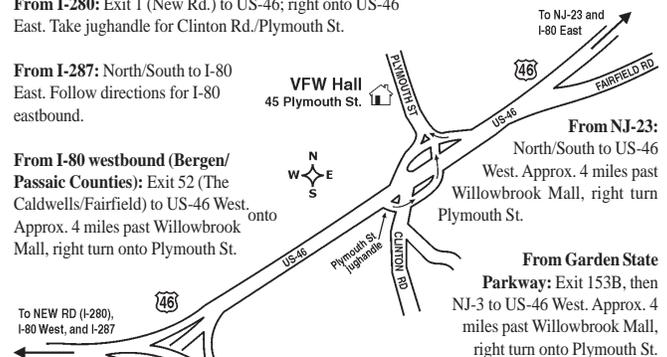
From I-80 eastbound (Morris County & points west): Exit 47B (The Caldwell/Montclair) to US-46 East. Take jughandle for Clinton Rd/Plymouth St.

From I-280: Exit 1 (New Rd.) to US-46; right onto US-46 East. Take jughandle for Clinton Rd./Plymouth St.

From I-287: North/South to I-80 East. Follow directions for I-80 eastbound.

From I-80 westbound (Bergen/Passaic Counties): Exit 52 (The Caldwell/Fairfield) to US-46 West. Approx. 4 miles past Willowbrook Mall, right turn onto Plymouth St.

To NEW RD (I-280), I-80 West, and I-287



From NJ-23: North/South to US-46 West. Approx. 4 miles past Willowbrook Mall, right turn Plymouth St.

From Garden State Parkway: Exit 153B, then NJ-3 to US-46 West. Approx. 4 miles past Willowbrook Mall, right turn onto Plymouth St.

From N.J. Turnpike: Exit 16W, then NJ-3 to US-46 West. Approx. 4 miles past Willowbrook Mall, right turn onto Plymouth St.