

# St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church

58 Elm Street, Claremont, NH 03743

Established 1920



## St Joseph Roman Catholic Church

Website: [stjosephclaremont.org](http://stjosephclaremont.org)

Email: [stjosephsclaremont@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsclaremont@gmail.com)

### Pastor, Rev. Maria Sebastian Susairaj, HGN

Pastor's Mailing Address:

32 Pearl Street, Claremont, NH 03743

[sebaafri@comcast.net](mailto:sebaafri@comcast.net)

1-603-322-1644

### Parish Finance Council

Rick Logan, Chairman

David Smith

Sharon Wood

### Music Director

Richard Brown

### Organists

Tristan Smith

Deborah Stone

### Parish Office Hours

Wednesday, Dec. 13 10:00am to 1:00 pm  
603-542-5732

### Second Sunday of Advent Sunday, December 10, 9:15 am

For the soul (†) of Stuart Stone  
requested by Mary, Jonathan, Lianne,  
Christian and Nicholas Stone

### Diocesan Day of Prayer Wednesday December 13, 9:00 am

For the soul (†) of John Merchant  
requested by Roy, Deborah, and Jennifer Stone

### Third Sunday of Advent Sunday, December 17, 9:15 am

For the soul (†) of Grace Hamel  
requested by John Hamel and Shirley McNutt

**Today's 2nd collection is for the Retirement Fund for Religious.**

<b>Offertory December 3, 2023</b>	<b>\$1,423.00</b>
Fuel	\$572.00
Christmas Flowers	\$50.00
Church Maintenance	\$20.00
Candles	\$22.00
Mass Intentions	\$10.00
Fundraiser (Christmas Craft Fair)	\$880.50
<b>12-3-23 TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,977.50</b>
<b>Upcoming Collections</b>	
Church Maintenance	Dec 17
<b>Ongoing Collections</b>	
NH Catholic Appeal (24 donors)	\$2,366.00
Grand Annual Collection	\$2,430.00



- Prayer List**
- Rev Msgr Donald Gilbert
  - Fr. John Loughnane
  - Brenda
  - Chris Currier
  - Frederick Gallant
  - Carol Girard
  - Isabella Gowell
  - Deborah Hemingway
  - Halford Jones
  - Tim Roberts
  - Brenda Ruest
  - Janet Ruest
  - Roger Sheehan
  - Barbara Trask
  - Becky Trombley
  - Chee Chee Tyrrell

To add a name to our Prayer List, please ask the person's permission first, and then notify Sherri Smith in the Church Hall after Mass or leave a message on the Rectory's answering machine (603-542-5732)

**THANK YOU**  
to everyone who worked on and supported our Christmas Craft Fair last Saturday.

**WHEN WRITING CHECKS**  
to St. Joseph Church, please mark the name of the collection (Offertory or Specific Collection) to be sure it is put into the right place.



The Sanctuary Lamp burns 24/7 near the tabernacle in all Catholic Churches in honor of the True Presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It burns this week in memory of Paul Duval requested by Larry and Jean Duval.

**Christmas Flower Fund**  
Envelopes are available in the back of the Church for donations for Christmas altar flowers. Please write your memorial intentions clearly on the envelope so that the donation list can be printed at Christmas.



**Masses and Sanctuary Lamp**  
Intentions may be scheduled with Sherri Smith in the Church Hall after each Mass or at the Rectory during Wednesday office hours by phone (603-542-5732) or in person. Suggested donations are \$10.00.

**Grand Annual Collection**  
In October we began our parish's Grand Annual Collection. This will not be a one-time collection taken up at a weekend Mass, but an ongoing collection to build a fund for larger repair and maintenance projects on the various parish buildings, both current and future—similar to our Renovation Fund in past years. Grand Annual Collection envelopes are available at the back of the church. If you are not able to bring your weekly offertory or other donations to Mass, you may mail them to St Joseph Church, 58 Elm Street, Claremont, NH 03743 or bring it to the Rectory during Wednesday office hours. Thank you for your generosity!

# Questions *and* Answers

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## For Catholics

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One of the best ways to learn is to ask questions. Interestingly, the most significant summary of our Catholic faith was written by St. Thomas Aquinas (called the *Summa Theologica* – Summary of Theology) and is set up in a question-and-answer format. It's hard to believe an answer if you don't understand the question it is addressing. The Q&A below is no *Summa Theologica*, but hopefully some of these reflections will answer questions that are important to you.

**Q. Is it a sin if we miss Sunday Mass if we have a valid reason like dangerous weather conditions or sick child at home?**

**A. This is a good and practical question that I'm sure many people deal with from time to time. So thanks for asking! I think the answer is very simple. And I think the best way to answer it is to first highlight the reason we are "obliged" to attend Sunday Mass and certain holy days.**

First of all, in our day and age, in the culture we live in, there is a tendency to dislike authority and being told what to do. We value our freedom. But sometimes we value it to the point of forgetting the role of legitimate authority in our lives. Parents know that kids, especially teenagers, dislike being told what to do and what the rules are. But this is an act of love and necessary. Similarly, God gave the Church, in the person of the pope in particular, the authority to oblige us to certain days of worship. But we should never forget this is a grace and a good thing! It's a way of knowing, with certainty, what God wants regarding our worship of Him at the Mass. So in exercising this authority the Church has bound us to worship at Mass on Sundays and certain holy days.

Again, this is a good thing and frees us from the burden of trying to figure it out all by ourselves. With that said, and with a proper understanding of the obligation to attend Mass those days then, yes, it's a sin to intentionally miss Mass through our own fault. It's an act of disobedience and also a disregard for the sacredness of the holy Mass. I realize this is hard to swallow for some and our defenses want to immediately go up sometimes when we are told what to do. But I'd want to lovingly challenge anyone feeling that way to realize this "obligation" really is an act of love from God and His Church.

Now to the heart of your question. What if it's bad weather or you have a sick child or something similar? I don't think there is any black and white answer to this other than to say God is a very reasonable God and would never impose upon us a burden that is unreasonable and too burdensome. So, to be direct, I do think there could be very legitimate reasons someone would miss Mass and it would be the right decision. The obvious example may be the elderly person who cannot drive very well in the midst of a snow storm. Is God going to be angry if this person is too afraid to brave the roads for fear of getting stuck or in an accident? I think not. Again, God is not unreasonable. And the sick child could be another legitimate example.

But be cautioned! Sometimes our tendency is to take advantage of the generosity of God. A good rule of thumb for missing Mass for a reasonable cause would be that you would not go out for any reason whatsoever! So, for example, if you decide to miss Mass because of snow but then go to the movies, or the store or McDonald's then we are the ones being unreasonable and are not being honest with the situation. Some also miss for reasons of inconvenience such as being on vacation. But, again, this is not a reasonable excuse barring impossibility.

The last point I'll make, which could so easily be missed, is that we should never forget that going to Mass is an incredible privilege! The obligation mentality is the minimalist approach. The truth is that we should work toward fostering a deep desire to attend Mass because we have discovered the great spiritual benefits of celebrating it and receiving our Lord in Holy Communion! If we can achieve this mind frame I think we will always know what to do.

### Readings for the Week - December 10, 2023

**Sunday, December 10, 2023** Is 40:1-5, 9-11 Ps 85:9-10-11-12, 13-14 2 Pt 3:8-14 Mk 1:1-8

**Monday, December 11, 2023** Is 35:1-10 Ps 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14 Lk 5:17-26

**Tuesday, December 12, 2023** Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab Jdt 13:18bcde, 19 Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47

**Wednesday, December 13, 2023** Is 40:25-31 Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8 and 10 Mt 11:28-30

**Thursday, December 14, 2023** Is 41:13-20 Ps 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13ab Mt 11:11-15

**Friday, December 15, 2023** Is 48:17-19 Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6 Mt 11:16-19

**Saturday, December 16, 2023** Sir 48:1-4, 9-11 Ps 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19 Mt 17:9a, 10-13

### Second Sunday of Advent

**Entrance Hymn: No. 194**  
"On Jordan's Bank"

**Offertory Hymn: No. 198**  
"Come, O Long Expected Jesus"

**Communion: (Choir)**

**Recessional Hymn: No. 200**  
"Savior of the Nations, Come"



**CHOIR  
REHEARSAL**  
**Wed. Dec. 13**  
**6:30 pm**  
**New members  
welcome!**

Today's Mass Readings are  
Second Sunday of Advent / B  
on page #481.

**Confessions  
at St. Mary Church**  
Fridays 9:30 am  
Saturdays 3:00 - 3:45pm



### Oplátky for Christmas

\$3 for a packages of four  
traditional Polish wafers inside an  
illustrated envelope with the story  
of the tradition printed on the back.  
Available in the church hall after Mass, in  
the rectory during Wednesday office hours  
or  
call 603-542- 5732 or  
stjosephsclaremont@gmail.com

### Winter Weather Cancellations:

If it becomes necessary to  
cancel the Wednesday  
afternoon Mass, rectory office  
hours or choir rehearsal, we  
will again be using the WMUR-  
TV notification system. Please  
check the cancellations listed



**Coffee Hour  
After Today's Mass**  
**All are welcome!**  
**Free Will Offering**

**Raffle Drawings**  
of 1-20 Raffle prizes  
at today's Coffee Hour!  
Proceeds to benefit the  
Fuel Fund  
Winners announced  
in next week's bulletin.

**PECANS may be  
purchased  
in the church hall  
after Mass.**

**Knights of  
Columbus 3rd  
Degree**  
**Monday Dec. 11,**  
**7pm**  
**Council Chambers,  
St Mary's Gym**

**Catholic Daughters  
Christmas Gathering**  
**Sunday Dec 17**  
**1:00 pm**  
**St. Joseph  
Church Hall**



### Homebound?

Schedule a visit with  
Fr. Sebastian on the  
2nd Monday of the month.  
Call St Mary Parish Office  
603-542-9518 or email  
sebaafri@comcast.net

### Safety and Security

Please remember to  
lock your car doors  
while attending any  
event in the church.

If you use email and would like to be placed on  
the Parish email list to receive timely updates to our  
church schedule, please send an email to:  
**stjosephsclaremont@gmail.com**

You can view our bulletin, and other valuable  
information, on our new website at  
**stjosephclaremont.org**

**PLEASE NOTE:** The email address uses St Josephs  
(plural) but the website address is singular (St Joseph)

### HAVE YOU HEARD OF "FORMED"?

It's a premier online platform filled with over 4,000 Catholic studies, movies,  
audio dramas, talks, e-books and even cartoons for children.

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Both St Mary and St Joseph parishioners can access the site  
and Fr. Sebastian would like us to take advantage of this opportunity.  
Go to [formed.org](http://formed.org), click on "sign up," type in our church's zip code (03743)  
and select the St Mary Church pop-up.

You'll be surprised at what you will find to watch, listen, and learn!

### CHANGE IN BULLETIN DEADLINE

Because of the upcoming holiday  
schedules at JCCP, our bulletin printers,  
there are much earlier deadlines for us to  
send them our completed bulletins.

If you have something you would like to  
see put into our bulletin in the next two  
weeks, please send it ASAP to  
[stjosephsclaremont@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsclaremont@gmail.com)



## Feast Days and Memorials

### December 10: Second Sunday of Advent (Peace)

Advent Candles, shining brightly in the midst of darkness, are symbols that remind us of Jesus, who came as Light into our dark world. During this 2nd week of Advent, the "Candle of Peace" is lit. Let us we reflect on our lives and orient ourselves toward Christ's coming, preparing our hearts to receive Him anew.

**Colossians 3:15** - "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace."

**Prayer:** "Almighty God, you offer rest for our hearts, and peace for our souls."

### December 11: St Damasus, Pope, 306-384

Damasus was elected Pope when he was a sixty-year-old deacon. His reign was marked by violence because of a rival group that fought to overthrow him in favor of another candidate. Although his Papacy was marked by continued struggle, Pope Damasus left his mark with accomplishments that have lasted longer than his opponents. He was responsible for changing the liturgical language of the Church from Greek to Latin, and commissioned Saint Jerome to translate the Scriptures into Latin. He worked hard to preserve and restore the catacombs, the graves of the martyrs, and relics. He is also known for his epigrams (short sayings in verse) about martyrs and saints.

### December 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe

Patron of the Americas

On December 9, 1531, in Mexico, Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego, a humble Aztec Indian who had recently converted to the Catholic faith. She asked him to go to the Bishop to ask for a church to be built on Tepeyac Hill, and as proof that he had truly seen her, she instructed him to pick beautiful roses that were growing on the hill, despite the rocky ground and December cold. The image that we know as Our Lady of Guadalupe was imprinted on his cloak by the roses as he carried them to the Bishop. He became the first Roman Catholic indigenous saint from the Americas.

### December 13: St Lucy, Virgin and Martyr, 283-304

Patron of the blind and of eyesight

Lucia, whose name can mean "light" or "lucid," was a young Christian woman in the early 4th century who lived in Syracuse, a city on the Italian island of Sicily. She was martyred during the persecution of Christians under the reign of Diocletian. Refusing an arranged marriage with a pagan, Lucy prayed to St. Agatha to cure her mother's illness and persuade her to allow her daughter to commit her life to God. The rejected bridegroom reported to the governor that she was a Christian, and he ordered that she be tortured and executed.

### December 14: Memorial of St John of the Cross, Priest, 1542-1591

Patron of contemplatives, mystics and Spanish poets

Juan de Yepes y Alvarez was born in Avila, Spain. His father worked as an accountant for wealthy members of his family. When he married a poor woman from a lower class his family disowned him. When Juan was young, his father and older brother died and his mother worked as a weaver to support her family. Sent to a boarding school for poor children, Juan received a religious education and embraced the religious life from a young age. He joined the Carmelite Order and became an expert on the Bible. After meeting Teresa of Avila, who was known for leading a strict and simple life, John of the Cross desired to follow that regimen too. Caught up in a reform movement that erupted in violent disagreement among the Carmelites, he was persecuted and imprisoned for disobedience. It was while in prison that John of the Cross became an influential poet. He is also known for experiencing a vision and making a small drawing of what he saw: Christ on the Cross, looking down from above.

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

<https://mycatholic.life/>

<https://www.stnicholascenter.org/>

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