

Dear Padre,

The Bible talks about Jesus' brothers and sisters. Is there scriptural proof that Jesus was Mary's only child?

The Catholic Church's position is that Mary had only one child; her son called Jesus. Yet there are at least ten scriptural references to "the brothers of Jesus" or to his "sisters" (see Matthew 13:55-56, Mark 6:3, and Luke 8:19-21).

The difficulty is that the meaning of the term "brothers" (translated from the Greek *adelphos*) isn't restricted to the sharing of a parent. On the contrary, it may not only refer to other relatives, including cousins, but also to close relationships, such as disciples. This is not unlike how we might refer to "brothers in arms" as those who fought in a war together, or a religious order of brothers or sisters.

Recall, too, that Jesus and his disciples spoke Aramaic, and there is no equivalent for the meaning of "cousins" as we know it in that language. Instead, the word for brother or sister was used when referring to cousins. Thus, when St. Jerome (*circa* 340-420) translated the Bible from Hebrew into Church Latin, he considered "the brothers of Jesus" as cousins, not siblings. After all, it would have been the rightful responsibility of these male relatives of Jesus to take care of Mary when Jesus died. Yet Jesus entrusts his mother to the care of his beloved disciple John (John 19:26). ●



VIRGIN AND CHILD, ASIA (ARTIST UNKNOWN)

Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / DearPadre.org

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
December 25 <i>Nativity of the Lord</i> Is 52:7-10 Heb 1:1-6 Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14	December 26 <i>St. Stephen, the First Martyr</i> Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 Mt 10:17-22	December 27 <i>St. John, Apostle and Evangelist</i> 1 Jn 1:1-4 Jn 20:1a, 2-8	December 28 <i>Holy Innocents, Martyrs</i> 1 Jn 1:5-2:2 Mt 2:13-18	December 29 <i>Christmas Weekday</i> 1 Jn 2:3-11 Lk 2:22-35	December 30 <i>Christmas Weekday</i> 1 Jn 2:12-17 Lk 2:36-40	December 31 <i>Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph</i> Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40

Do you have a question for the Padre?
Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

Let us ask our Lady for a grace...that she kindle our enthusiasm for the ideal of holiness which is not a matter of holy cards and images, but is about living what happens each day, humbly and joyfully...with our eyes fixed on God and the neighbor we meet.

ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 8, 2021



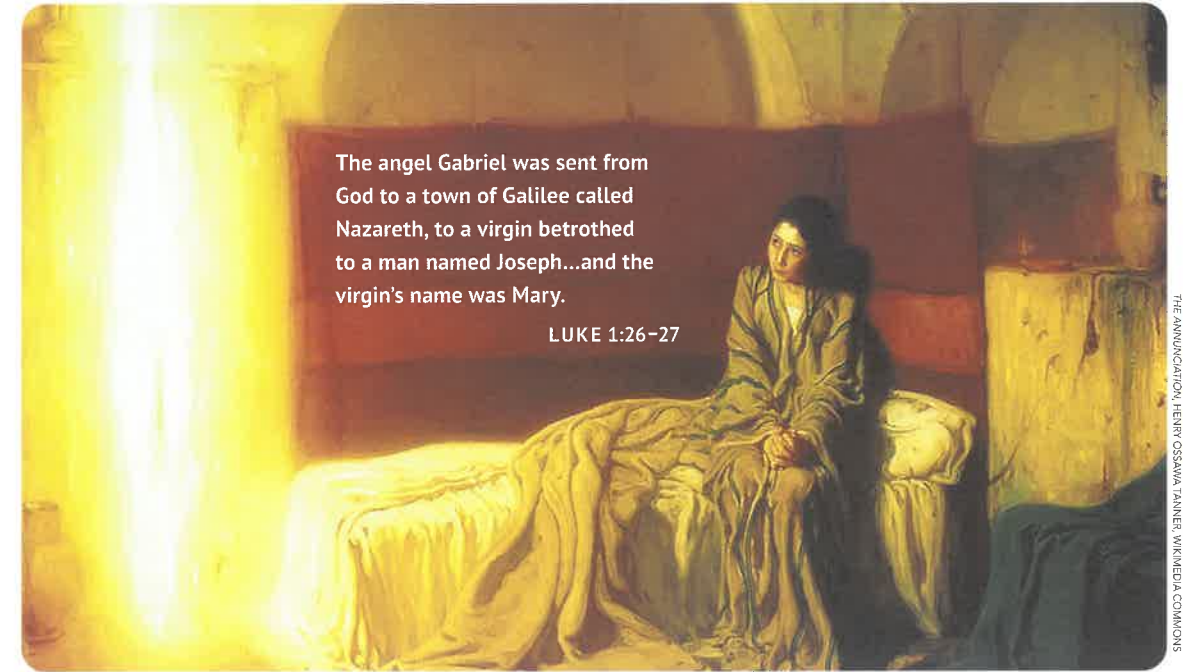
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Our Parish COMMUNITY

December 24, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Advent (B)

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 / Romans 16:25-27 / Luke 1:26-38



The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph...and the virgin's name was Mary.

LUKE 1:26-27

THE ANNUNCIATION, HENRY OSSAWA TANNER, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Wondering Why

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

The old axiom goes: if you want to make God laugh, tell God your plans. All too often the vision God has for us takes us in quite varying directions. The stories of King David and of Mary echo such realities. David, who wanted to build a temple for the Ark of the Covenant so God would not need to live in a tent, had his plans nixed, only to be reminded that it is *God* who does the building in life and not David. And Mary, who found herself confused over how she might conceive, was asked to simply trust and place her life in the hands of God. Both said "yes."

There are always times when the unfolding path of God for us may unsettle us: the complexities of immigrants at our doorstep, the changing demographics of our cities, the need to close or merge parishes, the upheavals of our personal lives. We find ourselves asking why without receiving any answers. Each time there is no answer, consider it an invitation to trust in a power greater than ourselves.

Not all rhythms of life are necessarily caused by the hand of God, but then one can never be sure. Who is to say where and how and through whom God works? Christmas comes as a reminder that God's love and presence still unfolds in varied and new ways, always giving birth again and again to the divine made flesh in our lives. The mystery of the Incarnation points to this truth: God is present in all of life. ●

Reflect

Have you ever had your plans unsettled in a way that turned out, in the end, to be a gift from God?



St. Joseph Neier

Rev. Peter Blake, Pastor &

Rev. Eric Kunz, Senior Associate Pastor

December
23 & 24
2023

Confession Times:

Saturday 4:00pm – 4:40pm

Saturday Mass: 5:00pm

Sunday Mass: 10:30am

Weekday Masses: Monday – Wednesday – NO MASS

Office: 636.583.2806

Sarah's Cell: 314.808.0337

Website: stjosephneier.com

Email: parishoffice@stjosephneier.com

Thursday – Friday – 6:30am

Pastor's Column

Today we celebrate the **Fourth and final Sunday of Advent**. Today most of us are already thinking ahead to Monday. Yet, the Church invites today to still prepare our hearts to receive the best Christmas gift ever! In our readings today we hear of the promise and the fulfillment of God to bring us a Savior. Our first reading from Samuel has God speaking to His prophet Nathan, the counselor to King David, of the things to come. Poignantly put, God will raise up an heir from David's line whose kingdom will endure forever. Being of the house and lineage of David, Jesus will be the new king, but unlike any other the world has ever known. Today's Gospel account of the Annunciation reminds us just how God fulfilled the promise of old. Mary is greeted by God's messenger, Gabriel, with an astounding message. It is through her that God's plans will unfold, if she is willing to participate. Although a bit perplexed, she is comforted by the angel who reveals how God will work in her. With that we have the perfect response of a disciple, **"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done according to your word."** At that moment God's plan to bring us a Messiah and an eternal king begin. Tomorrow we rejoice and celebrate the great birth of **Immanuel, God with us, forever and ever. Amen.**

Many years ago, I ran across a prayer by the once Chaplain to the U.S. Congress, Dr. Peter Marshall with which I'll end this week's column. It's titled, **"We yearn O Father."**

Please pray for those who are sick in our parish and families:

Shirley Beckman
Valerie Broeker
Anna Marie Brueggemann
Leann Davis
Chris Elbert
Cynthia Faust
Linda Frick
Zachery Goosage
Benny Hammer
Andrew Hellebusch
Marcia Herbst
Brandon Huels
Olivia Jasper
Rick Just

Get
Well
Soon

Ashley Koelling
Marcus Lowe
Vincent Mueller
Jean Oldavi
Ashley Shelton
Marcia Shollenberger
Courtney Smith
Special Intention 1
Special Intention 2
Erica Sterling
Heather Struckhoff
George West
Sr. Georgiann Wildhaber, SSND
Sheri Zambruski



I had a special prayer request come in for:
Juliette, Casper, Manuel, Aidan, Elias & Nicholas.

Please pray for those serving our country:

Adam Amato

Jamie
Brueggemann
Murphy

Andy Davis

Taylor Donner

Emily Guenther

Caleb Logsdon

Michael Miller

Michael Murphy

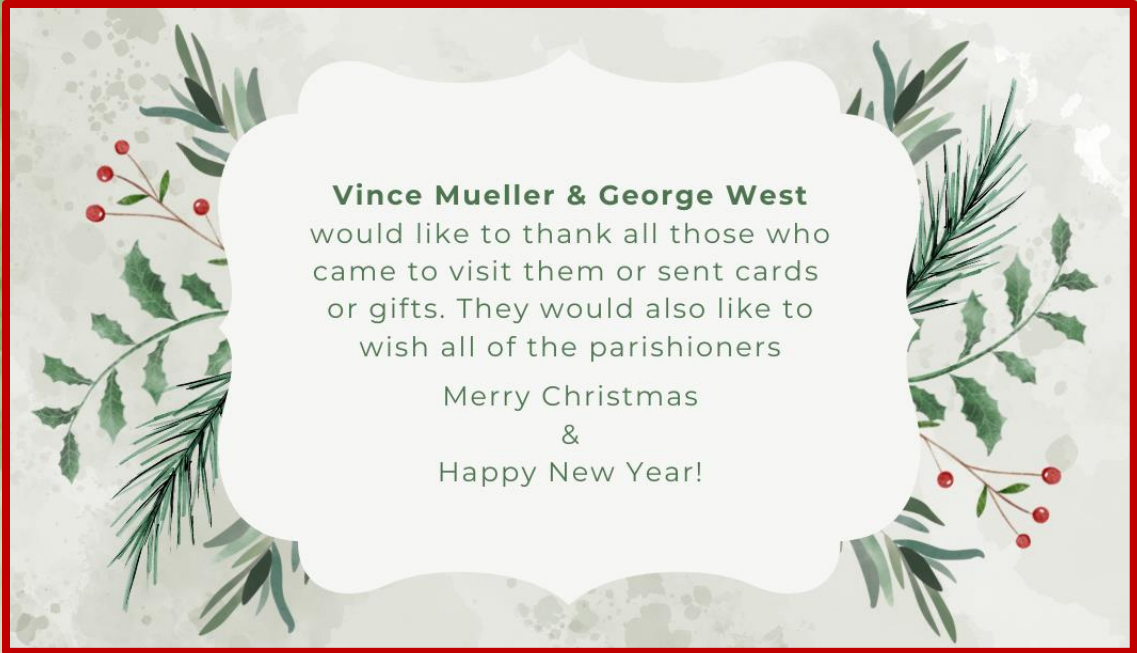
Reese Pellin

Sam Smith

Owen Struckhoff

Luke Stuesse

Emma Wildhaber



Vince Mueller & George West
 would like to thank all those who
 came to visit them or sent cards
 or gifts. They would also like to
 wish all of the parishioners
 Merry Christmas
 &
 Happy New Year!

**2024 NEW YEAR
 COUNTRY
 CHURCH TOUR**



CHURCHES PARTICIPATING THIS YEAR

- OUR LADY OF LOURDES-WASHINGTON
- ST ANN CLOVER BOTTOM-WASHINGTON
- ST GERTRUDE KRAKOW-WASHINGTON
- ST FRANCIS BORGIA-WASHINGTON
- ST PETERS UCC-WASHINGTON
- IMMACULATE CONCEPTION-AUGUSTA
- ST JOHN GILDEHAUS-VILLA RIDGE
- ST VINCENT DE PAUL-DUTZOW
- ST JOSEPH NEIER-UNION
- ASSUMPTION-NEW HAVEN
- HOLY FAMILY-PORT HUDSON-NEW HAVEN
- BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN-NEW HAVEN
- ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN-BEAUFORT



ALL CHURCHES WILL BE OPEN FROM
 NOON-4:00 PM
 ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT
 CONNIE RIGG 636-667-1537/CONNIE REDHAGE 314-640-7279

**BARTENDER MEETING
 Sunday, January 7th
 after 10:30am Mass
 in the Parish Hall**

Anyone who
 signed up to be a
 bartender, or
 anyone else that
 is interested,
 may attend the
 bartender
 meeting.



Pastor's Column Cont...

"We yearn, O Father, for the simple beauty of Christmas – for all the old familiar melodies and words which remind of that great miracle when He, who made all things, was one night to come as a Babe, to lie in the crook of a woman's arm. Before such mystery we kneel, as we follow the Shepherds and Wise Men to bring Thee the gift of our love, - a love we confess, that has not always been as warm, or sincere, or real as it could have been. But on this Christmas morning, that love would find its Beloved, and from Thee receive the grace to make it pure again, warm and real. We bring Thee our gratitude for every token of Thy love."

On behalf of Fr. Kunz, Sarah and all the staff of Neier, may yours be a **Merry Christmas**. May He who was born for you be reborn in you this Christmas!

**God Bless! Happy Advent!
 Please continue praying 3 Hail Marys.
 Fr. Pete**



Manger Moments

The season of Advent is about giving. God gave us his son, Jesus. We can give back to God by helping others. This year our PSR students gave back through "Manger Moments" which are acts of kindness. Each piece of straw represents something kind our students did for someone else.

On your way out of Church, be sure to check out our display of "Manger Moments" in the vestibule!





December 11 - 17

General Fund Donations

Regular Offering Envelopes: (65)	\$ 4,123.00
Regular Offering Loose:	\$ 103.00
Immaculate Conception: (2)	\$ 12.00
Rental Income: (1)	\$ 120.00
Online Giving*: (9)	\$ 330.01
Total:	\$ 4,688.01

Restricted Funds Donations

Catholic Education: (2+1*)	\$ 69.20
Cemetery: (1)	\$ 1,000.00
Christmas Flowers: (1)	\$ 10.00
Electric: (1*)	\$ 47.95
Flooring in Church: (1)	\$ 1,000.00
Seminary (1)	\$ 25.00

*Online Giving/With Transaction Fees Removed
(Number of Contributors)

December



December 2023

"General Funds Collections"

December 3	\$4,286.55
December 10	\$4,709.15
December 17	\$4,688.01
December 24	\$ TBD
December 31	\$ TBD

Jesus



Weekly Schedule

THIS WEEKEND

NEXT WEEK

SAT 23 DEC	5:00PM MASS MASS INTENTION MELVIN BRUNE LECTOR LISA BOCKLAGE EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS JO NOELKER THERESA STRAATMANN CHERYL VOSS	THURS 28 DEC	6:30AM MASS MASS INTENTION NO MASSES TODAY
	SUN 24 DEC		10:30AM MASS MASS INTENTION PARISH FAMILY OF ST. JOSEPH LECTOR VI SCHROEDER EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS PATTI GREIFE JEN KISSINGER JOAN KLOEPEL
WEEKEND MASS TIMES SATURDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4:15PM - IMMACULATE CONCEPTION - UNION 5:00PM - ST. JOSEPH - NEIER SUNDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00AM - IMMACULATE CONCEPTION - UNION 8:30AM - ST. CLARE - ST. CLAIR 10:00AM - IMMACULATE CONCEPTION - UNION 10:30AM - ST. JOSEPH - NEIER 		SAT 30 DEC	5:00PM MASS MASS INTENTION PARISH FAMILY OF ST. JOSEPH LECTOR KAREN GERLEMANN EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS JIM NOELKER KATHY FETH CATHIE GRUS
		SUN 31 DEC	10:30AM MASS MASS INTENTION ARTHUR, VIRGINIA, DENNIS & KAREN VOSS LECTOR MICHELLE YOUNG EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS DIANE SCHMIDT PATTI GREIFE JOAN KLOEPEL

UPCOMING EVENTS

December

- **Sunday, December 24th**
 - Christmas Eve Mass – 8pm - Church
- **Monday, December 25th**
 - Christmas Morning Mass – 9am – Church
- **Monday, December 25th – Monday, January 1st**
 - NO Weekday Masses
 - Parish Office Closed
- **Wednesday, December 27th**
 - NO PSR

And the winners for the Quilter's Raffle are...

Christmas Throw

Debra Kandlbinder

Christmas Pillows

Chelsea Rohlfing

Christmas Table Runner

Cindy Wischmeyer

please join us



Eucharistic Adoration

Let's give thanks to Our Lord

Thursday, January 4th

6:30am Mass

**Adoration following
Perpetual Help Devotions
until 12:50pm
With Benediction After**

Daughters of Isabella News

First Saturday Mass & Rosary

Saturday, January 6th, 8am

Rosary prayed @ 7:30am

Immaculate Conception Church

*Please join in praying for
Pro-life and Peace!*

**Union Knights of
Columbus**



December

Sunday, December 24th

Bar opens at noon

*Merry
Christmas
and
Happy New Year
from the
Knights of Columbus
Thank you for your
support throughout this
past year!*

All are
Welcome
to Sing
with Us
on the
Choir Loft

Merry Christmas

8:00pm	Sunday	December 24th	Monday	9:00am
	Mass Intention		Mass Intention	
	Parish Family of St. Joseph		Ed & Irene Stuesse	
	Lector		Lector	
	Judy Brueggemann		Jen Kissinger	
	Eucharistic Ministers		Eucharistic Ministers	
	Vi Schroeder		Cathie Grus	
	Jeanne Dierking		Diane Schmidt	
	Kathy Feth		Denise Feth	

Christmas Mass Schedule

<p>SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH</p> <p>Immaculate Conception 4pm</p> <p>St. Clare 6pm</p> <p>St. Joseph Neier 8pm</p>		<p>MONDAY, DECEMBER 25TH</p> <p>Immaculate Conception Midnight & 7am</p> <p>St. Clare 8am</p> <p>St. Joseph Neier 9am</p>
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Ladies Sodality Meeting

No Meeting in January
Happy New Year!

Cod Sandwich \$5.00

French Fries \$2.00

Cole Slaw \$1.00

1ST FRIDAY FISH FRY

St. Clair Knights of Columbus

**January 5th
4 - 7pm**

JESUS
is the
REASON
for the
SEASON

Join us!
Next Forever Young Day is
January 3rd @ 1pm

Always the **FIRST** Wednesday of the month

Forever Young Club

- Play Games
- Tell Stories
- Build Friendships