The background of the entire page is a night sky filled with stars. A single, exceptionally bright star with a four-pointed starburst effect is positioned in the upper center. Below the sky, a silhouette of a city with various buildings and a church spire is visible against a lighter blue glow. In the foreground, a desert landscape with rolling sand dunes is shown. Two small figures are walking across the dunes; one is on a horse, and the other is walking beside it.

THE  
JOURNEY  
*to Bethlehem*

Saint Brigid Catholic Church Sunday Reflections, Prayers and Calendar

*Advent 2021*

My brothers and sisters in Christ:

Advent is a special time in the Church year as we prepare for the coming of the Lord. Advent holds out the hope and desire to see the light of Christ shine thorough the darkness of our world. Our Holy Father Pope Francis focused on the importance of hope during Advent. He stated, "Advent is the season for remembering the closeness of God who came down to dwell in our midst." He noted, "Being watchful in expectation of his coming means not letting ourselves be overcome by discouragement. It is to live in hope."

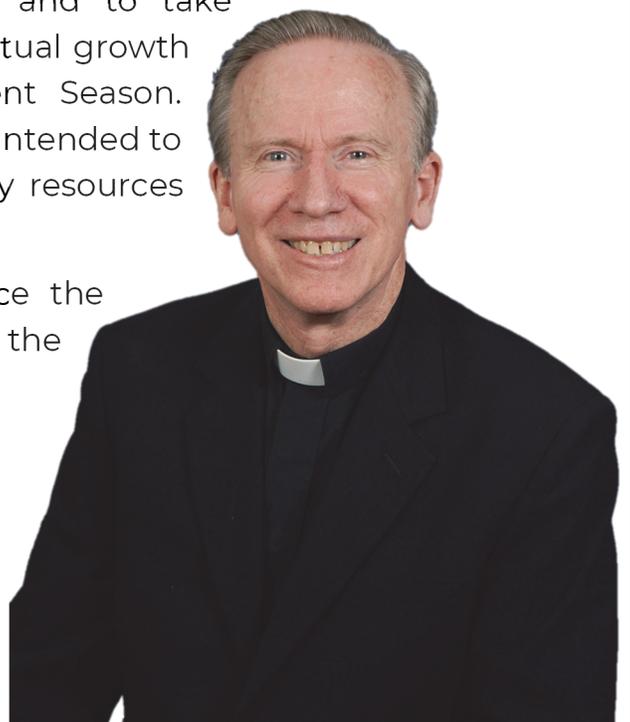
The word "Advent" literally means "coming", and during the four weeks of Advent we are urged to remain watchful and vigilant as we wait in joyful anticipation for the coming of the Christ Child. As we wait during this great season, we are challenged in a special way to focus on our preparation through our prayers, our spiritual reflections, and acts of charity. We are also invited to make a brief daily examination of conscience, and avail ourselves of the Sacrament of Reconciliation sometime during the season.

During this special time, we will sponsor our Advent Parish Mission on November 29<sup>th</sup> to December 1<sup>st</sup> which will be presented by Fr. Linus Klucsartis. During the Mission, Fr. Linus will speak about the desire to find hope during Advent in the midst of these difficult and uncertain times as we strive to deal primarily with the sustained impact of the COVID-19 virus. He will focus on the hope filled meaning of Advent with special emphasis on Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men.

I invite you to participate in the Mission and to take advantage of the many opportunities for spiritual growth which we have provided during the Advent Season. Included in this booklet are scheduled events intended to enhance our Advent journey as well as many resources that can assist us spiritually.

I pray that you will wholeheartedly embrace the Season of Advent as we anxiously await the celebration of the birth of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Prayerfully yours in Christ,  
Reverend Father Neil Herlihy  
Pastor



## *Come Lord Jesus*

Each year we are offered this season of Advent. The prayers are often about the “coming” of Jesus and the culture around us clearly points to Christmas. So, Advent can seem like a time of remembering the coming of Jesus at Christmas, and become a time of Christmas preparation.

A deeper look can allow Advent to be about preparing my heart for Jesus to come to me more intimately during these four weeks. The exploration – the activity and the work of Advent – can be about discovering where I need Jesus to come in my life. This is a process of examining the places in my heart where Jesus is missing, where His style, His way and His heart are not like mine. It is an opportunity to feel the absence, to feel the emptiness, or perhaps the shallowness of certain places in my heart. The beginning of the Advent experience is to allow myself to enter into an experience of missing something and of longing for something to replace it.

We don’t want to skip over this step. To pray, “Come, Lord Jesus” without knowing what I’m asking for will ultimately not be the best way to make that prayer. One way to help ourselves be more concrete and specific, we can journal our preparations. For example, we can put pen to paper – or fingers to keyboard – to ask ourselves key questions: What is feeling “empty” in me? Where do I feel I’ve not let Jesus into my heart? In what areas might I have walled Him out? Into what pain, loneliness, fear or anger have I not invited Him?

When I start naming my responses, I can begin to feel a longing. I can let myself sense that I’m not going to be happy if I continue to live with resentment or sadness or any kind of darkness. I can imagine how much happier I’d be if I let myself express a desire to welcome Jesus into those spaces where I need Him, where I need healing, where I need renewal, where I need His comfort and peace.

As I write this all out, during the early weeks of Advent, and hear the Isaiah’s readings and their promises, I will begin to say “Come, Lord Jesus” in a new way – with genuine hope and expectation, with deep desire, with feeling and energy.

When our desire meets God’s desire for us, something we call “grace” happens. The gift is given where we are most receptive to receive it.

Our desire for Jesus to fill us will make Advent a season that truly is about the Incarnation – the coming of Jesus, in the fleshy reality of our day to day life. And, it will get us to the manger and the reality of the fact that the one who came then, is here to come again – into the same poverty and with the same welcome with which Mary and Joseph received him with trust and hope.

*“Come, Lord Jesus, Come!”*

*Courtesy Creighton University's Online Ministries*

# First Sunday in Advent

November 28, 2021

[Lk 21:25-28, 34-36](#)

Jesus said to his disciples:

"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.

"Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth.

Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man."



# Second Sunday in Advent

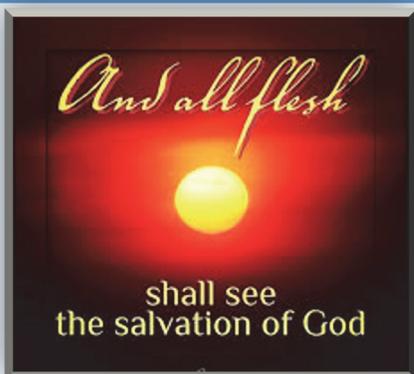
December 5, 2021

[Lk 3:1-6](#)

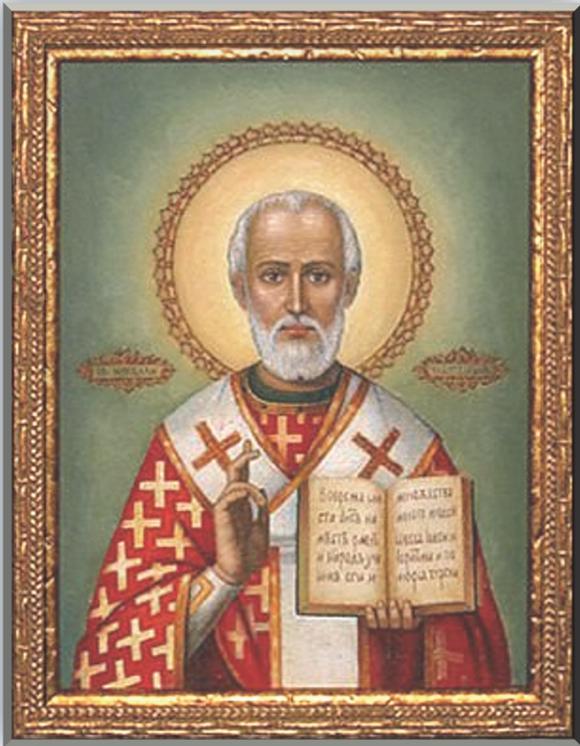
In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert.

John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah:

*A voice of one crying out in the desert:  
"Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight his paths.  
Every valley shall be filled  
and every mountain and  
hill shall be made low.  
The winding roads shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth,  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."*



*Advent is a time of business. We are readying ourselves for the secular side of Christmas. How are you being consumed by this? Are you taking time each day to make sure that you are not becoming drowsy from the anxieties of daily life? Is the tree ready? Do I have all of the gifts bought and wrapped? Is my Christmas card a perfect representation of my family and ready to go out? Take a breath. Light your advent wreath and sit a moment with Jesus.*



## FEAST OF SAINT NICHOLAS

Monday, December 6, 2021

St. Nicholas Day 4th-century bishop of Myra. St. Nicholas is the patron Saint of Russia and Greece, of a number of cities, and of sailors and children, among many other groups, and was noted for his generosity. Some countries celebrate St. Nicholas Day on December 5. Saint Nicholas Day is celebrated on Monday, December 6, 2021.

## THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Wednesday, December 8, 2021

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is an annual Roman Catholic tradition held on the 8th of December that celebrates and commemorates the 'Blessed Virgin Mary'.

Some people believe that the feast celebrates Jesus' conception, but in fact, it tributes Mary's conception, as she was chosen by God to be the Mother of Jesus. The feast celebrates that the very first moments of her existence occurred without sin.



## Third Sunday in Advent

December 12, 2021

[Lk 3:10-18](#)



The crowds asked John the Baptist, "What should we do?" He said to them in reply, "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He answered them, "Stop collecting more than what is prescribed." Soldiers also asked him, "And what is it that we should do?" He told them, "Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages." Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ.

John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Exhorting them in many other ways, he preached good news to the people.



## Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 19, 2021

[Lk 1:39-45](#)

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said,

*"Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb.  
And how does this happen to me, that the  
mother of my Lord should come to me?"*

For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

*What are you sharing this holiday season?*

*We have so much. Yes, we are giving gifts a plenty over the next few weeks, but those are just material things. What are we giving from our heart?*

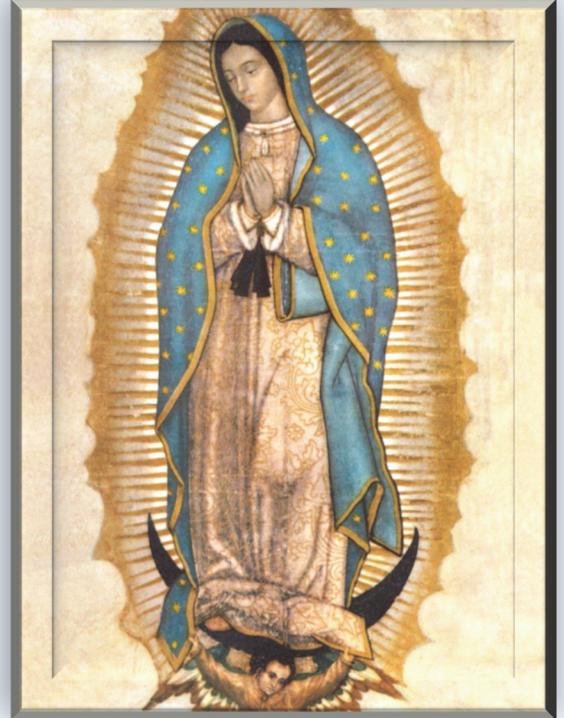
*Are we satisfied with what we have or are we constantly striving to have more? This holiday season let's see what we can do without?*

## OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

Sunday, December 12, 2021

Spanish Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, also called the Virgin of Guadalupe, in Roman Catholicism, the Virgin Mary in her appearance before St. Juan Diego in a vision in 1531. The name also refers to the Marian apparition itself.

Our Lady of Guadalupe holds a special place in the religious life of Mexico and is one of the most popular religious devotions. Her image has played an important role as a national symbol of Mexico.



## FEAST DAY OF SAINT LUCY

Monday, December 13, 2021

St. Lucy, a virgin and martyr, gave her life to Christ at a young age. She was born of nobility in Italy during the time of the Diocletian persecution. St. Lucy had a strong devotion to St. Agatha, and Lucy's own mother experienced a miracle through her daughter's prayers and Agatha's intercession.

Courageously keeping her vow of virginity, St. Lucy refused to marry the Governor of Syracuse and was brutally tortured because of her choice. One tradition holds that her persecutors gouged her eyes out and tried to burn her. When the fire kept extinguishing, the torturers killed her by thrusting a sword in her neck.

## Family Prayers

During Advent, we not only prepare ourselves to celebrate the birth of Jesus, but we also check in to see if we are doing all the things that will keep us ready to receive Jesus when He comes again.

Talk to your family about how you are doing in attending to your spiritual life as a family. Recommit yourselves to praying daily, reading Scripture, and staying faithful to God's commandments.

**G**od of Love,  
Your son, Jesus,  
is your greatest gift to us.  
He is a sign of your love.  
Help us walk in that love  
during the weeks of Advent,  
As we wait and prepare for His  
coming. We pray in the  
name of Jesus, our Savior.  
Amen.

**M**y heart is beating,  
filled with joy,  
awaiting Mary's baby boy.  
For with this child, we embrace  
the birth of God's most precious  
grace.

Baby Jesus, soon to come!  
For us comes the Promised One.  
Baby Jesus, God's own Son,  
you will be the Chosen One  
to lead our flock into salvation.

Our eternal life awaits.  
The birth of Jesus brings us nearer  
Heaven's holy gates.  
Sing with joy, and count the days,  
for soon to come,  
the Lord we'll praise.  
Rejoice that Jesus will soon arrive,  
the Messiah and our faith alive.  
Amen



# *What Can Advent Mean for Me?*

## *When is Advent?*

Advent is the period pre-ceding the Christmas season. It begins on the Sunday nearest November 30, the feast day of St. Andrew the Apostle, and covers four Sundays. Because the day it begins changes from year to year, so does the length of each Advent season.



## *What is the meaning of Advent?*

Advent is a season observed in many Western Christian churches as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas. The term is an anglicized version of the Latin word *adventus*, meaning “coming”.

## *Why is Advent celebrated when it is?*

During the season of Advent, winter for us, we prepare for the celebration of the coming of Jesus. In the last fifty years, however, it has also come to be thought of as a time of anticipating the Nativity, on Christmas Day. Advent is a time to celebrate light in the midst of darkness. Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran traditions have been celebrating Advent for centuries. Other Christian traditions have picked it up over the years, but the practice varies from congregation to congregation, depending on their liturgical traditions.

## *What is the significance of the Advent wreath and why the rose-colored candle?*

Advent wreaths have their origins in the folk traditions of northern Europe, where in the deep of winter people lit candles on wheel-shaped bundles of evergreen. Both the evergreen and the circular shape symbolized ongoing life. The candlelight gave comfort at this darkest time of the year, as people looked forward to the longer days of spring. An advent wreath traditionally contains four candles—three purple and one rose. Purple dyes were once so rare and costly that they were associated with royalty. The Catholic Church has long used this color around Christmas and Easter. The three purple candles in the Advent wreath symbolize hope, peace, and love. These candles are lit on the first, second, and fourth Sundays of Advent. The rose candle, which symbolizes joy, is usually lit on the third Sunday.

# *Advent Ideas for you and your family*

## *The Jesse Tree:*

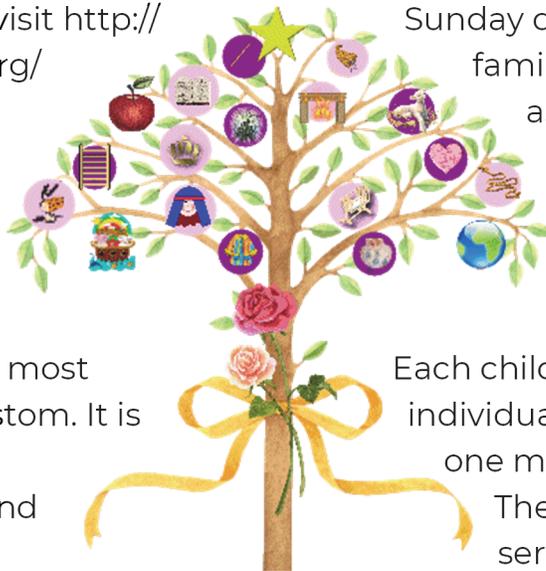
The Jesse tree tells about Christ's ancestry through symbols and relates Scripture to salvation history, progressing from creation to the birth of Christ. The tree can be made on a poster board with the symbols glued on, or on an actual tree. For further information read, *Advent and Christmas in a Catholic Home* or visit <http://www.catholicculture.org/>

## *Advent wreath:*

The Advent wreath, which has German origins, is probably the most recognized Advent custom. It is a wreath made of evergreens that is bound to a circle of wire. It symbolizes the many years from Adam to Christ in which the world awaited its Redeemer; it also represents the years that we have awaited His second and final coming. The wreath holds four equally spaced candles, the three purple ones lit on the "penitential" Sundays and a pink one for Gaudete, the joyful third Sunday in Advent. There are many available prayers and hymns found in the reading list that can accompany your personal Advent wreath ceremony.

## *The Christ Candle:*

Any large white candle can be used for the Christ candle. The idea is to decorate it with symbols for Christ. Use old Christmas cards, sequins, holly, etc. The candle can be lit on Christmas Eve to show that the Light of the World has arrived. Then continue to light the Christ candle throughout the year at Sunday dinner to remind your family of our waiting for Christ, as well as celebrating His birth and Resurrection.



## *The Empty Manger:*

Each child may have his own individual manger, or there may be one manger for the whole family. The idea is that when acts of service, sacrifice, or kindness are done in honor of Baby Jesus as a birthday present, the child receives a piece of straw to put into the manger. Then, on Christmas morning, "Baby Jesus" is placed in the manger. Encourage your children to make Jesus' bed as "comfortable" as possible through their good deeds. In the process, explain Christ's incomparable self-gift at Christmas and Easter that enables us to be part of God's family.

## *We've arrived in Bethlehem.*

From time to time you hear about babies being born in a car on the way to the hospital. Suddenly, an expectant father becomes an obstetrician. While those moments must be very stressful, I imagine that the back seat of a modern-day car must seem like the Mayo Clinic compared to a stable in Bethlehem. I don't think that St. Joseph gets enough credit for making the Christmas story a happy one, so I offer you my five reflections for spending Christmas with St. Joseph:



**1. Sore feet.** I have never ridden a donkey before, but I imagine that there is not much room for anyone besides a pregnant woman. The trip to the delivery stable was not short. Google Maps puts it at over ninety miles of walking. Luke's Gospel does not indicate that Mary was in active labor during the trip, but nonetheless Joseph did all the walking. Remember that getting things ready for Christmas can be exhausting, but don't add to the stress of the delivery by being cranky. I guarantee you that Joseph didn't complain.

**2. No reservations.** We know for a fact that the Holy Family had no reservations, so Joseph had to do some quick thinking. Flexibility is the first ingredient to lowering holiday stress. This Christmas expect the unexpected, say a little prayer to St. Joseph, and go with the flow. When things turn upside down, you'll smile and not frown.

**3. There's company coming.** After Jesus was born, there were a lot of visitors. First the shepherds showed up, next the Magi, and all along a multitude of Heavenly Hosts were enjoying the view. A little alone time is a nice thing, but it may not happen this year. Enjoy any calm before the storm. Don't just lie on your bed and nap; spiritually rest. Say your favorite prayer slowly (mine is the Memorare), and ask the newborn Prince of Peace to let his peace stay with you when you are in the midst of a big crowd, especially if that crowd is related to you.

**4. Away from home.** Joseph and his young family were away from their friends when Jesus was born. Many people are alone on Christmas, and for some this is very challenging. If you're not one of those people, stop and think if you know someone who will be alone, and invite them over for a little Christmas cheer. I am of the opinion that someone outside the family at the Christmas table puts everyone else on their best behavior. If you will be alone this Christmas, remember that you're never alone. In prayer, spend some time with the Holy Family in their solitude. Holidays need not be lonely. You can actually make Christmas an intentional spiritual retreat, a planned time of prayer with the best company imaginable.

**5. No delivery.** I am not talking about the baby; I mean dinner. New moms need to eat and drink to regain their strength. The Gospels make no mention of a Domino's delivery camel showing up outside the stable. Joseph shopped, cooked, and cleaned. If that is your Christmas job assignment, be grateful because you're in such great company. If you normally don't help with these things, put down your eggnog, get yourself off the couch, and say these simple words, "I will do the dishes." Think of it as doing Jesus' dishes.

—Excerpted from [5 Things with Father Bill](#)  
by William Byrne courtesy of Loyola Press

## *Merry Christmas*

## Saint Brigid Catholic Church Calendar of Parish Events 2021

Day/Date	Time	Event	Location
Friday 11/26	10:00 AM - 9:00 PM	<b>MOSB Christmas Tree Lot Opens</b>	Parking lot
Sat/Sun, 11/27-28	All Masses	<b>Giving Tree collections through 12/12</b>	Outside Corbett Hall
Sun 11/28	Regular Mass Times	<b>First Sunday of Advent, November 28</b>	Regular locations
Monday 11/29	10:00 AM- 11:00 AM 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM	<b>Parish Advent Mission</b>	Main Church
Tuesday 11/30			
Wednesday 12/1			
Thursday 12/2	2:30 PM - 7:00 PM	<b>Adopt A Family Gift Drop Off</b>	Parking Lot
Sunday 12/5	Regular Mass Times	<b>Second Sunday of Advent, December 5</b>	Regular locations
Tuesday 12/7	7:00 PM	<b>Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</b> Holy Day Masses	Main Church
Wednesday 12/8	6:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 12:00 PM, 7:00 PM		Main Church
Sunday 12/12	Regular Mass Times	<b>Third Sunday of Advent, December 12</b>	Regular locations
Saturday 12/18	8:00 AM -10:00 AM	<b>Breakfast with Santa</b>	Corbett Hall
Sunday 12/19	Regular Mass Times	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 19</b>	Regular locations
<b>Friday 12/24 Christmas Eve</b>	1:00 PM	<b>The Nativity of the Lord Vigil Masses</b>	Parking Lot
	4:00 PM		Main Church, Corbett Hall, Parking lot
	6:00 PM		
	8:00 PM		Main Church
	9:30 PM		
	12:00 AM Midnight		<i>Orchestra Prelude Begins at 11:30 PM</i>
<b>Saturday 12/25 Christmas Day</b>	7:00 AM	<b>The Nativity of the Lord Masses</b>	Masses will start in the Main Church and will move to other locations as capacities are met.
	9:00 AM		
	11:00 AM		
	1:00 PM		
Sunday 12/26	Regular Mass Times	<b>Holy Family of Jesus, Mary &amp; Joseph</b>	Main Church
Friday 12/31	4:00 PM	<b>Mary Mother of God Vigil</b>	Main Church
Saturday 1/1	9:00 AM 11:00 AM	<b>Mary Mother of God Masses</b>	Main Church

**The Parish Office is Closed Thursday Dec. 23 - Monday, Jan. 3**



**SAINT BRIGID**  
Catholic Church

3400 Old Alabama Road, Johns Creek, GA, 30022