

**The Bells of St. Mary's
The Church of the Immaculate Conception**

**The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
December 29, 2019**

From Fr. Anthony Columba Ekanem, MSP—Pastor

THE FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

On this last Sunday of December, 2019, we celebrate the family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph of Nazareth for a purpose. This family is a model for all families, but that does not mean that they did not have problems. One might think that the family of Jesus is too remote, too unique, too holy to be a useful model for our families. The family had their problems to face and overcome. They had their crosses to carry. Just like other families, they enjoyed times of great joy but also suffered through terrible hardships. The delight of a newborn baby came with fear that led them to flee to a foreign land. All these happened in a family.

Today, in the middle of the Christmas Season, we celebrate the love of God for humanity, the larger human family. We are to remind ourselves of the kind love that binds a family together. For many today, are yearning for that type of love that makes one feel belong, loved, respected, supported and even to be accepted. Take a look at the family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph especially during this Christmas Season and mediate on the readings of the Gospels. They went through their own with a profound kind of love for one another.

The Christmas Season should bring family and friends together. It should help us to appreciate the love in our lives that we often take for granted. Not just to rejoice but also to reflect on our family lifestyle. Jesus is the reason for every single day of our life. We need to appreciate this.

What do you think we can do to create a real family?

As part of our Parish Family Celebration, we are inviting you to join us at:

New Year's Eve Parish Family Dance on Tuesday, December 31, 2019 in our Parish Hall from 8:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Also, as we embark on a New Parish Family Directory, please make sure you have booked for an appointment for the photograph with Ms. Dianne O' Rouke before January 4 & 5, 2020. We are anxious to get everyone in our parish to be involved in our parish activities. And so, one way to do this is to know our parishioners personally. Some people say, "A picture is worth more than a thousand words." Here is one way we can get to know that you belong and are registered and are active in our parish family.

As we draw near the end of the year, please kindly remember today pray for the larger family:

- Peace in our world, especially in the Holy Land, for an end to terrorism and civil strife; for all hostages, refugees & immigrants.
- The safety of all those who protect us: military personnel, police officers, firefighters, and all others.
- A transformation of mind and heart for those who do not believe in the sanctity of human life.
- For all healthcare professionals to make wise and ethical decisions to promote health
- The spread of the Gospel and the sanctity of all marriages and families.
- An end to all discrimination, prejudice, and hatred.
- All the sick and suffering, the dying, and the faithful departed. Pope's Prayer Intention: The Future of the Very Young
- That every country takes the measures necessary to prioritize the future of the very young, especially those who are suffering.

Before I conclude, I sincerely wish to thank every one of you for your support to our Church this year, not minding the sexual scandal we hear all around us in our Church. Like Pope Francis says, "Don't let Church failings distant you from God." Just continue to pray for all who serve in the Church. For God has His own way of purifying and strengthening His Church. For those who helped us reach our Parish Goal of \$39,500 with the Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal this year, I wish to say a 'big thank you' to you all and pray for God's abundant blessings on you and your family. If you still wish to catch up with your contributions or offerings to the Church, you can do so before we start preparing the statements early next year for your tax purposes, if you need them. Thanks!

For those who decorated our Church for our Christmas celebration, all the liturgical functionaries: from the Altar Servers, Ushers, Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion, the Lectors, the Musicians, and especially those who clean our Church every Monday without pay. May the good Lord continue to bless you all with His peace, love and joy for working for Him.

Remember to pick a copy of our 2020 Parish Calendar after Mass and also check out FORMED online to learn more about our Catholic Faith.

On behalf of our Clergy, Staff, and Parish Pastoral Council members of Immaculate Conception - St Mary's Church, I wish you all a very

Happy and Blessed New Year from our Parish Family.

Stewardship

*Tithing - God's Plan for Giving on Sunday, 12/22/19 our Offering was \$ 3, 574.00

*Next week we have our second collection for Missionary Society of St. Paul

Food Collection: Next week we will have our monthly food collection for the needy in our community and as always thank you for your generosity in helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

Special Announcement

Public School Teacher's Retreat on Saturday, January 25, 2020 from 9:00 – 1:30 pm

Next Sunday, Jan 4 & 5, 2020, there is a second collection to support The Missionary Society of St Paul of Nigeria where Fr George and Fr Tony belong. We invite you to support us in the work of the missions we are serving. By

- Sponsoring the training of a Seminarian in Nigeria.
- Helping orphans and victims of wars in Malawi, Liberia and South Sudan.
- Providing medicine for the sick, food for the hungry, and water for the thirsty in our mission.
- Opening doors of opportunity for the poor kids in our missions by funding their education and supporting our school apostolate and self – reliant projects.
- Praying regularly for the success of our mission efforts.
- considering to become an Associate Members of St Paul giving monthly to MSP missions

Parish Family Directory

January 4 & 5, is our last day for photographs to be taken. You still have time to book for an appointment for your photo with Dianne. Call the Parish Office or meet her after this weekend's Mass.

Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal

I am happy to let you know that we have reached our Parish Goal of \$39, 500. Thank you, again sisters and brothers, who have always contributed generously to this annual appeal. We are blessed to have people like you in our parish community. Our Parish Community which is made up of Arabic, Spanish, and English speaking parishioners, has never lacked behind in these annual efforts. Thank you, and may our good Lord continue to bless you.

Sundays Readings:

First Reading: Sirach 3: 2-6, 12-14 p. 44

People who revere their father will live a long life; they who obey their father bring comfort to their mother. Kindness to a parent will take lasting root.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 p. 45 Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

Second Reading: Colossians 3: 12-21 p. 45 The church at Colossae heard, "Put on...heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentles and patience." Bear with one another. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. The author wrote, be thankful, and "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

Gospel: Matthew 2: 13-15, 19-23 p. 46

Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they wed, Mary became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph decided to break the engagement. He changed his mind when an angel in a dream told him to receive Mary as his wife.

Religious Education

December 12/29– 1/4/20 - No Religious Education Classes.

January 1/11/20 - Religious Education Classes

Immaculate Conception ~ St Mary's Church

End of the Year Family Celebration 2019 December 31, 2019

from 8:00 pm - 2:00am Tickets Adults \$50.00 Children 12 a 16 \$25 Children under 12 Free

Mass Intentions for the week of December 28, to January 5, 2020

Saturday, December 28, 2019:

12:05 pm - For the Pichardo's decease Family + * Magaly Pichardo

5:00 pm - Joanne Kunny + * Anthony Kunny

7:30pm—Rafaela Navarro + * Cesar & Guadalupe Cuadra

Sunday, December 29, 2019:

7:30 am - For the Parish

9:00 am - Guadalupe Reyes * De La Familia

11:00 am - Juvenil & Celina Antao + * Eduardo & Alejandra Rodrigues

Monday, December 30, 2019:

8:15am - Bony Mathew (Living) * Mathew Joseph

12:05 pm - Mathew Joseph & Family (Living) * Bency Mathew

Tuesday December 31, 2019:

8:15am - Anthony Ricciardi + * Barry Romano

12:05 pm - Anvi John Justin (Blessing) * Anvi John

5:00 pm - James McCormick (Living) *Tony Felicissimo

Wednesday, January 1, 2020:

9:00am - William Anderson + * Tony Felicissimo

11:00 am - Rose Kunny * The Kunny Family

Thursday, January 2, 2020

8:15am - Mathew Joseph & Family (Living) * Bency Mathew

12:05 pm - Carl & Vee Motta * Son George Motta

7:00 pm - Available /Disponible

Friday, January 3, 2020:

8:15 am - Available /Disponible

12:05 pm - Luis & Amelia Rodriguez * Marta Vega

7:00 pm - Sagrado Corazon De Jesus

Saturday, January 4, 2020:

12:05 pm - Portia Fagel 40 days + * Espie Thompson

5:00 pm - Walter R. Mc. Clain + * Helen McClain

7:30pm - Available/Disponibile

Sunday, January 5, 2020:

7:30 am - For the Parish

9:00 am - Hector J. Marmolejos * Cesar Cuadra Family

11:00 am - Florinda Valdivia + * Beba Brown

Celina Antao + * Eduardo & Esther Rodriguez

+Indicates deceased *Indicates the person (s) who requested the Mass.