

## The Immaculate Conception

Why does the Catholic Church... in the middle of Advent, while preparing for Christmas... throw in yet another holy day? Why pause to honor Mary while we're prepping to party with Jesus? What is the Immaculate Conception... and why is it a big deal? God was hoping you would ask.

The Immaculate Conception is not about the conception of Jesus in Mary's womb. It's about the conception of Mary in her mother's womb years before. While Mary was conceived in the normal, human way through her parents (Joachim and Anne), the Immaculate Conception speaks to the fact that Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin. Immaculate means 'without stain.' Why would God preserve Mary from Original Sin? The quick answer: Because God is God, and He can do anything He wants. The better answer: The Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin in order to preserve her as the perfect vessel through which our Lord would become flesh to the world. This does not mean, however, that Mary was not in need of a Savior. Jesus redeemed Mary, too, but in a unique way.

You and I are conceived with the stain of original sin (unleashed in Eden by our ancestors Adam and Eve), and we need Baptism to wash away that stain and cleanse our souls. The difference is that when Mary was conceived, God intervened and chose to prevent Mary's soul from bearing that stain. Picture it like this: you're walking down a path in the forest and you fall into a deep, dark pit. That pit represents original sin. Someone reaches in to pull you out... they are now your "savior." In Mary's case, before she fell into the pit, God intervened and lifted her over it. He preserved her from the pain (and the stain). This was also a form of saving her — just in a different way.

Remember what the angel said when he greeted Mary in the Gospel of Luke, "Rejoice, O highly favored daughter!" (Luke 1:28). The better, more accurate translation reads, "Rejoice, you who are full of grace!" (from the Greek phrase kecharitomenē). Without getting too deep into Greek here, it's important to note that the term indicates that Mary was "graced" already (not by the angel's visit) and that she still was presently. The Greek speaks to her character and quality, not her luck. This was not an announcement that Mary had randomly won some divine lottery. She had been set apart... chosen and preserved... from the beginning of time. This means that God prepared Mary to be clean (sinless) so that she could give birth to the Son of God. This doesn't mean that she was never tempted. She was. But the Church says that she was filled with the love of the Holy Spirit and that there was no room for sin to take over. That's a lot of love. If you want to read more about this teaching, check out the Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 721 – 726.



Our November Youth Night had a special guest...Sister Faustina from the community of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary located in Waukesha, WI. <https://schoenstatt-wisconsin.us/> Sister Faustina was able to arrange to arrive at 5:30pm and share a meal and talk with some of our High School girls about life and vocations. Then after the meal we gathered in the gym where the students worked on some brain teasers in their small groups, and after that we settled in for a Q & A with Sister. She answered questions about her life, family and dress to just name a few. It was a wonderful night and thank you to all that were apart of it.





*"Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did."*  
 -- Saint Maximilian Kolbe

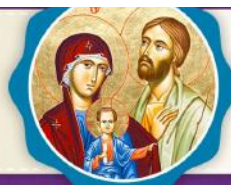
St. Nicholas was born in the third century to a wealthy family who raised him devoutly in the Faith. His parents died when he was young. Nicholas used his inheritance to serve those on the margins, truly taking our Christian call to care for the most vulnerable to heart. St. Nicholas is literally legendary. There are multiple stories and legends surrounding this generous man and his heavenly intercession. Don't forget to put out your shoes at night on the 5th for St. Nicholas to fill with gifts on the 6th!



Saint Nicholas, pray for us!

### December Schedule

- **December 5th ~ DONUTS with Santa** following the 10am Mass in Reardon Hall. All are invited! :)
- **December 7th ~ Immaculate Conception Vigil Mass 5:30pm**
- **December 8th ~** RE class 1st-5th grade 4pm-5pm// **HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION Mass 6:15pm**// RE class with 7th/8th grade and Confirmation II 6:15pm-8pm
- **December 15th ~** RE class 1st-5th grade 4pm-5pm// Mass @ 6:15pm// YOUTH NIGHT 6:15pm-8pm Christmas Caroling
- **December 16th ~** Communal Penance Service 7pm
- **December 19th ~** Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast
- **December 24th ~** Christmas Eve Mass 4pm & 11pm
- **December 25th ~** Christmas Day Mass 10am
- **December 26th ~** Sunday Mass 8am & 10am
- **December 28th ~** Feast of the Holy Innocents//Mass at 5:30pm // a time of remembrance for the many parents who have lost a baby through miscarriage, stillborn birth, or early infant death.



**A FAMILY OF FAITH**  
 Family Catechesis  
 for Our Parish

Check out our Advent Wreaths that the 1st grade Religious Ed Students: Solomon Becker, Hazel Finger and Aubrey Dailey made! Father John was even able to bless them before they took them home.



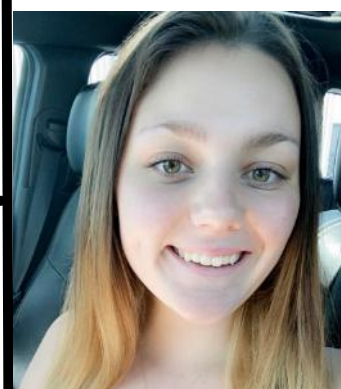
### Religious Ed Students (Young Adult Addition!)

I am so excited to feature some of our Alumni from the Religious Ed Program. I love receiving their updates! Send your updates to [re@stpatrickismauston.com](mailto:re@stpatrickismauston.com)



**Emily Patton** - I am currently studying Accounting, Business Administration, and Banking and Financial services at the University of Mary and Bismarck, North Dakota. In my free time I like to go to daily mass, hang out with friends, and go to school hockey games. One of my favorite things to do on campus is go to Exultate, a praise and worship program in one of the chapels on campus. It's amazing to experience so many students who are so passionate about praising the Lord. I'm looking forward to being home for Christmas break and seeing my friends and family back home!

I'm a CNA at the Crest View nursing home in the dementia ward. It's always a new day and old story's! I love the people and helping /taking care of their everyday needs!  
**-Summer Strack**



**Anna Boppart** is currently going to school at UMary and is a part of the Emerging Leaders Academy there. Through this servant leadership program, she has been given the opportunity to organize a service project. The picture shows her at an event last week called Freezin for a Reason. On a cold, winter day in November, people around Bismarck raise homelessness awareness while also hosting a food and clothing drive. Anna has been loving the Catholic community at UMary and the servant leadership values that it helps cultivate in every student.



I am currently living in DeForest, WI working at the UW Swine Research and Teaching Center, as well as working towards my Master's degree in Animal Nutrition. I am staying plenty busy being on the Dane County Farm Bureau board, volunteering at St. Olaf parish, and walking dogs at the Columbia County Humane Society. I try to get back home to Mauston as much as I can to spend time with my nieces and nephews, and of course my other family and friends!

~ Kadence Walsh

