

Note: Daily Mass Schedule There will be no Saturday morning Mass on December 17 at 8:30am.
Thank you for your attention to this.

continued from front of bulletin

From a different point of view, last Thursday's celebration of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception also indirectly honors Saint Anne becoming a mother. The Annunciation celebrates Mary becoming a mother. Once a child is conceived, there is a particularly profound sharing between God and the mother of that new life. This special cooperation between God and a mother applies to every woman throughout the entire history of humanity. One author described the special sacred character of motherhood as follows.

"The most important person... on earth is a Mother."

"She cannot claim the honor of having built Notre Dame Cathedral."

"She need not."

"She has built something more magnificent than any cathedral — a dwelling for a immortal soul, the tiny perfection of her baby's body."

"The angels have not been blessed with such a grace."

"They cannot share in God's creative miracle to bring new souls to heaven."

"Only a human mother can."

"Mothers are closer to God the Creator than any other creature."

"God joins forces with mothers in performing this act of creation..."

"What on God's good earth is more glorious than this: to be a mother?"

In 1949, Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty wrote this beautiful affirmation of the sacred dignity of all mothers and their unique creative cooperation with God. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of the One Who is Life — without Whom we would not even exist — it might be worthwhile to think about the gift of life given to us and entrusted to our care by God.

My brothers, we have been given the gift of sharing in God's creative power to engender new life. Rejoice and be in awe of this beautiful gift from God. Realize that it is a gift. Treat this gift with the respect and reverence it deserves. If it is God's plan for your life to be the father of one or more children, then realize that you are a father — not "going to be a father", but already are a father — from the moment of your first child's conception. You have the responsibility to provide for, nurture, love, support, and protect your child and wife. Encourage your wife in moments of doubt or depression. Protect and defend the life of your child and your child's mother. Insist on your legal and moral rights as the father of your child. Do not let the secular world tell you that you have no say or part in any decisions affecting your child. Look to Saint Joseph as an example. Yes, in reality, he was Jesus' foster-father; but in every other respect, he cared for his family, supported them, and protected their lives, as a father should.

My sisters, you have been given the gift of sharing in God's creative power as well. As Cardinal Mindszenty wrote, it is your special blessing from God that new life — from the moment of conception to birth — is entrusted to your care, to be nurtured, protected, loved, and to develop within your body — to form a dwelling for a new and immortal soul. To every woman here today who is a mother, I repeat Elizabeth's greeting and affirmation: "Blessed are you!" and blessed is your child.

Christmas is God's gift of Life — Jesus. The Son of God came that we might have life and have it in abundance. We are about to celebrate the birth of Jesus

- Life Itself
- Emmanuel
- God with us.

He is on His way!
Brothers and sisters, rejoice!
"The Lord is near!"



A big thank you to Beth Ganss, Marie Skrobola, and the OSP American Heritages Girls for organizing and serving at our Advent Tea. Deacon Jerry gave a beautiful presentation on the Angels based on Scripture. The event was truly enjoyed by all who attended!



An Examination of Conscience

This is one version of an examination of conscience. There are many available and some are more thorough than others. This is offered here as a convenience and aid for you if you wish.

FOR A GOOD, VALID CONFESSION:

- Examine your conscience - what sins have you committed since your last good confession.
- Be sincerely sorry for your sins.
- Confess your sins to the priest.
- Make certain that you confess all your mortal sins and the number of them. Deliberately withholding a sin invalidates the sacrament.
- After your confession, do the penance.

FIRST COMMANDMENT

"I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before Me." (Ex 20:2,3)
Did I address the doubts about my faith in order to deal with questions I have?
Did I believe in fortune telling, horoscopes, dreams, occult, good-luck charms, tarot, palmistry, seances, reincarnation, etc.?
Did I deny I was Catholic or leave the faith?
Did I give time to God each day in prayer?
Did I love God with my whole heart?
Did I despair of or presume on God's mercy?
Did I have false gods in that I gave greater attention to than God, like money, popularity, profession, drugs, TV, fame, pleasure, property, etc.?

SECOND COMMANDMENT

"You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain." (Ex 20:7)
Did I blaspheme or insult God?
Did I take God's name carelessly?
Did I curse, or break an oath or vow?
Did I get angry with God?

THIRD COMMANDMENT

"Remember that you keep holy the Sabbath Day." (Ex 20:8)
Did I miss Mass Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault?
Did I come to Mass on time? Leave early (for example: right after receiving communion)?
Did I do work Sunday that was not necessary?
Did I set aside Sunday as a day of rest and a time set aside for God and my family?
Did I show reverence in the presence of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament?

FOURTH COMMANDMENT

"Honor your father and your mother." (Ex 20:12)
Did I disobey or disrespect my parents or legitimate superiors? Did I fulfill all my responsibilities toward my parents and family? Have

I been faithful to chores and school work?
Did I neglect my duties to my wife, husband, children, or parents? Was I overly critical or disrespectful of my spouse? Was I inattentive or cold? Am I as understanding and generous as I ought to be toward her or him?
Did I neglect to give good example?
Did I fail to actively take an interest in the moral and spiritual formation of my children?
Did I fail to educate myself on the true teachings of the Church?
Did I give scandal by what I said or did, especially to the young?
Did I encourage anyone to leave the faith?
Did I cause tension and fights in my family?
Did I care for my aged and infirm relatives?
Did I give a full day's work for a full day's pay?
Did I give a fair wage to my employees?

FIFTH COMMANDMENT

"You shall not kill." (Ex 20:13)
Did I kill or physically injure anyone?
Did I have an abortion, or advise someone else to have an abortion?
Did I use or cause my spouse to use birth control?
Did I attempt suicide?
Did I take part in or approve of euthanasia?
Did I become angry, impatient, envious, unkind, revengeful, jealous or indifferent?
Did I give bad example by drug abuse, drinking alcohol to excess, fighting, quarreling?
Did I hurt my children?

SIXTH & NINTH COMMANDMENTS

"You shall not commit adultery." (Ex 20:14)
"Anyone who looks lustfully at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his thoughts." (Mt 5:28)
Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts or desires?
Did I use impure or suggestive words? Tell impure stories? Listen to them?
Did I deliberately look at impure TV, videos, plays, pictures or movies? Or deliberately read impure materials?
Did I commit impure acts by myself or with another?
Did I practice artificial birth control?
Did I avoid the occasions of impurity?
Did I try to control my thoughts?
Did I engage in homosexual activity?
Did I respect all members of the opposite sex, or have I thought of other people as objects?

Did I or my spouse have sterilization done?
Did I abuse my marriage rights?

SEVENTH & TENTH COMMANDMENTS

"You shall not steal." (Ex 20:15) "You shall not covet your neighbor's goods." (Ex 20:17)
Did I steal, cheat, help or encourage others to steal or keep stolen goods? Have I made restitution for stolen goods?
Did I fulfill my contracts; give or accept bribes; pay my bills; rashly gamble or speculate; deprive my family of the necessities of life?
Did I waste time at work, school or at home?
Did I envy other's families or possessions?
Did I make material possessions the purpose of my life?

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." (Ex 20:16)
Did I lie?
Did I commit perjury?
Did I gossip or reveal others' faults or sins?
Did I fail to keep secret what should be confidential?

OTHER SINS

Did I fast on Ash Wednesday & Good Friday?
Did I eat meat on the Fridays of Lent or Ash Wednesday?
Did I go to Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin? Without fasting (water and medicine permitted) for one hour from food and drink? Did I make a bad confession? Did I fail to contribute to the support of the Church?
"Whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily sins against the Body and Blood of the Lord. ... He who eats and drinks without recognizing the Body eats and drinks judgment on himself." (1 Cor 11:27-29)

ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am sorry for my sins with my whole heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good I have offended you whom I should love. I firmly resolve with the help of Your grace to confess my sins, do penance and amend my life. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

"If we confess our sins, [God] who is upright can be depended upon to forgive sins, and to cleanse us from every wrong."