

# **THE CHRONICLE**

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*Grace and Saint Peter's Church*  
*Baltimore's Traditional Anglo-Catholic Parish*

**December 2009**

## From the Rector

Dear Friends in Christ,

Advent, for me, calls to mind applesauce cupcakes, cheese straws, fruitcakes, and Christmas cookies, all those smells and tastes which remain with me from my childhood. My mother was an ardent baker as well as churchman and Advent was truly a time to prepare for Christmas, both materially and spiritually. Advent is meant to be a time to get ready for Christmas.

In the early church in Rome the Advent season was but a scant week long to prepare for Christmas. The feast itself had been established in Rome about the fourth century as a kind of Christianization of the pagan celebration of the victorious sun. The Church of Rome saw in the natural occurrence of the winter solstice a sign of the risen Christ conquering sin and death. Thus the church began the celebration of the Nativity of the Son of God on December 25th. The Church in Gaul began to prepare for Christmas with a liturgy that was Lenten in tone and began on the feast of St. Martin of Tours, November 11th. This season was forty days in length and was meant to mirror Lent.

The eventual combination of these two forms of Advent began our present cycle of four Advent Sundays leading up to Christmas. Prayer and fasting before Christmas was assumed to be a good preparation. Advent took on the character of a little Lent. It is good that we not forget this when we find ourselves in the midst of Christmas shopping. Even with the reform of the liturgy, the *Gloria in excelsis* is not sung except on the greatest festivals and until recently weddings were discouraged during this season.

I think that a good preparation for the birth of the Messiah is one that uses the readings of the daily office and the Eucharist as a focus for our Advent prayer life. Prayer is of paramount importance during this busy season in that it nurtures our faith and allows us to smile at ourselves and at others. Fasting teaches us the importance of restraint during a season when the world is rarely restrained. The Sacrament of Penance reminds us that we must forgive to be forgiven. You may find it helpful to have an Advent wreath at home. Say your prayers each day as you light the appropriate candle.

Each of the Advent Sundays carries a distinct theme. Watch carefully and attentively each Sunday for a progression from the Second Coming of Christ to His first. The Advent season will do its job of preparation if you will but take the time to let it. Attend Mass often but most certainly each Sunday. Remember that all Sundays are days of obligation,

not time to be out buying Christmas Trees or other things. This year we use the readings for the year C of the three-year cycle. These readings are from the Gospel according to St. Luke. As Advent Sunday occurred on November 29<sup>th</sup> the second Sunday of Advent is our first Sunday in December and brings us to St. John the Baptist as herald of the Lord.

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is on Tuesday, December 8th. Mass will be celebrated at 12:00 Noon, and High Mass at 6:00 p.m. A Reception will take place after High Mass. Remember that this feast is a Holy Day of Obligation. It is a liturgical reminder that God's love for mankind knows no bounds and is truly timeless. Our guest preacher will be Bishop John Rabb, the Suffragan Bishop of Maryland. We are delighted to have him and want all you to come. The reception will be in the Rectory dining room and living room. Please call Nona Porter or Louise Tapper if you can bring a dish for the reception. There is a sign-up sheet in the rectory dining room. Anything but shellfish as both of our Bishops have allergies to shellfish.

The Traditional Mass of the Vigil of Christmas will be at 12:00 Noon on 24<sup>th</sup> December. The Family Mass at 6:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve is the first of our liturgical celebrations of the Feast. The Family Mass is with hymns and shall be celebrated in our beautiful Lady Chapel. The Mass of Midnight begins with a Solemn Procession to the Crèche at 11:00 p.m. followed by High Mass. The music will be Mozart and the Gospel St. Luke. Our choir will be accompanied by strings. At 7:45 a.m. on Christmas Day, Matins will be said, followed by the Mass of the Dawn when the shepherds will arrive in the words of St. Luke's Gospel. At 10:00 a.m. Christmas Day the Mass of the Day will be said. The Gospel is from St. John, who unfolds the mystery of the Incarnation.

Remember that Pat Hom and the stewardship committee are counting on you for a pledge for the coming year. If you are behind this year, please catch up. Robert Zimmerman and the Christmas decorators need your help with flower memorials for Christmas. Likewise, John Marks and the choir need your help with music memorials. Grace and St. Peter's ministry depends on your support. Good preparation for Christmas means good stewardship of time, talents, and treasure.

I remain faithfully your priest,

*The Rev'd Frederick S. Thomas, SSC*  
*Rector*

## From Father Speer

The stained glass diptych above the font in Grace and Saint Peter's Church has two dominant figures. Standing in the right panel is the woman caring for the children. Seated in the left panel is Christ Jesus calling the children and welcoming them. Begin at the crimson robe of Jesus and look to his eyes looking kindly at the children. The halo surrounds the face of Jesus. Above his left shoulder rises the garden wall and the city on a hill far away in the distance. In the blue sky float cotton candy clouds.

The balance between the two dominant figures, Jesus seated on the left and the woman standing on the right, draws my sight upward to the guardian angel and beyond my eyesight to a supreme point of balance, that is to say, God. The cotton candy clouds float to the right side. High in the upper right hand corner rises the face of a mother. Wearing a black hood and mourning robe, she presents a tiny infant to Jesus. Hear this mother's cry in the dedication below the window. The standing woman faces Jesus, her hand gently on the shoulder of the girl. The girl wears a white robe with a flowered pattern. She notices some flowers she will bring to Jesus. The boy wears a brown school robe with his leather school bag on his belt. These children walk toward Jesus and look up to him.

These children walk to the left panel on another day. The girl now has shorter hair and kneels near Jesus. The boy now wears a blue robe and kneels with hands folded. Like the spaniel that rests its chin on the knee of the master and looks up in total trust, the boy rests his chin on the knee of Jesus. We contemplate our clockwise reading of this diptych as the children look to the robe of deep crimson Jesus wears, and up to his face. In the final balance of the story Jesus receives the children and the children receive Jesus.

The memorial across the bottom of the diptych remembers two children. Are these the children in this story? Enter the baptistery of Grace and Saint Peter's Church, renew your baptismal vows, read the memorial, and decide for yourself. And read Matthew's Gospel at 19:14 for the record of the invitation Jesus speaks to the children, and to you and me.

*Father Speer*  
*Priest Associate*

## Immaculate Conception BVM

***Tuesday, December 8***

6:00 p.m. Procession and High Mass in the Presence of a Greater Prelate

*Bishop John Rabb, Guest Preacher*

**This Feast is a Holy Day of Obligation.**

## December Kalendar and Mass Intentions

*December is the Month of the Holy Nativity*

1 Feria (St Edmund Campion, M)	The Society of Jesus
2 Feria (Chantry Mass)	The faithful departed
3 St Francis Xavier, C (Feria)	The mission of the Church
4 St Peter Chrysologus, BCD (Feria)	Apostolic Faith
5 Feria	A faithful Advent
<b>6 ADVENT II</b>	Our Parish Family
7 St Ambrose, BCD (Vigil; Feria)	The Church in Milan
<b>8 IMMACULATE CONCEPTION BVM</b>	Greater Marian Devotion
9 Octave (Feria)	The All Saints Sisters
10 Translation of the Holy House of Loreto	Marian Societies
11 St Damasus I, PC (Octave; Feria)	The Church in Rome
12 Our Lady of Guadalupe (Feria)	The Church in Mexico
<b>13 ADVENT III</b>	Our Parish Family
14 Octave (Feria)	Prayerful recitation of the Rosary
15 Octave Day (Feria)	Bishop Rabb
16 Ember Day (Feria)	Bishop Sutton
17 Feria	Pope Benedict
18 Ember Day (Feria)	Seminarians
19 Ember Day (Feria; Vigil)	Nashotah House
<b>20 ADVENT IV</b>	Our Parish Family
21 ST THOMAS, Ap. M (Feria)	St. Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, NYC
22 Feria	Rowan, Archbishop of Canterbury
23 Feria	A penitent heart
24 Vigil	Our Parish Family
<b>25 NATIVITY OLJC</b>	Our Parish Family
26 ST STEPHEN, M (Octave)	St. Stephen's Church, Providence, RI
<b>27 ST JOHN, Ap. Ev. (Octave)</b>	St. John's Church, Newport, RI
28 HOLY INNOCENTS (Octave)	All Children
29 St Thomas of Canterbury, BM (Octave)	The Church of England
30 Octave	Thanksgiving for the Incarnation
31 St Sylvester, PC (Octave)	The Church in Italy

*The Rosary is now offered on the first Saturday of each month after the Noon Mass.  
All are encouraged to attend and make use of this time-honored devotion.*

## Anglicans and the Immaculate Conception

By the Immaculate Conception is meant that, while the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived in her mother's womb by the ordinary processes of human generation, in the first instant of her Conception she was cleansed from every taint of original sin, in virtue of the merits of Christ, which were applied to her by anticipation. The consequence of this miraculous preservation was that, when the Son of God took flesh of her, He did not take sinful flesh but, as the Apostle St Paul declares, He took only "the likeness of sinful flesh."

This did not mean that the Blessed Mother was incapable of sinning. She *could have* sinned, but 'full of grace,' as St Gabriel declared, she was ever faithful to this grace, and was therefore preserved sinless all the days of her life. Greater glory to her that she could have sinned and did not, than if she had been inherently incapable of sinning.

This feast in its development is especially connected with the Anglican Church. Anciently it was called the Feast of the Conception, but we find in the thirteenth century in France the Abbot Helchinius introducing the Feast of the Immaculate Conception; its observance, however, was not of obligation, being left to the will of the people. In England, however, in a council held in London in 1287, it was made obligatory, and another council in 1328 again enjoined it as binding upon the faithful. It was slow to make its way in Rome and, while widely observed, was not made a feast of precept there until 1708.

[Alban Butler writes,] "From that instant (of her Conception) the Eternal Word of God which was to take flesh of her, looked upon it as particularly incumbent on Him, in the view of His future Incarnation, to sanctify this Virgin, to enrich her with His choicest gifts, and to heap upon her the most singular favors with a profusion worthy of His omnipotence. ...Almighty God, therefore, was pleased to preserve this holy Virgin from contracting any stain of sin, whether original or actual."

From *Athletes of God*, by Father S. C. Hughson, O.H.C. Father Hughson was an Anglican priest, monk, and popular spiritual writer.

## **December Music Schedule**

### **December 6 - Advent II**

Mass in C - Baldassare Galuppi  
This Is The Record Of John - Orlando Gibbons  
Lord, We Beseech Thee - Adrian Batten

### **Tuesday, December 8 - Immaculate Conception**

*6:00 pm Procession and High Mass in the Presence of a Greater Prelate*  
Mass in C - Baldassare Galuppi  
Ave Maria - Igor Stravinsky  
Adam Lay Ybounden - Boris Ord

### **December 13 - Advent III – Rose Sunday**

Communion Service in E "Collegium Regale" - Harold Darke  
Rejoice in the Lord Alway - Anonymous  
Daughter Of Zion - Joseph Clokey

### **December 20 - Advent IV**

Missa Brevis No. 4 "Divinum Mysterium" - Healey Willan  
The White Dove - Johannes Brahms  
Ave Maria - Igor Stravinsky

### **December 24 - Christmas Eve**

*10:30 pm Prelude:*  
Weinachtskonzert - Johann Vierdanck  
Motets by Handl, Walter, and Praetorius  
*11:00 pm Midnight Mass:*  
Missa Brevis in G, K.V. 140 - W. A. Mozart  
Torches - John Joubert  
The Lamb - John Tavener

### **December 26 – St John, Apostle & Evangelist**

Missa de Sancta Maria Magdalena – Healey Willan

## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Sunday**

7:45 a.m. Matins & Low Mass

9:30 a.m. Confessions

10:00 a.m. High Mass

5:00 p.m. Evensong

### **Monday**

6:00 p.m. Low Mass

### **Tuesday**

12:00 Noon Low Mass and Holy Unction

### **Wednesday**

6:00 p.m. Low Mass

### **Thursday**

6:00 p.m. Low Mass

### **Friday**

8:45 a.m. Sung Mass

6:00 p.m. Low Mass

### **Saturday**

12:00 Noon Low Mass

12:30 p.m. Rosary (First Saturday of the month)

### **Grace and Saint Peter's Church**

The Rev'd Frederick S. Thomas, SSC, Rector

707 Park Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21201

401-539-1395

[www.graceandstpeter.org](http://www.graceandstpeter.org)