



Ignite the F.I.R.E.



Families Involved in Religious Education

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ADVENT SEASON

“If we want to keep *Christ* in Christmas, we need to spend Advent with Mary.”

Father Craig has invited us to the beauty of building up our relationship with our Blessed Mother this Advent in order to grow closer to her Son and our Lord and Savior. This is not just a “Catholic” thing...all Christians should recognize the significance of Mary and that she was perfectly created by God to bring His Son in to the human world. She is referred by the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation as “*Theotokos*”, which means “*full of grace*”, a term not used in any other instance in Scripture. This is the dogma, (a teaching and belief of the Church that we do not doubt), of the Immaculate Conception that we just celebrated on Dec 8th. The truth is that Mary *was* created without the stain of original sin and is recognized as the mother of Jesus, who is God, and therefore is recognized as the Mother of God.

The “splendor of an entirely unique holiness” by which Mary is “enriched from the first instant of her conception” comes wholly from Christ: she is “redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son.” CCC 492

In the words of Fr. Michael Gaitley in his book, “33 Days to Morning Glory”, on why we should draw closer to Mary,

And thank God that after the fall of the human race, he made a creature who was conceived without sin and who is freely and perfectly conformed to his will, for she is perfectly united with the Holy Spirit. She helps us poor sinners along the way. She helps us to overcome the tragedy of sin. She leads us to do God’s will, return to God, and become saints.

RECONCILIATION

Advent is also one of those special times when the Church invites us to draw even closer to God by partaking physically and spiritually in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We always have the opportunity for confessions, but during this time of the year, our priests make even more time

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available for us all to look at the burdens of our sins and invite Christ, our spiritual doctor, to heal our hearts. With the Holy Spirit, the priest offers God's merciful love and direction to grow in holiness and hope of strength to fight off the devil's grip on us, as well as the knowledge of Christ's unfailing love for us, no matter the sins we have committed.

"The penitential aspect of Advent urges us to recognize oneself as being a sinner, and therefore take the first essential step in returning to God." Catholic.org

"It is now the hour for you to wake from sleep, for our salvation is closer than when we first accepted the faith. The night is far spent; the day draws near. Let us cast off deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light". Romans 13:11-12

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8

UPCOMING FEAST DAYS *More Saint information can also be found on www.catholic.org.*

- 12/26 St. Stephen, first martyr
- 12/28 Holy Innocents, martyrs
- 12/30 Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph



**Wishing you a blessed Advent and a very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year in Christ!**

MISSION STATEMENT

F.I.R.E. is a desire to involve more families in the investment of teaching our children to live and love the Catholic faith, through education, family events and opportunities to build up our relationship with Christ and His Church.

"Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire!" ~ St. Catherine of Siena

