

Calendar

Monday

DECEMBER 24
Advent Weekday
2 Sm 7:1–5,
8b–12, 14a, 16
Lk 1:67–79

Tuesday

DECEMBER 25
Christmas
Is 52:7–10
Heb 1:1–6
Jn 1:1–18 or
Jn 1:1–5, 9–14

Wednesday

DECEMBER 26
*St. Stephen,
The First Martyr*
Acts 6:8–10; 7:54–59
Mt 10:17–22

Thursday

DECEMBER 27
*St. John, Apostle
and Evangelist*
1 Jn 1:1–4
Jn 20:1a and 2–8

Friday

DECEMBER 28
*The Holy Innocents,
Martyrs*
1 Jn 1:5–2:2
Mt 2:13–18

Saturday

DECEMBER 29
*Fifth Day in the
Octave of Christmas*
1 Jn 2:3–11
Lk 2:22–35

Sunday

DECEMBER 30
*The Holy Family of
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph*
Sir 3:2–6, 12–14 or
1 Sm 1:20–22, 24–28
Col 3:12–21 or
Col 3:12–17 or
1 Jn 3:1–2, 21–24
Lk 2:41–52

Dear Padre,

Our parish is big into nighttime services. We have the Advent vespers and, of course, Midnight Mass. Is there a reason for doing these services at night?

Both Advent vespers and Midnight Mass center on our expectation of Jesus coming into our midst as the Light of the World. The vespers prayer is usually celebrated at dusk, as day is turning into night. The service proclaims that the darkness of night will not conquer the Light of Jesus. Christian tradition holds that the ecclesiastical day begins at sunset, in accord with Genesis 1:5: “Evening came, and morning followed—the first day.” Vespers, or the Office of Evening, is the first hour of the new Church day.

Both the vespers and the Mass at midnight call us to embrace a new beginning, which is Jesus the Light.

This imagery is especially appropriate considering the arrival of the winter solstice. In the beginning of Advent, the nights grow progressively longer. Then, right before Christmas, the winter solstice marks the light’s reclaiming of the world.

In the early centuries of Christianity, people from the countryside would gather on Christmas Eve in the warmth of the great monastery church. They would go to confession, be forgiven, sing of the newborn Savior, and participate in the Eucharist. After Eucharist, they would join in a great feast that lasted until sunrise. When you celebrate at Midnight Mass this year, recall that you are proclaiming that Jesus the Light has conquered the darkness again—this year and forever.

—Fr. Paul J. Coury, CSsR
Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org



A Word From Pope Francis

Jesus keeps knocking on our doors, the doors of our lives. He doesn't do this by magic, with special effects, with flashing lights and fireworks. Jesus keeps knocking on our door in the faces of our brothers and sisters, in the faces of our neighbors, in the faces of those at our side.

—Meeting the homeless, Washington, DC, September 24, 2015