Advent and Christmas

Edited by Jennifer Gregory Miller and Darden Brock

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Advent and Christmas

by Jennifer Gregory Miller and Darden Brock
(Editors)

First of six volumes covering the 2019-2020 Catholic liturgical year, including all the days of the Advent and Christmas seasons.

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Introduction to Christmas

December 25th (Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas))

December 26th (Feast of St. Stephen, first martyr)

December 27th (Feast of St. John, apostle and evangelist)

December 28th (Feast of the Holy Innocents, martyrs)

December 29th (Feast of the Holy Family)

December 30th (Sixth day in the Octave of Christmas)

December 31st (Optional Memorial of St. Sylvester I, pope)

January 1st (Octave of Christmas and Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Holy Day of Obligation USA))

January 2nd (Memorials of St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen, bishops and doctors)

January 3rd (Friday of the Weekdays of Christmas; Optional Memorial of the Most Holy Name of Jesus)

January 4th (Memorial of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious)

January 5th (The Epiphany of the Lord)

January 6th (Optional Memorial of St. Andre Bessette, religious; Epiphany (traditional))

January 7th (Optional Memorial of St. Raymond of Penafort, priest; St. Andre Bessette, religious (Can))

January 8th (Tuesday Christmas Weekday)

January 9th (Wednesday Christmas Weekday; Venerable Pauline-Marie Jaricot)

January 10th (Thursday Christmas Weekday)

January 11th (Friday Christmas Weekday)

January 12th (Feast of the Baptism of the Lord)
Introduction to the Liturgical Year

The Church inculcates Christ and His mission through the patterns and rhythms of her Liturgical Year. She is herself the universal sacrament of salvation and the visible manifestation on earth of the presence of the Kingdom of God even now. But the Church also has various ministries and means by which she carries out her special mission. The Liturgical Year is perhaps the most important means she uses to sanctify the concept of time itself.

During the course of the Liturgical Year, the saving actions of Christ are presented again to the Faithful in an effective spiritual sequence that provides occasions for deepening our experience of Christ, for giving scope to our need for fasts and feasts, penance and joy, the remission of sin and the foretaste of heavenly glory. The annual cycle invites us to live the Christian mysteries more deeply, to let the Christ-life seep into our very bones, and in so doing to transform and renew all human endeavors, all human culture.

The backbone of the Liturgical Year is the Liturgical Calendar, an annual cycle of seasons and feasts which both commemorate and invite us to more fully enter into the real history of our salvation. At the same time, the days devoted to the celebration of many of the Church’s saints provide us with inspiring models of what it means to exemplify the love and virtues which Our Lord and Savior so zealously wishes us to share. In this way, we may develop in and through time a heart like unto His own.

On the CatholicCulture.org website, we have collected and organized a great many resources for helping all of us to live the Liturgical Year more consciously and more actively. In addition to the accounts of the nature, history and purposes of the great feasts, and of course the lives of the saints, we have brought together a wide variety of customs for celebrating the various seasons and feasts which have grown up in cultures throughout the world. And in connection with these customs, we have also collected appropriate prayers and devotions, family activities, and even receipes—the better to help us taste and see the glory of the Lord! (Ps 34:8)

All of these resources are organized according to the Liturgical Calendar, and many of them are deliberately oriented toward use by the family, or what recent popes have referred to as the domestic church. The family is to be the Church in miniature, the first of all Christian communities, the warm embrace in which new souls are claimed for Christ and nourished in every way for His service. The family is also the source of the
Church’s manifold vocations, including the vocations of those who dedicate themselves exclusively to Christ and the Church’s service as priests and religious. Thus, in every way, the Church public, the Church as a whole, the mystical body of Christ in its fulness, depends on the health and strength of the domestic church, even as she nourishes the domestic church through her presence, her sacraments, her counsel, her teaching—and, of course, her Liturgical Year.

It is not possible in an eBook to reproduce the full richness and flexibility of these resources as they are presented on our website (www.catholicculture.org). The visual displays of eBooks cannot, in most cases, equal those of web pages, and it is generally not as easy to follow the many links available to explore the full range of offerings. What we have done in the volumes of this series is to present the days of the Liturgical Year in sequence, grouped in their proper seasons, so that the user can follow the unfolding of the Liturgical Year with immediate access to the meaning of each day, complete with its spiritual and liturgical explanations, and its biographies of the saints. Following the basic presentation for each day are many links to additional information, prayers, activities and recipes which relate specifically to that day or the Season as a whole.

These materials can be used with profit by anyone. However, if we were to offer specific advice to parents on how they may make the best use of all the resources in their own families, we would emphasize the following two points:

First, remember that all of us, but especially children, grow spiritually when we have the opportunity to associate living examples, customs and activities with God’s love and saving power. This sort of participation helps children to learn the Faith along with their mother’s milk, so to speak—or, as we said above, to get it into their very bones. Children also need heroes, and one way or another they will find them. The saints make the best of all possible heroes.

Second, avoid trying to do too much. Select carefully and emphasize a few things that you believe will work well in your situation. Keep your attitude joyful and relaxed. With a little judicious planning, let your family’s own customs grow and develop over time. Much of this will be carried on for generations to come, generations which trace their own faith to and through you.

A word, finally, on the sources of much of the material presented both in this eBook and on the much larger web site. Many of these wonderful books are, sadly, out of print, but we owe a great debt to them. You may enjoy pursuing some of these sources on your own. The years listed are the original publication dates; some have gone through multiple editions. They include:

www.catholicculture.org
• Berger, Florence. *Cooking for Christ* (National Catholic Rural Life Conference) 1949

• Burton, Katherine and Helmut Ripperger. *The Feast Day Cookbook*, 1951

• Butler, Alban. *Butler’s Lives of the Saints* (updated since the 18th century, up to 12 volumes depending on edition)


• Gueranger, OSB (Abbot). *The Liturgical Year*, 1983

• Kelly, Fr. George A. *Catholic Family Handbook*, 1959

• Lodi, Enzo. *Saints of the Roman Calendar*, 1993


• Mueller, Therese. *Our Children’s Year of Grace*, 1943

• Newland, Mary Reed. *Saints and Our Children*, 1958

• Newland, Mary Reed. *We and Our Children*, 1954

• Newland, Mary Reed. *The Year and Our Children*, 1956

• Parsch, Dr. Pius. *The Church’s Year of Grace* (5 volumes), 1953

• Trapp, Maria Augusta. *Around the Year with the Trapp Family*, 1955

• Weiser, Francis X., SJ. *The Easter Book*, 1954.

May you find in this series of volumes on the Liturgical Year a true gateway to the riches of Christ!

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/introduction-to-liturgical-year/
Introduction to Advent

The Church begins a new Liturgical Year on the First Sunday of Advent. During the subsequent four weeks, she prepares with mounting expectation for the coming of Christ in a spirit of waiting, conversion and hope. This is in marked contrast to our commercial society, which begins enjoying Christmas in October and frequently ends by leaving people all “Christmased out” by the time the Christmas season actually starts on December 24th. Advent holds the key to preparing properly for Our Lord’s saving action in history, which we relive throughout the Liturgical Year.

Advent includes elements of both penitence and joy. In 490, Bishop Perpetuus of Tours officially declared Advent a penitential season in the Frankish Church of Western Europe, ordering a fast on three days of every week from November 11 until Christmas. This forty days’ fast, similar to Lent, was originally called *Quadragesima Sancti Martini* (Forty Days’ Fast of Saint Martin’s). By contrast, the Advent season of the Roman liturgy, developing a century after that of the Frankish Church, was a non-penitential, festive and joyful time of preparation for Christmas. By the thirteenth century a compromise was reached, which combined the fasting and penitential character of the Gallic observance with the Mass texts and shorter four-week cycle of the Roman Advent liturgy. The liturgy of Advent remained substantially unaltered until Vatican II mandated a few minor changes to more clearly delineate the spirit of the Lenten and Advent seasons.

Again, Advent is the beginning of the Church year, and for all of us it provides an opportunity for a fresh start. There are many popular traditions which can help us to inculcate the spirit of Advent in our lives and our homes. Among these are the Advent wreath, the Advent calendar, the Jesse Tree, and the use of the O Antiphons. More information about these traditions and customs is available on our web site, especially in the *Advent Workshop*.

In addition, the various feasts which we celebrate during the Advent season remind us of those holy men and women who most fully lived the Advent spirit of yearning for Christ. They form a rich and varied background for our own spiritual progress during this important season. In Advent, we enjoy the Communion of the Saints in a special way, asking their help in preparing for the coming of Jesus in our hearts.

There are always four Sundays in Advent, though not necessarily four full weeks. The liturgical color of the season is violet or purple, except on the Third Sunday of

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Advent, called *Gaudete* or Rejoice Sunday, when optional rose vestments may be worn. The Gloria is not recited during Advent liturgies, but the Alleluia is retained.

The prophesies of Isaiah are read often during the Advent season, but all of the readings of Advent focus on the key figures of the Old and New Testaments who were prepared and chosen by God to make the Incarnation possible: the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph, Sts. Elizabeth and Zechariah. The expectancy heightens from December 17 to December 24 when the Liturgy resounds with the seven magnificent Messianic titles of the O Antiphons.

**Advent Workshop**

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:  
http://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/intro-advent/
Advent: December 1st

First Sunday of Advent

Old Calendar: First Sunday of Advent

For Catholics, the new Liturgical Year commences with the first Sunday of Advent. In this new liturgical year, the Church not only wishes to indicate the beginning of a period, but the beginning of a renewed commitment to the faith by all those who follow Christ, the Lord. This time of prayer and path of penance that is so powerful, rich and intense, endeavors to give us a renewed impetus to truly welcome the message of the One who was incarnated for us. In fact, the entire Liturgy of the Advent season, will spur us to an awakening in our Christian life and will put us in a ‘vigilant’ disposition, to wait for Our Lord Jesus who is coming:

‘Awaken! Remember that God comes! Not yesterday, not tomorrow, but today, now! The one true God, “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”, is not a God who is there in Heaven, unconcerned with us and our history, but he is the-God-who-comes.’

The Season of Advent is therefore a season of vigilant waiting, that prepares us to welcome the mystery of the Word Incarnate, who will give the ‘Light’ to the womb of the Virgin Mary, but essentially this time prepares us not only to welcome this great event but to incarnate it in our lives. We could say that the true light enters the world through the immaculate womb of Mary but it does not stay there. On the contrary, this light flows out into our dark, obscure, sinful lives to illuminate them, so that we can become the light that illuminates the world. For this reason, let us live this time of waiting not only to celebrate a historical memory but to repeat this memory in our lives and in the service of others. To wait for the Lord who comes, means to wait and to watch so that the Word of Love enters inside us and focuses us every day of our lives.

www.catholicculture.org
As Blessed John Henry Newman reminded us in a homily for the Advent Season: “Advent is a time of waiting, it is a time of joy because the coming of Christ is not only a gift of grace and salvation but it is also a time of commitment because it motivates us to live the present as a time of responsibility and vigilance. This ‘vigilance’ means the necessity, the urgency of an industrious, living ‘wait’. To make all this happen, then we need to wake up, as we are warned by the apostle to the Gentiles, in today’s reading to the Romans: ‘Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed’ (Rm 13:11).

We must start our journey to ascend to the mountain of the Lord, to be illuminated by His Words of peace and to allow Him to indicate the path to tread (cf. Is 2:1-5). Moreover, we must change our conduct abandoning the works of darkness and put on the ‘armor of light’ and so seek only to do God’s work and to abandon the deeds of the flesh (cf. Rm 13:12-14). Jesus, through the story in the parable, outlines the Christian lifestyle that must not be distracted and indifferent but must be vigilant and recognize even the smallest sign of the Lord’s coming because we don’t know the hour in which He will arrive (cf. Mt 24:39-44)

Pope Benedict XVI, *Celebration of First Vespers of Advent, Vatican Basilica, December 2006*

Excerpted from the website of Congregation for the Clergy

The traditional Collect (or opening prayer) of the last Sunday of the Church year began “Stir up the wills of Thy faithful people, we beseech Thee, O Lord…” With this request to God to “stir up” our wills, this day was traditionally called Stir-Up Sunday. Because the Ordinary Form celebrates the Solemnity of Christ the King on the last Sunday of the year, “Stir-Up Sunday” is often the First Sunday of Advent. The traditional Collect of the First Sunday is asking God to stir up His might: “Stir up Thy might, we beg Thee, and come.” Many families create a traditional plum pudding or fruit cake or some other recipe that all the family and guests can “stir-up.” This activity of stirring-up the ingredients symbolizes our hearts that must be stirred in preparation for Christ’s birth.

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www.catholicculture.org
What You Need to Know About Advent

A short explanation of the Advent season and its significance in the Liturgical Year.

The History, Customs and Folklore of Advent

Resources for Celebrating Advent in the Home

Jesse Tree Instructions

Jesse Tree ~ Day 1, Creation

Jesse Tree Overview

The Jesse Tree dates back to the middle ages and came from Europe. Even some ancient cathedrals have Jesse Tree designs in their stained glass windows. The “tree” is usually a branch or sapling and is decorated with various symbols that remind us of the purpose and promises of God from Creation to the Birth of Jesus Christ.

Jesse was the father of King David and God promised David that his Kingdom would last forever. Two centuries after the death of King David, God spoke through the prophet Isaiah and said:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-2)
Each Jesse Tree ornament usually consists of a handmade symbol or drawing that represents one of the major stories of the Old Testament along with a brief verse of Scripture from that story.

Commentary for the Readings in the Extraordinary Form: First Sunday of Advent

“There will be signs in the ...(heavens)...and upon the earth, distress of nations...they will see the Son of Man coming...lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand” (Gospel).

On His second Advent at the end of the world Jesus will come in the fullness of Divine Power. Then will we be obliged to accept Him as King of Justice. So today let us begin to prepare for this year’s anniversary of His first Advent as King of Mercy.

Because His coming is “nearer” we are warned to “rise from sleep,…lay aside the works of darkness…and put on he Lord Jesus Christ” (Epistle).

A aware of the dangers ahead during this preparation, we call upon His “power” to protect us (Prayer) and to “cleanse us” (Secret). Finally, we promise to “prepare with due reverence for the coming festival” (Postcommunion).

Excerpted from My Sunday Missal, Confraternity of the Precious Blood

Daily Readings for: December 01, 2019
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to
meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- Plum Pudding I
- Plum Pudding II
- Plum Pudding III
- Plum Pudding IV
- Plum Pudding V
- Rich Dark Fruit Cake II

**ACTIVITIES**

- Advent and the Year of the Eucharist
- Advent Calendar II
- Advent or Mary Candle I
- Advent or Mary Candle II
- Advent Wreath I
- Advent Wreath II
- Advent Wreath III
- Advent Wreath V
- Advent Wreath: Background and How To Make Your Own Wreath
- Advent Wreath: Making Your Own
- Gifts for Jesus, the Advent Manger
- Jesse Tree Instructions
- Jesse Tree Symbols
- Jesse Tree, Day 1 - Creation
• Posters for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany
• Religion in the Home for Elementary School: December
• Religion in the Home for Preschool: December
• Stir-Up Sunday
• Stir-Up Sunday - First Sunday in Advent

**PRAYERS**

• Blessing of the Advent Wreath
• Hungarian wheat
• Advent Prayers
• Jesse Tree Prayer Service
• Advent Table Blessing 1
• Book of Blessings: Blessing of an Advent Wreath (First Sunday of Advent)
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
• Novena to the Immaculate Conception

**LIBRARY**

• Caryll Houselander and the Flowering of Christ | Janet Golden

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-01
Advent: December 2nd

Monday of the First Week of Advent

Old Calendar: St. Bibiana, virgin and martyr

According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, today is the feast of St. Bibiana who was martyred at Rome under Julian the Apostate in 363.

St. Bibiana

St. Bibiana was a Roman who was martyred during the time of Julian the Apostate. A legend states that Bibiana’s parents, Flavian and Dafrosa, were devout Christians as well. Dafrosa was beheaded, and Flavian, who was a former Roman prefect, had his face burned with a hot iron and was exiled. Bibiana and Demetria, her sister, were forced to remain in their house after all their possessions had been taken from them. For five months the two sisters fasted and prayed. When they appeared in court, Demetria died on the spot, and the judge handed Bibiana over to a woman named Fufina. This woman tried to tempt Bibiana to be unfaithful to Christ, but her efforts were in vain. Bibiana was scourged to death with whips that were loaded with lead. Her corpse was left out in the open for dogs to eat, but no dogs touched it, and after two days a priest
named John took the body at night and buried it. St. Bibiana is one of the three virgin martyrs particularly venerated in Rome, the other two being St. Cecilia and St. Agnes.

**Patron:** Diocese of Los Angeles, California; epilepsy; epileptics; hangovers; headaches; insanity; mental illness; mentally ill people; single laywomen; torture victims.

**Symbols:** pillar; branch of a tree; dagger; scourge; column and scourge with leaded thongs.

**Things to Do:**

- Saint Bibiana lost everything except her faith. Say a prayer for those you know who are grieving the loss of loved ones, homes, jobs, health or some other tragedy.

- In imitation of St. Bibiana, resolve, with the help of God’s grace, that no human considerations or advantages, no human ties and affections, will ever move you to surrender your Catholic faith, to deflect from God’s commandments, to defile yourself with mortal sin or to lose the priceless pearl of chastity.

- Say this prayer in honor of St. Bibiana: O God, the giver of all good gifts, who didst bestow on thy servant Bibiana both the flower of virginity and the palm of martyrdom; we pray thee, that, by her intercession, our hearts may in such wise be joined in charity unto thee; that we, being defended against all dangers, may attain unto the rewards of everlasting salvation. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

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**Daily Readings for: December 02, 2019**

(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** Keep us alert, we pray, O Lord our God, as we await the advent of Christ your Son, so that, when he comes and knocks, he may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in his praise. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
RECIPES

- Pepparkakor (Ginger Cookies)

ACTIVITIES

- Religion in the Home for Elementary School: December
- Religion in the Home for Preschool: December

PRAYERS

- December Devotion: The Immaculate Conception
- Collect for Feast of St. Bibiana
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
- Novena to the Immaculate Conception
- Novena to St. Francis Xavier - The Novena of Grace

LIBRARY

- None

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-02
Advent: December 3rd

Memorial of St. Francis Xavier, priest

Old Calendar: St. Francis Xavier

St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552) was born in the castle of Xavier in Navarre, Spain. In 1525 he went to Paris where he met St. Ignatius Loyola and with whom he received Holy Orders in Venice in 1537. In 1540 he was sent to evangelize India. He labored in western India, the island of Ceylon, Malacca, Molucca Islands, island of Mindanao (Philippines), and Japan. In 1552 he started on a voyage to China but died on Sancian Island.

Jesse Tree ~ The Fall of Man

St. Francis Xavier
This saint, one of the Church’s most illustrious missionaries, came from a noble Basque family in Spain. He studied at the University of Paris, where he taught philosophy after obtaining his degree of master of arts. Here he met Ignatius of Loyola and was enrolled as one of the first seven Jesuits. They decided to go to the Holy Land, but the war between the Turks and Venice prevented this, so for a time Francis labored at Padua, Bologna, and Rome.

In 1540 Ignatius chose him as the first missionary to the Portuguese East Indies. Francis sailed from Lisbon armed with four papal briefs making him nuncio with full powers and recommending him to the Eastern princes. He landed at Goa in India and began a vast apostolate lasting over ten years. Here he instructed the adults, gathered the children by ringing a bell in the streets, catechized them, and also visited the hospitals and prisons. He then turned to the native Indians, teaching the simple folk by versifying Catholic doctrine and fitting the verses to popular tunes. He then went on to Cape Comorin and began the conversion of the Paravas, some days baptizing so many that at night he could not raise his arm from fatigue. Then to Travencore where he founded forty-five churches in various villages. Then to Malacca in Malaya, and for eighteen months from island to
island, preaching, instructing, baptizing.

On his return to Goa he heard of the vast harvest of souls awaiting the laborers in Japan and he set out for this field with several companions, arriving at Kagoshima in 1549. He set himself to learn the language and started to preach and teach with such success that twelve years later his converts were found still retaining their first fervor. In 1551 he returned to Malacca to revisit his converts in India. Now a new goal loomed up before his eyes—pagan China, but he was not to reach it.

Arriving on the island of Sancian at the mouth of the Canton river, he became ill of a fever and would have died abandoned on the burning sands of the shore if a poor man named Alvarez had not taken him to his hut. Here he lingered for two weeks, praying between spells of delirium, and finally died, his eyes fixed with great tenderness on his crucifix. He was buried in a shallow grave and his body covered with quicklime, but when exhumed three months later it was found fresh and incorrupt. It was taken to Goa where it is still enshrined. St. Francis Xavier was proclaimed patron of foreign missions and of all missionary works by Pope St. Pius X.

Excerpted from  *A Saint A Day* by Berchmans Bittle, O.F.M.Cap

**Patron:** African missions; diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana; Apostleship of Prayer; Australia; black missions; Borneo; China; East Indies; foreign missions; Goa, India; diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin; India; archdiocese of Indianapolis, Indiana; Japan; diocese of Joiliet, Illinois; missionaries; Missioners of the Precious Blood; Navarre, Spain; navigators; New Zealand; parish missions; plague epidemics; Propagation of the Faith.

**Symbols:** bell; crucifix; vessel; Pilgrim’s staff; rosary; lily; font; ship and crucifix; globe.

**Often portrayed as:** young bearded Jesuit with a torch, flame, cross and lily; young bearded Jesuit in the company of Saint Ignatius Loyola; preacher carrying a flaming heart.

**Things to Do:**

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www.catholicculture.org
• What does it mean to be an apostle? Consider how you might imitate St. Francis Xavier in apostolic works in your own situation. Read this letter from St. Francis to St. Ignatius to get an idea of his zeal.

• Read some more about St. Francis and ideas for Celebrating the Feast of St. Francis Xavier.

• St. Francis was sent to India and Japan. Pray for the Church in these countries, and learn more about the modern Church in India here and here, read about the history of the Church in Japan.

• Find out about and support the Holy Childhood Association (St. Francis always started with the children first).

• Teach your children to pray St. Francis’ favorite prayer, “Give me souls” when they have some suffering to offer up.

• Spend some time meditating on St. Ignatius’ response to St. Francis before his conversion, “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but suffers the loss of his soul?”

• Say the Litany of St. Francis Xavier.

• Make a big pot of soup for the Feast of St. Francis Xavier.

• Study some beautiful art depicting St. Francis Xavier at Olga’s Gallery.

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Daily Readings for: December 03, 2019
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: O God, who through the preaching of Saint Francis Xavier won many peoples to yourself, grant that the hearts of the faithful may burn with the same zeal for the faith and that Holy Church may everywhere rejoice in an abundance of offspring. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPE
ACTIVITIES

- Celebrating for the Feast of St. Francis Xavier
- Nameday Ideas for the Feast of St. Frances Xavier
- St. Francis Xavier: Letter on the Missions, to St. Ignatius de Loyola, 1549

PRAYERS

- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
- Litany of St. Francis Xavier
- Christmas Anticipation Prayer
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
- Novena to the Immaculate Conception
- Novena to St. Francis Xavier - The Novena of Grace

LIBRARY

- Arrival of Relic of St. Francis Xavier | Cardinal George Pell

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-03
Advent: December 4th

Wednesday of the First Week of Advent; Optional Memorial of St. John Damascene, priest and doctor

*Old Calendar: St. Peter Chrysologus, bishop, confessor and doctor; St. Barbara, virgin and martyr*

St. John Damascene was a learned theologian who carefully gathered together and transmitted to us the teaching of the Greek Fathers, and is thus one of the most trustworthy witnesses to oriental tradition. He also wrote many liturgical hymns still in use today. St. John Damascene died in 749. Leo XIII proclaimed him a Doctor of the universal Church.

According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, today is the feast of St. Peter Chrysologus, bishop, confessor and doctor whose feast in the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite is celebrated on July 30. It is also the feast of St. Barbara, a virgin and martyr who died at Nicomedia about 235.

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**St. John Damascene**

John of Damascus or Damascene, the last of the Greek Fathers, was one of the principal defenders of the veneration of images against the Iconoclasts, who condemned this practice.
When John was born, Damascus was under the jurisdiction of caliphs, but Christians were allowed to hold high offices. John’s father was chief revenue officer of the caliph and a sterling Christian. He entrusted his son’s education to a monk, Cosmas, who had been brought from Sicily as a slave, and who schooled the young man in theology, the sciences, and poetry.

John succeeded his father in office, and while living at the court gave an example of a model Christian. But he had set his sights higher, and after resigning his office he became a monk at St. Sabbas monastery near Jerusalem. Here he spent his time writing books and composing hymns. When Leo the Isaurian issued decrees against the veneration of images, John took up the challenge and wrote treatises defending this ancient practice.

At this time the Patriarch of Jerusalem, desirous of having John among his clergy, ordained him priest and brought him to Jerusalem. After some time, however, John returned to the monastery and devoted the rest of his life to writing. His most important work is his *Fountain of Wisdom*, in which he compiled and collated the teachings of all the great theologians before him; this is the first attempt at a *Summa Theologica*, a summary of philosophy and theology, that has come down to us. John’s writings are a rich treasure of ancient traditions, and are held in high esteem. Pope Leo XIII declared him a Doctor of the Church in 1890.

St. John was such a great orator that he was known as *Chrysorrhoas* (“golden-stream”). He was the last of the Greek Fathers of the Church, and the first of the Christian Aristotelians. He also adapted choral music for use in the liturgy. His eloquent defense of Christian images has given him the title of “Doctor of Christian Art.”

— *A Saint A Day* © 1957

**Things to Do:**

- St. John Damascene has contributed much to the Church through his writings. Read all or part of his most famous work, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*.
- Check out some ideas for Celebrating the Feast of St. John Damascene.
- Learn more about his life and writings.

www.catholicculture.org
• He was famous for his opposition to the heresy of the Iconoclasts: you could find out more about this heresy.

• Learn more about Catholic Sacramentals which include statues and images.

• Purchase A Handbook of Catholic Sacramentals by Ann Ball.

• St. John Damascene was made a Doctor of the Church for his efforts to defend the faith, learn to defend the use of religious pictures and objects to your Protestant friends.

St. Barbara

Barbara (from Nicomedia) was the daughter of a pagan noble who worshipped false gods. Because of her striking beauty, her father enclosed her in a tower to hide her from the snares of men. Barbara vowed virginity, and during an absence of her father had a third window added to her quarters in honor of the Blessed Trinity; at the same time, she also adorned her bath with the sign of the holy Cross. Upon his return her father was so angered over these changes that a miracle was needed to save her life. She was presented before the magistrate, subjected to much torturing, and finally her own father wielded the sword that severed her head. Immediately God’s vengeance struck him dead. The holy virgin is highly honored both in the East and the West as patroness of artillery men and of miners. She is especially invoked for preservation from sudden death. She is one of the “Fourteen Holy Helpers.”

In the past, the following prayer to St. Barbara was often recited:

Saint Barbara, thou noble bride, To thee my body I confide As well in life as at life’s end. Come, aid me when I breathe my last, That I may, ere here all is past, Receive the Blessed Sacrament!

In certain parts of Europe, the so-called “Barbara branch” is brought into homes today. It consists of a small cherry twig that is set in water and should blossom on Christmas eve. The custom is deeply Biblical and liturgical. “The bud from the root of Jesse and the flower from its root” is Jesus Christ, whom we expectantly await during Advent and who

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will blossom forth as a flower at Christmas.

**Patron:** against death by artillery; against explosions; against fire; against impenitence; against lightning; against mine collapse; against storms; ammunition magazines; ammunition workers; architects; armourers; artillery; artillerymen; boatmen; bomb technicians; brass workers; brewers; builders; carpenters; construction workers; dying people; explosives workers; fire; fire prevention; firefighters; fireworks; fireworks manufacturers; fortifications; founders; geologists; gravediggers; gunners; hatmakers; hatters; lightning; mariners; martyrs; masons; mathematicians; military engineers; milliners; miners; ordnance workers; prisoners; safety from storms; sailors; saltpetre workers; smelters; stone masons; stonecutters; storms; sudden death; Syria; tilers; warehouses; watermen.

**Symbols:** cannon; chalice; host and paten; tower with three windows; tower and palm; monstrance; peacock feather; torches; fortress; spears; crown; book; sword; palm of martyrdom.

**Often portrayed as:** princess in a tower with either the palm of martyrdom or chalice of happy death; woman holding a tower or feather; woman trampling a Saracen.

**Things to Do:**

- Be sure to look at *Celebrating for the Feast of St. Barbara* in the Activities section. See also *Painting Angels, Saints and Their Symbols* for a description of St. Barbara’s symbols.
- Have a *St. Barbara’s Party, Syrian Style*.
- Further reading:
  - *Story of St. Barbara for Children*
  - *Encyclopedia of Catholic Saints*
  - *Short Biography and History* by Father Weiser. Read this *Life of St. Barbara*.
- Read about the German custom of St. Barbara’s Twig, where every member of the family puts a small cherry or peach branch into water so that it will blossom on Christmas. If you have a young lady in your home desiring marriage, the custom of St. Barbara’s Cherry Twigs will have St. Barbara pick the right
husband for young unmarried girls. An alternative idea to this custom would be forcing Amaryllis or other bulbs to bloom for Christmas. Start the bulbs today!

- St. Barbara is the patron of artillerymen. Offer your rosary or say a prayer for all our enlisted men and women who are in harm’s way. This page provides the Legend of St. Barbara and the explanation why she is the patron of artillerymen. Read the Ballad of St. Barbara by G. K. Chesterton.

- Read about Barbórka, Miners Day, which is celebrated in Poland and other European countries.

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**Daily Readings for: December 04, 2019**
(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** Grant, we pray, O Lord, that we may be helped by the prayers of the Priest Saint John Damascene, so that the true faith, which he excelled in teaching, may always be our light and our strength. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Prepare our hearts, we pray, O Lord our God, by your divine power, so that at the coming of Christ your Son we may be found worthy of the banquet of eternal life and merit to receive heavenly nourishment from his hands. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPEs**

- *Ghorabie* (Short Cake)
- *Mrubbah-el-Mishmush* (Apricot Candy)
- Confectioners’ Icing
- Strawberry Frosted Layer Cake
- Barbarakuchen
- Kamhié
• Schweinelendchen Barbara (Pork Tenderloin St. Barbara)
• St. Barbara’s Bread
• Stuffed Shredded Wheat

ACTIVITIES

• Celebrating for the Feast of St. Barbara
• Celebrating for the Feast of St. John Damascene
• Fourteen Holy Helpers
• Nameday Ideas for the Feast of St. Barbara, Virgin and Martyr
• Pre-Christmas Syrian Party in Honor of St. Barbara
• St. Barbara
• St. Barbara Branch or Barbarazweig
• St. Barbara, December 4
• St. Barbara, Saint of Advent
• St. Barbara’s Cherry Twigs
• St. Barbara’s Twig or Barbarazweig
• Story of St. Barbara for Children by Joan Windham

PRAYERS

• Advent Wreath Prayers I
• Advent Wreath Prayers II
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
• December Devotion: The Immaculate Conception
• Prayer for Troops
• Litany of the Fourteen Holy Helpers
• Novena in Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe
• Prayer for a Happy Death

www.catholicculture.org
• Christmas Anticipation Prayer
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
• Novena to the Immaculate Conception

LIBRARY

• The Age of Patrology | Sal Ciresi
• The Doctors of the Church | Fr. Stephen McKenna

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-04
Advent: December 5th

Thursday of the First Week of Advent

*Old Calendar: St. Sabbas, abbot*

St. Sabbas is pictured as an abbot with an apple. He was once tempted to eat an apple outside of the prescribed mealtime, whereupon he vowed never to eat apples again. The Martyrology says: “At Mutala in Cappadocia the holy abbot Sabbas; in Palestine he gave the shining example of a holy life. Untiringly he labored in defense of the true faith against those opposing the Council of Chalcedon.” In Jerusalem he built a famous laura (as oriental monasteries are called), which bears his name. When the Arabs later conquered the Holy City, the monks fled to Rome, where they built a monastery and introduced the veneration of their saint. In the Eastern Church St. Sabbas ranks high in popular devotion; he is distinguished by the titles “God-bearer, the Saint, Citizen of the Holy City, Star of the Desert, Patriarch of Monks.” This feast is celebrated in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite.

Jesse Tree – Abraham

**St. Sabbas**

Saint Sabbas the Sanctified was born in the fifth century in Cappadocia, in the pious Christian family of John and Sophia. His father was a military commander. Journeying to Alexandria on military matters, his wife went with him, but they left their five-year-old son in the care of an uncle. When the boy reached eight years of age, he entered the monastery.
of St. Flavian, located nearby. The gifted child quickly learned to read and became an expert on the Holy Scriptures. In vain did his parents urge St. Sabbas to return to the world and enter into marriage. At seventeen years of age he received monastic tonsure, and attained such perfection in fasting and prayer that he was given the gift of wonderworking. After spending ten years at the monastery of St. Flavian, he went to other monasteries. St. Sabbas lived in obedience at this monastery until the age of thirty.

He was later blessed to seclude himself in a cave. On Saturdays, however, he left his hermitage and came to the monastery, where he participated in divine services and ate with the brethren. After a certain time St. Sabbas received permission not to leave his hermitage at all, and he struggled in the cave for five years. After several years, disciples began to gather around St. Sabbas, seeking the monastic life. As the number of monks increased, a lavra sprang up. When a pillar of fire appeared before St. Sabbas as he was walking, he found a spacious cave in the form of a church.

St. Sabbas founded several more monasteries. Many miracles took place through the prayers of St. Sabbas: at the Lavra a spring of water welled up, during a time of drought there was abundant rain, and there were also healings of the sick and the demoniacs. The saint surrendered his soul to God in the year 532.

Symbols: Abbot with an apple.

Things to Do:

- Learn about the icon of the Mother of God called the “Milk-Giver” and its connection to St. Sabbas.
- Take some time-off from TV viewing and make time for family reading of the Scripture passages concerning the Messiah (portions of Isaiah, the birth and infancy narratives).
- Make preparations for the feast of St. Nicholas. Tonight many families put out their shoes or stockings for St. Nicholas to fill. Also many families celebrate with a party on St. Nicholas Eve.
- Don’t forget to pray “Hail and Blessed be the hour…” , the Christmas Anticipatory Prayer every day until Christmas.
- Read this longer biography of St. Sabas to find out why he is pictured with an

www.catholicculture.org
apple.

- Read St. Sabbas the Sanctified and his Holy Lavra.
- Visit this site to learn more about the ancient monastery established in the 5th century by St. Sabas.

Daily Readings for: December 05, 2019
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: Stir up your power, O Lord, and come to our help with mighty strength, that what our sins impede the grace of your mercy may hasten. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPES

- Bishopwyn I (Bishop’s Wine)
- Ciastka Miodowe (Honey Cakes)
- Kris Kringle Cookies
- Rozijnen Koekjes (Raisin Cookies)
- Santa Claus (St. Nicholas) Cookies
- Speculaas or Speculatius II

ACTIVITIES

- St. Nicholas Day Party
- St. Nicholas Eve
- St. Nicholas Puppet Show
- St. Nicholas’ Visit

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**PRAYERS**

- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Jesse Tree Prayer Service
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
- December Devotion: The Immaculate Conception
- Novena in Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Christmas Anticipation Prayer
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
- Novena to the Immaculate Conception
- Collect for the Feast of St. Sabbas

**LIBRARY**

- Joyful Expectation of Christmas Among Christians | Pope Benedict XVI

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:  
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-05
Advent: December 6th

Friday of the First Week of Advent; Optional Memorial of St. Nicholas, bishop

*Old Calendar: St. Nicholas, bishop and confessor*

Not much is known about this 4th century bishop, but that doesn’t diminish his popularity around the world, both in the East and West. It is known that Nicholas was born in Lycia in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) and died in 352 A.D. as the Bishop of Myra. All other stories that surround Nicholas illustrate that he practiced both the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. He was generous, strove to help the poor and disadvantaged, and worked tirelessly to defend the faith. His legends of generosity and a slip of the tongue from other languages has made St. Nicholas or Sinterklaas into today’s Santa Claus.

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**St. Nicholas of Myra**

Saint Nicholas, bishop of Myra, is undoubtedly one of the most popular saints honored in the Western world. In the United States, his memory has survived in the unique personality of Saint Claus — the jolly, rotund, white-bearded gentleman who captivates children with promises of gifts on Christmas Eve. Considered primarily as the patron saint of children, Nicholas is also invoked by sailors, merchants, bakers, travelers and pawnbrokers, and with Saint Andrew is honored as the co-patron of Russia.

In spite of his widespread fame, Saint Nicholas, from the historian’s point of view, is
hardly more than a name. He was born in the last years of the third century in Asia Minor. His uncle, the archbishop of Myra in Lycia, ordained him and appointed him abbot of a nearby monastery. At the death of the archbishop, Nicholas was chosen to fill the vacancy, and he served in this position until his death. About the time of the persecutions of Diocletian, he was imprisoned for preaching Christianity but was released during the reign of Emperor Constantine.

Popular legends have involved Saint Nicholas in a number of charming stories, one of which relates Nicholas’ charity toward the poor. A man of Patara had lost his fortune, and finding himself unable to support his three maiden daughters, was planning to turn them into the streets as prostitutes. Nicholas heard of the man’s intentions and secretly threw three bags of gold through a window into the home, thus providing dowries for the daughters. The three bags of gold mentioned in this story are said to be the origin of the three gold balls that form the emblem of pawnbrokers.

After Nicholas’ death on December 6 in or around 345, his body was buried in the cathedral at Myra. It remained there until 1087, when seamen of Bari, an Italian coastal town, seized the relics of the saint and transferred them to their own city. Veneration for Nicholas had already spread throughout Europe as well as Asia, but this occurrence led to a renewal of devotion in the West. Countless miracles were attributed to the saint’s intercession. His relics are still preserved in the church of San Nicola in Bari; an oily substance, known as Manna di S. Nicola, which is highly valued for its medicinal powers, is said to flow from them.

The story of Saint Nicholas came to America in distorted fashion. The Dutch Protestants carried a popularized version of the saint’s life to New Amsterdam, portraying Nicholas as nothing more than a Nordic magician and wonder-worker. Our present-day conception of Santa Claus has grown from this version. Catholics should think of Nicholas as a saint, a confessor of the faith and the bishop of Myra — not merely as a jolly man from the North Pole who brings happiness to small children. Many countries and locations honor St. Nicholas as patron: Greece, Russia, the Kingdom of Naples, Sicily, Lorraine, and many cities in Italy, Germany, Austria, and Belgium.

Excerpted in part from Lives of the Saints for every day of the Year, Volume III © 1959,
by The Catholic Press, Inc.

**Patron:** against imprisonment; against robberies; against robbers; apothecaries; bakers; barrel makers; boatmen; boot blacks; boys; brewers; brides; captives; children; coopers; dock workers; druggists; fishermen; grooms; judges; lawsuits lost unjustly; longshoremen; maidens; mariners; merchants; murderers; newlyweds; old maids; parish clerks; paupers; pawnbrokers; perfumeries; perfumers; pharmacists; pilgrims; poor people; prisoners; sailors; scholars; schoolchildren; shoe shiners; spinsters; students; thieves; travellers; unmarried girls; watermen; Greek Catholic Church in America; Greek Catholic Union; Bari, Italy; Fossalto, Italy; Duronia, Italy; Portsmouth, England; Greece; Lorraine; Russia; Sicily.

**Symbols:** Three children in a trough or tub; three golden balls on a book; six golden balls; three golden apples; three loaves; three purses or bags of gold; anchor; ship; Trinity symbol on a cope; angel; small church; three balls;

**Often portrayed as:** Bishop with three children in a tub at his feet; Bishop calming a storm; bishop holding three balls; bishop holding three bags of gold; bishop with three children.

**Things to Do:**

- Today is a good day to teach your children the difference between Santa Claus and St. Nicholas. This story of the origin of Santa Claus will help you. Also learn all you can about St. Nicholas.
- Read **St. Nicholas of Bari**, ancestor of Santa Claus.
- Choose some of the recommended activities — a puppet show, a party, a visit from “St. Nicholas.” Make sure to include in all the activities the story of St. Nicholas, virtues to imitate, and his significance in the Advent season. Read how different countries **Celebrate the Feast of St. Nicholas**.
- To enhance your feasting, purchase a copy of the CD by the Anonymous 4 **Legends of St. Nicholas**. This is medieval music, all in honor of St. Nicholas, done by four female vocalists.
- There are numerous recipes to enhance this feast, anything from a soup to dessert, so have fun in the kitchen trying different ones.

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St. Nicholas did his charitable works secretly. Suggest that your children do one hidden act of kindness in imitation of the saint.

From the Netherlands we have the most popular recipe, speculaas (or St. Nicholas Cookies; Speculaas; Speculatius; Kris Kringle Cookies; Dutch spice cookies). You can find tips for using special speculaas cookie molds by Gene Wilson. Try these sites for St. Nicholas Cookie cutters or molds: House on the Hill, HOBI Picture Cookie Molds, Rycraft, and St. Nicholas Center. You could also use Nativity Cookie Cutters, like these from Cookie Craft.

**Daily Readings for: December 06, 2019**
*(Readings on USCCB website)*

**Collect:** We humbly implore your mercy, Lord: protect us in all dangers through the prayers of the Bishop Saint Nicholas, that the way of salvation may lie open before us. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Stir up your power, we pray, O Lord, and come, that with you to protect us, we may find rescue from the pressing dangers of our sins, and with you to set us free, we may be found worthy of salvation. Who live and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- *Marzipankartoffel* (Marzipan Potatoes)
- *Nikolausschnitten* (St. Nicholas Dainties)
- *Schokoladekugeln* (Chocolate Balls)
- Bishopwyn I (Bishop’s Wine)
- Bishopwyn II (Bishop’s Wine)
- Biskkupsky Chelbicek
- Bisschopswijn IV (Bishop’s Wine)
• Black Forest ‘Good Works’ Cake
• Ciastka Miodowe (Honey Cakes)
• December 06, St. Nicholas: Klauskerl (St. Nicholas Doughman)
• Gevulde Speculaas
• Hazelnut Macaroons
• Honey Cake
• Kris Kringle Cookies
• Letter banket
• Moussaka
• Nikolaussteifel
• Pepernoten or Pfeffernüsse I (Peppernuts)
• Pepernoten or Pfeffernüsse III (Peppernuts)
• Pepernoten or Pfeffernüsse IV (Peppernuts)
• Rozijnen Koekjes (Raisin Cookies)
• Santa Claus (St. Nicholas) Cookies
• Ship Cake
• Speculaas or Speculatius I
• Speculaas or Speculatius II
• Speculaas or Speculatius III
• Speculaas or Speculatius IV
• Speculaas or Speculatius V
• Sprits
• St. Nicholas Breads
• St. Nicholas Day Initial Cookies
• St. Nicholas Pudding
• St. Nicholas Soup
• Stuffed Pork Shoulder Roast
• Tarte Normande Saint-Nicolas
Speculaas or Speculatius VI
Speculaas or Speculatius VII

ACTIVITIES

- Celebrating for the Feast of St. Nicholas
- Feast of St. Nicholas
- Life and Legend of St. Nicholas
- Santa Claus
- Santa Claus
- St. Nicholas Customs
- St. Nicholas Day Ideas
- St. Nicholas Day Party
- St. Nicholas Eve
- St. Nicholas Puppet Show
- St. Nicholas’ Visit
- Visit of St. Nicholas
- St. Nicholas Festivities

PRAYERS

- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
- December Devotion: The Immaculate Conception
- Litany of the Fourteen Holy Helpers
- Novena in Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Christmas Anticipation Prayer
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
• Novena to the Immaculate Conception
• Traditional Collect for St. Nicholas of Myra, Bishop and Confessor

LIBRARY

• A Giver of Gifts | Fr. William Saunders
• You Better Watch Out—St. Nicholas is Coming to Town | Christopher B. Warner

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-06
Advent: December 7th

Memorial of St. Ambrose, bishop and doctor

*Old Calendar: St. Ambrose; Vigil of the Immaculate Conception*

St. Ambrose (340-397) was born at Treves in Gaul, a territory which embraced modern France, Britain, Spain, and part of Africa. He studied in Rome and later became governor of Liguria and Aemelia with residence at Milan. While supervising the election of a new bishop of Milan in 374, he himself was suddenly acclaimed the bishop. He was only a catechumen at the time and was ordained a priest and consecrated a bishop on Dec. 7. He wrote much on the Scriptures and Fathers, preached a homily every Sunday, resisted the interference of the secular powers with the rights of the Church, opposed the heretics, and was instrumental in bringing about the conversion of St. Augustine. He composed many hymns, promoted sacred chant, and took a great interest in the Liturgy.

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**Jesse Tree ~ Isaac**

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**St. Ambrose**

Around the year 333 Ambrose was born at Trier, the child of a noble Roman family. After his father’s death he went to Rome, and was soon appointed consul with residence at Milan. While attempting to settle a dispute between the Arians and Catholics over the choice of a bishop, he himself was chosen, although only a catechumen at the time. Thereupon he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the study of theology, and gave his possessions to the poor. He was an illustrious preacher, and through his sermons brought
Augustine to the faith and baptized him.

Candid and fearless no matter how strong the opposition, Ambrose was directed to confront Maximus, the murderer of the Emperor Gratian. When Maximus refused to do penance, Ambrose excommunicated him. Later he denied Emperor Theodosius entrance into church for his massacre of the inhabitants of Thessalonica. It was on this occasion that allusion was made to [King] David as a murderer and adulterer, and Ambrose retorted: “You have followed him in sin, now follow him in repentance.” Humbly, Theodosius accepted the penance imposed.

We often meet this saint in the Divine Office as a teacher and as an inspired composer of hymns (fourteen of the hymns attributed to him are definitely authentic, true pearls of religious poetry). His writings are vibrant with ancient Christian liturgical spirit, for his life was wholly rooted in mystery and sacrament. We can profit greatly by reading Ambrose’s works. He is one of the four great Latin Doctors of the Church.

Excerpted from The Church’s Year of Grace, Pius Parsch

**Patron:** bee keepers; bees; candelmakers; chandlers; domestic animals; French Commissariat; learning; Milan, Italy; schoolchildren; students; wax melters; wax refiners.

**Symbols:** Scourge; beehive; tower; dove; cope and mitre; human bones; scroll with staff of music; pen book and pen; cross; chalice; bull; knotted scourge; two scourges; goose; writing tablet and stylus; heart surmounted with flame; scroll with quotation from writings.

**Often portrayed as:** Bishop holding a church in his hand; beehive; man arguing with a pagan; with Saint Gregory the Great, Saint Jerome and Saint Augustine of Hippo.

**Things To Do:**

- See Celebrating the Feast of St. Ambrose for ideas.
- Read some of the Writings of St. Ambrose, Doctor of the Church.
- Food Ideas: Besides the recipes named for Ambrose, other highlighted recipes are honey cakes or cookies, appropriate since Ambrose is known as the “Honey-Tongued Doctor.”
Daily Readings for: December 07, 2019  
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: O God, who made the Bishop Saint Ambrose a teacher of the Catholic faith and a model of apostolic courage, raise up in your Church men after your own heart to govern her with courage and wisdom. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPES

- Genoise Book Cake
- Honey Chiffon Pie
- Honey Pie
- Insalata Ambrosiana
- Ciastka Miodowe (Honey Cakes)
- Honey Cake
- Milk and Honey Cookies
- Costoletta alla Milanese (Breaded Veal Chops)
- Ambrosia Salad

ACTIVITIES

- Celebrating for the Feast of St. Ambrose
- Jesse Tree, Day 5 - Abraham

PRAYERS

- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
- December Devotion: The Immaculate Conception
- Novena in Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Christmas Anticipation Prayer
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
- Novena to the Immaculate Conception

**LIBRARY**

- Saint Ambrose of Milan | Pope Benedict XVI

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-07
Advent: December 8th

Second Sunday of Advent

Old Calendar: Second Sunday of Advent

“As the journey of Advent continues, as we prepare to celebrate the nativity of Christ, John the Baptist’s call to conversion sounds out in our communities. It is a pressing invitation to open our hearts and to welcome the Son of God Who comes among us to make divine judgement manifest. The Father, writes St. John the Evangelist, does not judge anyone, but has entrusted the power of judgement to the Son, because He is the Son of man.

“And it is today, in the present, that we decide our future destiny. It is with our concrete everyday behavior in this life that we determine our eternal fate. At the end of our days on earth, at the moment of death, we will be evaluated on the basis of our likeness or otherwise to the Baby Who is about to be born in the poor grotto of Bethlehem, because He is the measure God has given humanity.

“Through the Gospel John the Baptist continues to speak down the centuries to each generation. His hard clear words bring health to us, the men and women of this day in which even the experience and perception of Christmas often, unfortunately, reflects materialist attitudes. The ‘voice’ of the great prophet asks us to prepare the way for the coming Lord in the deserts of today, internal and external deserts, thirsting for the water of life which is Christ.” — Benedict XVI

The feast of the Immaculate Conception, which is ordinarily celebrated today, is superseded by the Sunday liturgy.
Jerusalem

In Palestine Christians gather today in Jerusalem for the celebration of holy Mass. In Rome they proceed to the stational church “Holy Cross at Jerusalem” which serves to give the atmosphere of the Holy City.

Why “Jerusalem”? Excavations of ancient sites often reveal a number of strata. When enemies destroyed a city, a new one would rise on the same location, so that today there are several layers of remains, one city, as it were, above the other. Our Jerusalem likewise has four strata. The bottommost layer is the Jerusalem of the Jews, that venerable land where the Lord Jesus began His mission of redemption, where He suffered and died. This is the historical Jerusalem so dear to us Christians. Anyone making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land enters that ancient city with holy awe. That Jerusalem, however, lies buried deep.

For us another has been built upon it, the Jerusalem of Christians, God’s kingdom on earth, the holy Church. This city still stands; it is the one which the divine King will enter at Christmas. Now we understand why we will hear so much about Jerusalem during the coming week. We should now clean and adorn our city, improving its streets and avenues through which the Savior will make His entrance. As a motto we should take the words of the precursor, St. John the Baptist: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths; let every valley be filled, every hill be leveled.” Holy Mother Church’s message today is that the Savior is coming to the Jerusalem of the Christians, to the Church.

Above the second stratum there arises a third, the heavenly Jerusalem at the end of time. Already now the Church sings of this Jerusalem. For during Advent we await the Savior who will appear on the Last Day to take all into “the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven.”

Finally, there may be recognized a fourth Jerusalem, our souls in sanctifying grace. This city too must be adorned and prepared, for the King will want to enter. That is our present task.

On Epiphany, the climax to the current season, the Church will cry out: “Arise, shine, O Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee.” That is the goal.
Today we must prepare for the great King’s visit to our city. The whole coming week must be devoted to it. The Church prays: “Awaken our hearts to prepare the way for Your only-begotten Son that we may serve Him with purified hearts.”

In the time of the Roman Empire, rulers rode from city to city for the purpose of official visitations. Their appearance, called *epiphany* or *parousia*, was a great event, one preceded by months of preparation. Something analogous takes place in the Jerusalem of our souls. From a high watchtower we see the Lord coming afar off. Suddenly John the Baptist appears; he hurries into the city to announce the King’s approach. God condescends to manifest Himself to us in grace; but He demands the proper reception.

Excerpted from *The Church’s Year of Grace* by Pius Parsch

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**Commentary for the Readings in the Extraordinary Form: Second Sunday of Advent**

Jesus referred John as “My messenger” who prepared the “way”. John now wanted his disciples to realize that they, too, must follow Christ in this “way”. Only through the same Jesus Christ, the long expected Savior, will the “blind” of soul “see;” the “lame” of character “walk;“ the ”lepers” of sin become “cleansed;” the “poor” become rich with a new Gospel. (Red figures in picture indicate the blink, the lame, the leper.)

The Epistle points to these interior and social aspects of the “Christ” way: interiorly, by prayer, to “glorify” the Fatherhood of God; socially by our actions, to “receive one another” in the Brotherhood of Man, “even as Christ has received you.”

Excerpted from *My Sunday Missal*, Confraternity of the Precious Blood

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**Daily Readings for: December 08, 2019**

(Readings on USCCB website)

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Collect: Almighty and merciful God, may no earthly undertaking hinder those who set out in haste to meet your Son, but may our learning of heaven wisdom grain us admittance to his company. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPES

- Whole Wheat Sweet Porridge

ACTIVITIES

- Advent and the Year of the Eucharist
- Christmas Wheat
- Posters for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany
- Jerusalem Christmas Decorations

PRAYERS

- Hungarian wheat
- Advent Prayers
- Jesse Tree Prayer Service
- Second Sunday of Advent: Prayer Devotions
- Advent Table Blessing 1
- Novena in Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Christmas Anticipation Prayer
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
- Novena to the Immaculate Conception

LIBRARY

www.catholicculture.org
• Jerusalem, Mother Of All Peoples | Pope John Paul II
• Jerusalem, Praise Your Saving God | Pope John Paul II
• The Question of Jerusalem | Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-08
Advent: December 9th

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

*Old Calendar: Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I class.*

Today’s Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the solemn dogma defined by Blessed Pope Pius IX in 1854, was transferred from the 8th because of the Sunday Liturgy.

Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, “full of grace” through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Blessed Pope Pius IX proclaimed on December 8, 1854: “The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.” — *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

It is also the feast of the feast of **St. Juan Diego**.

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**Jesse Tree ~ Mary**

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**Immaculate Conception of Mary**

“Hail Mary, full of grace”. For thousands of centuries, millions of times per day the Virgin Mary is greeted by the faithful with the greeting of the Archangel, that we hear resonating anew in today’s Gospel. The sons of the Church learn from the words of the Archangel Gabriel that the fullness of the mystery of God’s grace was realized in Holy Mary. St Paul the Apostle teaches us that the Father made all fullness dwell in His
Incarnate Son (c.f. Col 1:12-20), which overflows from Christ’s head and spills out on His Mystical Body that is the Church. Before descending in Body, Christ’s fullness was spread in a unique and unrepeatable way on Mary, predestined from eternity to be the Mother of God.

Significantly in the first reading, the liturgy recalls the figure of Eve, the mother of all the living. The Fathers of the Church saw in Mary, the new Eve that unties the knot bound by the first woman. The knot of disobedience tied by Eve, was untied by the obedience of Mary. As Eve was created in purity and integrity, also the new Eve was miraculously preserved from the contamination of original sin because she had to give humanity the Word, who was incarnated for our ransom.

Saint Irenaeus compares the virginity of the pure earth from which Adam was drawn to the virginity of the immaculate humanity of Mary from which the Second Adam was drawn. ‘And as the protoplast himself, Adam, had his substance from untilled and as yet virgin soil (for God had not yet sent rain, and man had not tilled the ground (Genesis 2:5)) so did He who is the Word, recapitulating Adam in Himself, rightly receive a birth, enabling Him to gather up Adam [into Himself], from Mary, who was as yet a virgin’ (Adversus hereses III, 21:10).

Blessed Pope Pius IX on the 8th of December 1854 proclaimed the Dogma of the faith revealed by God that the Blessed Virgin Mary “in the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin” (Denz.-Schonm, 2083). If the official proclamation of the dogma is relatively recent, the profession of faith by Christians and the liturgy is very ancient in this regard. Furthermore, four years later the same Virgin Mary, appearing in Lourdes to St Bernadette, confirmed the truth of the doctrine by presenting herself with the title ‘I am the Immaculate Conception’.

Mary’s predestination to this singular grace—consistent with the suspension of the universal decree by which every man, from the moment of his conception is contaminated with original sin—leads us to ponder in the deepest depths the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity’s salvific plan. God, One and Triune, had foreseen from the very beginning the future incarnation of the Word culminating in the redemption of human
nature that had fallen into sin. He therefore predestined pure Mary, so that He could draw from her uncontaminated humanity, which the Son could adopt in order to re-establish in Himself the original purity of creation and reorientate it to eternal glory.

For this reason, in the second reading of today’s liturgy, St Paul reminds us that God wants to see us holy and immaculate before Him. The purity of our origins seemed to be irredeemably lost. However, in Immaculate Mary, God found the perfect solution to reverse the disaster made from the misuse of our liberty, and returned humanity to the original purity that seemed hopelessly lost.

Mary’s Immaculate Conception is a direct consequence of her Divine Maternity. St Anslem of Aosta wrote: ‘Assuredly, it was fitting that the Virgin be beautified with a purity than which a greater cannot be conceived, except for God’s. For, toward her, God the Father was so disposed to give His only Son who was naturally one and the same common Son of God the Father and of the Virgin.’ (De conceptu virginali et originali peccato, XVIII)

This link between the privilege of Divine Maternity and Mary’s Immaculate Conception results also in her superiority with respect to us. She is a perfect image of the Church in heaven, the new triumphant Jerusalem, that won’t have any marks nor will there be pain and death. This is why today’s preface recites: ‘...she was to be a worthy mother of your Son, your sign of favour to the church at its beginning, and the promise of its perfection as the bride of Christ, radiant in beauty’. Also in heaven Mary is not and will never be only a disciple, but her Son’s most exalted. She is and will always be the Mother of God, the Mother of the Church, the Queen of the Angels and Saints. Therefore, the preface of the Mass adds: ‘...You chose her from all creatures to be our advocate with you and our pattern of holiness.’

Mary was Immaculate because she had to be the Mother of God. She, herself has received the original grace of purity and the final state of the blessed life that we also, by collaborating with Divine Grace, hope one day to receive.

Immaculate Mary is full of grace. She is not only Christ’s disciple, who with the help of grace has overcome the chains of sin, but she is totius Trinitatis nobile triclinium, the noble resting place of the Holy Trinity (St Thomas Aquinas, Exposito Salutationis Angelicae, I). The Immaculate, full of grace, will always be Mother and Queen for that

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elect part of the Church that we hope one day to join, that will one day joyfully sing before the Almighty.

From the Congregation for the Clergy

**Patron:** United States.

**Symbols:** crown and monogram; lily; enclosed garden; crown of stars; glass (symbol of purity) lily often placed in a vase of transparent glass; lily of the valley.

**Things to Do:**

- The dogma of the Immaculate Conception lends itself to fruitful meditation and should be taught to children. The doctrine of original sin, the sin of Adam and its effects on the human race, is a good beginning for study. For the best explanation of the teachings of the Church on this, see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, numbers 386-412. Also you might read Pope Pius IX’s bull, *Ubi Primum (On The Immaculate Conception)* proclaiming the Immaculate Conception as a dogma of Faith. Other reading from the Catholic Culture Library:
  - **Apostolic Constitution** *The Immaculate Conception (Ineffabilis Deus)* by Pius IX;
  - *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum (On The Immaculate Conception)* by Pius X;
  - *Fulgens Corona (Proclaiming A Marian Year To Commmemorate The Centenary Of The Definition Of The Dogma Of The Immaculate Conception)* by Pope Pius XII;
  - **On Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary (Marialis Cultus)** by Pope Paul VI;
  - **Immaculate Conception Defined by Pius IX** by Pope John Paul II;
  - *John Duns Scotus: Champion of the Immaculate Conception* by Brother John M. Samaha, S.M.;
  - **The Message of the Virgin of Lourdes** by Bishop Donald Montrose, D.D.;

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• The Immaculate Conception by Abbot Gueranger

• Mary as the Immaculate Conception is the patroness of the United States. Visit or take a virtual tour of the Basilica of the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, America’s patronal church.

• This day would also be appropriate for parents to plan their approach on family sex education, as it is the privilege and duty of parents to teach their own children in this area.

• Make a Mary candle for the feast of the Immaculate Conception. See Celebrating for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception for details and other ideas.

• Prepare an all white meal for dinner and then discuss with your children the dogma of the Immaculate Conception with the visual aids of dinner showing the purity and the stainlessness of Mary’s soul. Read Teaching the Immaculate Conception and Advent and the Immaculate Conception for discussion ideas.

Ideas for dinner:

**Appetizers:** Rice crackers and white cheeses; **Soups:** cream soups, such as clam chowder, potato soup, cream of celery; **Main Course:** chicken breasts, pasta with alfredo sauce; **Side Dishes:** mashed potatoes, white rice, cauliflower with (or without) white cheese sauce, white bread (with crusts removed), white corn; **Dessert:** White cake with white icing, meringue kisses, vanilla ice cream, whipped cream, white chocolate.

• The special treat for this feast is Moravian Spritz, or gingerbread cookies, loaded with fine, aromatic spices. These are mixed on the vigil, December 7. Or make your favorite gingerbread cookie. Perhaps for this solemnity the family could make a gingerbread house or Gingerbread Bowls.

• Today, plant an Immaculate Conception Rose Bush. During this winter season, it is also a good time to plan a Mary Garden. Flower Theology by John Stokes, the website Mary’s Gardens and the book Mary’s Flowers, Gardens, Legends and Meditations by Mary’s Gardens Associate, Vincenzina Krymow, are good beginnings for planning your garden.

• No room for a garden? No time to nurture nature? Read Flowers for the Fairest by Daniel Foley to read about flowers appropriate for Our Lady, and purchase a

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small bouquet or a few flowers…real or silk to display for feasts of Mary.

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**Daily Readings for: December 09, 2019**
(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin prepared a worthy dwelling for your Son, grant, we pray, that, as you preserved her from every stain by virtue of the Death of your Son, which you foresaw, so, through her intercession, we, too, may be cleansed and admitted to your presence. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- December 08, Immaculate Conception: Moravian Hearts
- Mexican Wedding Cookies
- Crown Cake
- Moravian Spice Cookies

**ACTIVITIES**

- Cut-outs and Shadow Boxes
- Feasts of Mary in the Family
- Marian Hymn: 'Tis Said of Our Dear Lady
- Marian Hymn: A Single Branch Three Roses Bore
- Marian Hymn: Ave Maria Dear
- Marian Hymn: Ave Maris Stella
- Marian Hymn: Beautiful, Glorious
- Marian Hymn: Behold a Branch is Growing Or Lo, How a Rose Er

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Blooming

- Marian Hymn: Lourdes Hymn or Immaculate Mary
- Marian Hymn: Salve Regina
- Marian Hymn: Stella Matutina
- Marian Hymn: Virgin Blessed, Thou Star the Fairest
- Mary Garden
- Advent — The Immaculate Conception
- Celebrating for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
- Celebrating the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in the Home
- Celebrating the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin
- Feasts of Our Lady in the Home
- Immaculate Conception
- Immaculate Conception Rose Bush
- Mary Candle I
- Mary Candle II
- Nameday Ideas for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
- Teaching the Immaculate Conception

PRAYERS

- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Readings and Hymns for the Immaculate Conception
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
- December Devotion: The Immaculate Conception
- Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Litany of Loreto)
- Novena in Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Christmas Anticipation Prayer
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
• Litany of the Immaculate Conception
• Table Blessing for the Feasts of the Mother of God
• Novena to the Immaculate Conception

LIBRARY

• For the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception | Pope Pius X
• Holy Days of Obligation, Or Holy Days of Opportunity | Brother John M. Samaha S.M.
• The Immaculate Conception (Ineffabilis Deus) | Pope Pius IX
• The Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin | Abbot Gueranger O.S.B.
• Ubi Primum (On The Immaculate Conception) | Pope Pius IX

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-09
Advent: December 10th

Tuesday of the Second Week of Advent; Optional Memorial of Our Lady of Loreto

*Old Calendar: St. Melchiades, pope and martyr; St. Eulalia (Hist)*

In 2019 Pope Francis added this Optional Memorial to the universal Roman Calendar. The title Our Lady of Loreto refers to the Holy House of Loreto, the house in which Mary was born, and in which the Word was made flesh at the Annunciation. Tradition says that a band of angels scooped up the little house from the Holy Land, and transported it first to Tersato, Dalmatia in 1291, then Recanati, Italy in 1294, and finally to Loreto, Italy where it has been for centuries. It was this translation of the Holy House and the longstanding of the structure Our Lady of Loreto is the patron of builders, construction workers, and aviation. It is the first shrine of international renown dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and has been known as a Marian center for centuries. Popes have always held the Shrine of Loreto in special esteem, and it is under their direct authority and protection. A replica of an ancient statue of Our Lady which is found there, one of the “Black Madonnas.” The original statue made of cedar from Lebanon was destroyed in a fire in 1921.

St. Melchiades “who suffered much during the persecution of Maximianus; when at last peace was restored to the Church, died in the Lord.” He was an African whom St. Augustine calls “the true child of the peace of Jesus Christ.” He ruled the Church of God in the last period of the Christian persecution from 311-314; hence the title of martyr is applied to him in a wider sense. His was the good fortune of witnessing the beginning of an era of peace, for in 312 the Emperor Constantine granted freedom to the Church. According to the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite today is his feast.

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Our Lady of Loreto

The shrine of the Holy House of Loreto is located along the Adriatic Sea coast of Italy, in a small town located three hours from Rome. The house has been said to have been miraculously transported from Palestine to Italy, and by the 14th century this shrine in Loreto is one of the most famous shrines of Our Lady in Europe.

The large basilica provides the setting of the small house within the basilica itself. Though the rough walls of the little building have been raised in height and are cased externally in richly sculptured marble, the interior measures only thirty-one feet by thirteen feet.

Within the house an altar stands at one end beneath a statue, blackened over time from the smoke of burning candles and incense, of the Virgin Mother and her Divine Infant. The current statue is a 1920 replacement of damaged ancient original made of cedars of Lebanon. The replacement is made of cedar wood from the Vatican.

The inscription on the altar, *Hic Verbum caro factum est*, is a reminder that this building is honored by Christians as the house at Nazareth in which the Holy Family lived, and site of the Incarnation, when the Word became Flesh. Another inscription of the sixteenth century which decorates the eastern façade of the basilica sets forth at greater length the tradition which makes this shrine so famous.

Christian pilgrim, you have before your eyes the Holy House of Loreto, venerable throughout the world on account of the Divine mysteries accomplished in it and the glorious miracles herein wrought. It is here that most holy Mary, Mother of God, was born; here that she was saluted by the Angel, here that the eternal Word of God was made Flesh. Angels conveyed this House from Palestine to the town Tersato in Illyria in the year of salvation 1291 in the pontificate of Nicholas IV. Three years later, in the beginning of the pontificate of Boniface VIII, it was carried again by the ministry of angels and placed in a wood near this hill, in the vicinity of...
Recanati, in the March of Ancona; where having changed its station thrice in the course of a year, at length, by the will of God, it took up its permanent position on this spot three hundred years ago [now, of course, more than 600]. Ever since that time, both the extraordinary nature of the event having called forth the admiring wonder of the neighboring people and the fame of the miracles wrought in this sanctuary having spread far and wide, this Holy House, whose walls do not rest on any foundation and yet remain solid and uninjured after so many centuries, has been held in reverence by all nations.

Adapted from The Catholic Encyclopedia.

**Things to Do:**

- Why is Our Lady of Loreto connected with aviation? Read these two articles, *Did angels really carry the Holy House of Mary to Loreto, Italy?* at Catholic News Agency and *Our Lady of Loreto and Aviation* from “All About Mary” at the University of Dayton.

- Find out the connection the University of Notre Dame has with *Our Lady of Loreto*.

- Visit the website of *Sanctuary of the Holy House of Loreto*.

- Here is further reading about the *Basilica of the Holy House (Basilica della Santa Casa)*

- The Litany of Loreto originated from this Shrine. Read about *the Litany of Loreto in Context*.

- See *The Illustrated Litany of Loreto* for visual meditation on the Litany of Loreto.

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**St. Melchiades (also known as St. Miltiades)**

Two popes had been exiled by Emperor Maxentius, and for nearly two more years the Church in Rome was steeped in turmoil, making it impossible to choose a pope. Finally, Miltiades, an African, was elected. He had served as a priest
under Marcellinus during the terrible Diocletian persecution. Now, however, he witnessed the effects of a kinder, more generous Roman government. Indeed, the Church would actually be favored with splendid gifts. By 311 the Church began to enjoy a peace resulting from a decree of toleration issued in both the East and the West. Emperor Maxentius ordered the properties of the Church restored. These included the land and buildings that had been confiscated during the reign of Emperor Diocletian. In 312 for the first time since the outbreak of persecution, a pope was able to preside over the celebration of Easter in full possession of the Church’s holy assets.

Pope Miltiades worked diligently in a difficult time of transition. His edicts included forbidding the Christians to fast on Thursday and Sunday (the days during which the pagans kept their fasts) and directing that the Eucharist plate blessed by the bishop be carried to the various churches.

Constantine, having been proclaimed emperor in Gaul, now marched on Rome. The sign of the cross had been revealed to him in a vision where he was told that “by this sign shalt thou conquer.” Constantine ordered his standards changed, and for the first time in history, the sign of peace was borne by an army. Constantine’s legions defeated Maxentius, and the year 312 ushered in a new era, an era of peace; the Christians were truly set free. During the emperor’s stay in Rome, the famous Lateran palace was given to Pope Miltiades by Fausta, Constantine’s wife. The Lateran served as the papal residence for some four hundred years.

Less than a year later, a schism broke out in North Africa. Headed by a rigorist named Donatus, the faction objected to the policies of the bishop of Carthage, Caecilian. Bypassing the pope, they appealed directly to Constantine to intervene. The emperor, annoyed that he should be called on to settle disputes among the clergy, commissioned Miltiades and three other Gallic bishops to rectify the matter. The pope gathered fifteen additional bishops and held a synod in the great Lateran palace. The decision of this synod was to condemn Donatus and his party and to support the true bishop, Caecilian. The Donatists (as they later became called) appealed again to Constantine, but by the time another council could be called, Pope Miltiades had died.

St. Miltiades was an excellent pontiff who guided the Church wisely during a difficult time of changeover. Pope Miltiades was the last pope to be buried in a catacomb in the cemetery of Calixtus. His feast is celebrated on December 10.

Excerpted from The Popes: A Papal History, J.V. Bartlett

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St. Eulalia

St. Eulalia descended from one of the most prominent families in Spain. She was educated in the Christian religion and was taught the sentiments of perfect piety. From her infancy she distinguished herself by an admirable sweetness of temper, modesty and devotion.

She showed a great love of the holy state of virginity, and by her seriousness and her contempt of dress, ornaments diversions and worldly company, she gave early signs of her sincere desire to lead a heavenly life on earth. Her heart was raised above the world before she was thought capable of knowing it, so that its amusements, which usually fill the minds of youth, had no charms for her, and every day of her life she continued to grow in virtue.

She was just twelve years old when the bloody edicts of the Emporer Diocletian were issued, by which it was ordered that all persons, without exception of age, sex, or profession, should be compelled to offer sacrifice to the gods of the empire.

Eulalia, although young, took the publication of this order as a sign of battle, but her mother, observing her impatient ardor for martyrdom, carried her into the country. However, the young saint quickly found a means to make her escape by night, and after much fatigue, arrived at Merida before daybreak.

That same morning, as soon as the court convened, she presented herself before the cruel judge, whose name was Dacian, and reproached him with impiety in attempting to destroy souls by compelling them to renounce the only true God.

The governor then commanded her to be seized. First, employing caresses, Dacian presented to her the advantages which her birth, youth and fortune gave her in the world and the grief which her disobedience would bring to her parents. Seeing that these temptations had no effect, he began to threaten her, placing the cruelest instruments of torture before her eyes, saying to her, “All this you shall escape if you will but touch a little salt and frankincense with the tip of your finger.”

Provoked at these seducing flatteries, she threw down the idol, trampled upon the
cake which was laid for the sacrifice and spat at the judge—an action only to be excused by her youth and inattention under the influence of a warm zeal, and fear of the snares which were laid before her.

Upon the judge’s order, two executioners began to tear her tender sides with iron hooks, so as to leave the very bones bare. While this was happening, she called the strokes the trophies of Christ. Next, lighted torches were applied to her breasts and sides: under which torment, instead of groans, nothing was heard from her mouth but thanksgivings. The fire at length catching her hair surrounded her head and face, and the saint was stifled by the smoke and flame.

History says that a white dove seemed to come out of her mouth, and to wing its way upward when the holy martyr expired: at which prodigy the executioners were so much terrified that they fled and left the body.

Her relics are kept with great veneration at Oviedo, where she is honored as patroness. The Roman Martyrology mentions her name on December 10.

Excerpted from *Butler’s Lives of the Saints*

**Things to Do:**

- View this short YouTube video of the Fiesta of St. Eulalia in El Ramu, Spain to see how devotion to this saint is still celebrated.

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**Daily Readings for: December 10, 2019**
(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** O God, who at the announcement of your angel willed that your Word would take flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grant, we pray, to us who remember this great mystery in this holy place, the ability to celebrate both in faith and in holiness of life, the immensity of your mercy. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

O God, who have shown forth your salvation to all the ends of the earth, grant, we pray, that we may look
forward in joy to the glorious Nativity of Christ. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- Lehi Lentils
- Whole Wheat-Barley Bread

**ACTIVITIES**

- Advent Folksong: Maria Walks Amid the Thorn
- Advent Penances

**PRAYERS**

- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
- December Devotion: The Immaculate Conception
- Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Litany of Loreto)
- Novena in Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Collect of the Mass of Pope St. Melchisedech
- Christmas Anticipation Prayer
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
- Prayer to Our Lady of Loreto for Flying

**LIBRARY**

- Ecclesia in Africa | Pope John Paul II
- The Holy House of Nazareth | Zsolt Aradi
- The Home of Mary | Pope Francis

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http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-10
Advent: December 11th

Wednesday of the Second Week of Advent;
Optional Memorial of St. Damasus I, pope

Old Calendar: St. Damasus, pope and confessor

St. Damasus was Supreme Pontiff from 366 to 384. He was a very learned man, well versed in the Scriptures. He commissioned St. Jerome to complete the translation of the Bible into the Latin language. Shortly after his reign the 72 books of the Bible, hitherto scattered in different parts of the Orient, were collected into one volume. He defended the rights of the Holy See, and beautified the Roman resting places of the Christian dead and of the saints. He also confirmed the practice of singing the Psalms day and night in the churches and adding a Glory Be at the end of each Psalm.

Jesse Tree ~ King Solomon

St. Damasus

On Liberius’ death, riots broke out over the election of a successor. The majority favored Damasus, who was born in Rome of Spanish descent. He had served as a deacon under Liberius and upheld the Nicene Creed. In less than a month, Damasus was installed in the Lateran palace. A minority, however, refused to accept the decision; they set up the antipope Ursinus. As the violence continued, Emperor Valentinian, who now ruled the West, was compelled to intercede and expel the antipope.

Pope Damasus fostered the development of the Church during this period of peace by publishing a list of the books of both the Old and New Testaments. He also encouraged his longtime friend and secretary, St. Jerome, to translate the Bible into Latin. This
Vulgate edition continues to serve the Church usefully. Damasus himself composed eloquent verse which he had inscribed on marble slabs and placed over the tombs of martyrs and popes alike. But Damasus is best known for his devoted project in the catacombs. He ardently searched for the tombs of martyrs which had been both blocked up and hidden during previous persecutions. He lighted the passages and stairwells of the catacombs, encouraging pilgrimages to the martyrs. He did much to beautify existing churches, such as building the baptistery in St. Peter’s and laying down marble pavement in the basilica of St. Sebastian.

Damasus was a vigorous defender of the orthodoxy, as well. He condemned the heresies of such men as Macedonius and Apollinaris and continued the march against Eastern Arians. Although Emperor Valentinian was a Catholic, his less capable brother Valens was under the Arian influence. Valens kept the Eastern bishops in turmoil until his death in 378 by the determined Goths. Emperor Theodosius, who succeeded Valens, supported the orthodox and convened the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 381. The council settled the dispute by recondemning Arianism and adopting the pope’s teachings.

The chair of St. Peter was never more respected than during the pontificate of Damasus. He tirelessly promoted the Roman primacy, successfully persuading the government to recognize the Holy See as a court of first instance, although it declined to give the pope himself any particular immunity against the civil courts. Next in hierarchy came Alexandria, founded by St. Mark, and then Antioch, where Peter reigned before leaving for Rome.

Pious Pope Damasus died in December of 384 after a reign of eighteen years.

— *The Popes: A Papal History*, J.V. Bartlett

**Patron:** Archeologists.

**Things to do:**

- Learn more about St. Damasus.
- Read about the Catacombs of St. Callistus where Pope St. Damasus wrote an inscription on the tomb of Pope St Cornelius.
- St. Damasus I commissioned St. Jerome to revise a translation of Scripture. Spend some time reading the Bible.
Almighty God, who command us to prepare the way for Christ the Lord, grant in your kindness, we pray, that no infirmity may weary us as we long for the comforting presence of our heavenly physician. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**Daily Readings for: December 11, 2019**
(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** Grant, we pray, O Lord, that we may constantly exalt the merits of your Martyrs, whom Pope Saint Damasus so venerated and loved. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Almighty God, who command us to prepare the way for Christ the Lord, grant in your kindness, we pray, that no infirmity may weary us as we long for the comforting presence of our heavenly physician. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPIES**

- Skewered Beef Roman Style

**ACTIVITIES**

- Advent and the Year of the Eucharist
- Celebrating for the Feast of Pope St. Damasus I

**PRAYERS**

- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
- December Devotion: The Immaculate Conception
- Novena in Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe

See Celebrating the Feast of St. Damasus for ideas.
• Christmas Anticipation Prayer
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

• Catacombs: Witness To Early Heroism | Pope John Paul II
• Eastern Orthodoxy: Primacy and Reunion | James Likoudis

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-11
Advent: December 12th

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

*Old Calendar: Our Lady of Guadalupe (Third Class, U.S.); St. Valery (Hist); St. Finian (Hist)*

“Rejoice: the Lord is nigh.” As Christmas draws near, the Church emphasizes the joy which should be in our hearts over all that the birth of our Savior means for us. The great joy of Christians is to see the day drawing nigh when the Lord will come again in His glory to lead them into His kingdom. The oft-repeated *Veni* (“Come”) of Advent is an echo not only of the prophets but also of the conclusion of the Apocalypse of St. John: “Come, Lord Jesus,” the last words of the New Testament.

In 1910 Our Lady of Guadalupe was declared Patroness of Latin America, and in 1945 Pope Pius XII declared Her to be the Empress of all the Americas. She appeared to an Indian convert named Juan Diego on December 9, 1531. She left a marvelous portrait of herself on the mantle of Juan Diego. This miraculous image has proved to be ageless and is kept in the shrine built in her honor, the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

*Jesse Tree ~ Samuel*

**Our Lady of Guadalupe**

“Hear me and understand well, my son the least, that nothing should frighten or grieve you. Let not your heart be disturbed. Do not fear that sickness, nor any other sickness or anguish. Am I not here, who is your Mother? Are you not under my protection? Am I not
your health? Are you not happily within my fold? What else do you wish? Do not grieve nor be disturbed by anything.” — Our Lady to Juan Diego

In the winter of 1531, a poor, 57-year-old Aztec Indian living five miles outside of Mexico City encountered a miraculous happening on his way to morning Mass. First he heard strange music coming from Tepeyac Hill, and then he heard a woman’s voice calling his name. Juan Diego climbed the hill and encountered a young woman, appearing to be of his own people in physical appearance and dress. The woman identified herself as the Virgin Mary, and told Juan Diego to ask the bishop of Mexico City to build a church on the hill to assist in the conversion of the nation and be a source of consolation to the people.

Juan Diego obeyed the request, but the bishop was skeptical regarding the message, even though he perceived that Juan was a humble, and well meaning Catholic. Juan reported the bishop’s doubt to Our Lady at Tepeyac Hill, and she asked him to return to the bishop once again, bearing the same message. The bishop once again heard the story, and told Juan Diego to ask Our Lady for a sign that it was indeed herself that wished for the church to be built.

When he returned to the hill, Mary gave Juan Diego such a sign. Miraculously, roses appeared on the hill in the middle of winter, and Juan gathered them in his tilma, or cloak. Our Lady arranged the roses in his tilma with her own hands, and Juan returned to the bishop’s presence. When Juan released the tilma, allowing the flowers to fall to the floor, it was revealed that a miraculous image of Our Lady had imprinted itself on his tilma (see above).

The bishop immediately fell to his knees, and came to believe in Juan Diego’s message. A church was built on the spot of the apparition, as Mary had requested, and 8 million people converted to Catholicism in a short period of time upon hearing of or viewing the miraculous image of Our Lady.

The tilma of Juan Diego has been the subject of much modern research. The tilma, woven out of coarse cactus fiber, should have disintegrated after 20 years, but although over 500 years have passed the tilma is still in perfect condition. The pupils of Mary in the picture reflect the Indians and clergy present at the time of the first revelation of the image. No paint was used, and chemical analysis has not been able to identify the color imprint. Additionally, studies have revealed that the stars on Mary’s mantle match
exactly what a Mexican would have seen in the sky in December of 1531.

**Patron:** The Americas; pro-life movement.

**Things to Do:**

- Start a novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe.
- If you live close to La Crosse, WI visit the beautiful [Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe](#); if not make a virtual visit.
- Read more about this title of Our Lady.
- Make a sacrifice, say a prayer or visit the Blessed Sacrament for an end to abortion.
- If your parish is having a pro-life Mass or holy hour try to attend.
- Have a party, which includes a procession and a special Mexican dinner to celebrate the feast.
- See [Celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe](#) for ideas.

**St. Valery**

Saint Valery was born at Auvergne in the sixth century, where in his childhood he kept his father’s sheep. He desired to study and begged a teacher in a nearby school to trace the letters and teach them to him, which the schoolmaster was happy to do. He soon knew how to read and write, and the first use he made of his knowledge was to transcribe the Psalter; he then learned it by heart. He began to frequent the church, and love of his religion soon burnt strongly in his heart.

He was still young when he took the monastic habit in the neighboring monastery of Saint Anthony. No persuasion could convince him to return home when his father came to attempt that move, and the Abbot, recognizing that his firmness was of divine origin, said to the monks, Let us not reject the gift of God. His father eventually was present when he received the tonsure, and shed It was soon visible to all that God destined him
for some high role in the Church.

He left for a more distant monastery in Auxerre, and there he seemed to live a life more angelic than human. A rich lord of the region, after talking with him one day, disposed of his entire fortune without even returning home, to embrace religious poverty.

At that time Saint Columban was preaching in Gaul; Valery with some fellow monks desired to hear him and went to Luxeuil, where they were not disappointed. They asked to be received into that monastery in 594 and were accepted. A corner of the garden which Valery was assigned to cultivate was entirely spared when insects devastated the rest. The holy Abbot Columban allowed him to make his religious profession, and he remained at Luxeuil for some fifteen years. He was a witness when the local king drove away Saint Columban from his foundation, as a foreigner in the land. Soon afterward the monastery was invaded by strangers, but finally Saint Valery and the new Abbot, Saint Eustasius, succeeded in recovering it.

Some time afterwards Saint Valery with another monk left to carry the faith elsewhere, and decided with the permission of King Clotaire to remain as hermits in the region of Amiens. He raised to life a poor condemned man after he had been hanged, and the word of the sanctity of this monk soon spread. The wilderness of Leuconaus was transformed into a community, where from the numerous monastic cells and church the praises of the Lord rose up night and day. In 613, three years after his arrival, this locality became a monastery where the religious lived in common.

A man who had become unable to walk was cured by Saint Valery and replaced him later as Abbot of this monastery; he is today Saint Blitmond. Many more miracles illustrated his life of prayer and sacrifice. Saint Valery died in 619, and his tomb became celebrated by numerous miracles. A basilica was raised there in his honor, at the site where one of his disciples had felled a tree, object of pagan superstitions, at a word from the Saint.

Excerpted from  Les Petits Bollandistes: Vies des Saints, by Msgr. Paul Guérin

St. Finian, or Finan, Bishop of Cluain-Irard, or Clonard

Among the primitive teachers of the Irish church the name of St. Finian is one of the most famous next to that of St. Patrick. He was a native of Leinster, was instructed in the elements of Christian virtue by the
disciples of St. Patrick, and out of an ardent desire of making greater progress passed over into Wales, where he conversed with St. David, St. Gildas, and St. Cathmael, three eminent British saints.

After having remained thirty years in Britain, about the year 520 he returned into Ireland, excellently qualified by sanctity and sacred learning to restore the spirit of religion among his countrymen, which had begun to decay. Like a loud trumpet sounding from heaven, he roused the sloth and insensibility of the lukewarm and softened the hearts that were most hardened, and had been long immersed in worldly business and pleasure.

To propagate the work of God, St. Finian established several monasteries and schools; the chief of which was Clonard, in Meath, which was the saint’s principal residence. Out of his school came several of the principal saints and doctors of Ireland, as Kieran the Younger, Columkille, Columba, the son of Crimthain, the two Brendans, Laserian, Canicus or Kenny, Ruadan, and others. St. Finian was chosen and consecrated bishop of Clonard. The great monastery which he erected at Clonard was a famous seminary of sacred learning.

St. Finian, in the love of his flock, and his zeal for their salvation, equalled the Basils and the Chrysostoms, was infirm with the infirm, and wept with those who wept. He healed the souls, and often also the bodies of those who applied to him. His food was bread and herbs, his drink water, and his bed the ground, with a stone for his pillow. He departed to our Lord on the 12th of December, in 552, according to the Inisfallen Annals, quoted by Usher, but according to others in 564.

Excerpted from Bultler’s Lives of the Saints

Daily Readings for: December 12, 2019
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: O God, Father of mercies, who placed your people under the singular protection of your Son’s most holy Mother, grant that all who invoke the Blessed Virgin of Guadalupe, may seek with ever more lively faith the progress of peoples

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in the ways of justice and of peace. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPIES**

- Beef Broth
- Flan
- Mexican Bread Pudding
- Mole Poblano
- Rose Petal Pound Cake
- Sopa de espinaca con codito
- Tacos

**ACTIVITIES**

- Celebrating for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Celebrating the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin
- Enthronement of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Marian Hymn: 'Tis Said of Our Dear Lady
- Marian Hymn: Ave Maria Dear
- Marian Hymn: Beautiful, Glorious
- Marian Hymn: Salve Regina
- Marian Hymn: Stella Matutina
- Marian Hymn: Virgin Blessed, Thou Star the Fairest
- Mary Garden
- Party for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

**PRAYERS**

- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
- Novena in Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe for the Unborn
- Christmas Anticipation Prayer
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

- Marian Apparitions: Some Lessons From History | Donal Anthony Foley
- Our Lady of Guadalupe | Zsolt Aradi

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-12
Advent: December 13th

Memorial of St. Lucy, virgin and martyr

*Old Calendar: St. Lucy*

St. Lucy (283-304) was born in Syracuse, Sicily, where she also died. She was of a noble Greek family, and was brought up as a Christian by her mother, who was miraculously cured at the shrine of St. Agatha in Catania. Lucy made a vow of virginity and distributed her wealth to the poor. This generosity stirred the wrath of the unworthy youth to whom she had been unwillingly betrothed and who denounced her to Paschasius, the governor of Sicily. When it was decided to violate her virginity in a place of shame, Lucy, with the help of the Holy Spirit, stood immovable. A fire was then built around her, but again God protected her. She was finally put to death by the sword. Her name appears in the second list in the Canon.

St. Lucy

Today’s feast can easily be harmonized with Advent themes. The very name Lucy pulsates with light, a living symbol amid the season’s darkness (the days are now the shortest of the year). As a wise virgin Lucy advances with a burning lamp to meet the Bridegroom. She typifies the Church and the soul now preparing their bridal robes for a Christmas marriage.

That the famous Sicilian martyr really lived may be deduced from the great popular veneration accorded her since most ancient times. The Acts detailing her sufferings, however, merit little credence. According to these she made a pilgrimage to Catonia with

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her mother, who suffered from hemorrhage, to venerate the body of St. Agatha. After praying devoutly at the tomb, Agatha appeared to her in a dream and consoled her: “O virgin Lucy, why do you ask of me what you yourself can procure for your mother? For your faith too has come to her aid and therefore she has been cured. By your virginity you have indeed prepared for God a lovely dwelling.” And her mother actually was healed.

Immediately Lucy asked permission to remain a virgin and to distribute her future dowry among Christ’s poor. Child and mother returned to their native city of Syracuse, and Lucy proceeded to distribute the full proceeds from the sale of her property among the poor. When a young man, to whom Lucy’s parents had promised the virgin’s hand against her will, had heard of the development, he reported her to the city prefect as a Christian. “Your words will be silenced,” the prefect said to her, “when the storm of blows falls upon you!” The virgin: “To God’s servants the right words will not be wanting, for the Holy Spirit speaks in us.” “Yes,” she continued, “all who live piously and chastely are temples of the Holy Spirit.” “Then,” he replied, “I shall order you put with prostitutes and the Holy Spirit will depart from you.” Lucy: “If I am dishonored against my will, my chastity will secure for me a double crown of victory.”

Aflame with anger, the judge imposed the threatened order. But God made the virgin solidly firm in her place and no force could move her. “With such might did the Holy Spirit hold her firm that the virgin of Christ remained immovable.” Thereupon they poured heated pitch and resin over her: “I have begged my Lord Jesus Christ that this fire have no power over me. And in testimony of Him I have asked a postponement of my death.” When she had endured all this without the least injury, they pierced her throat with a sword. Thus she victoriously ended her martyrdom.

—Excerpted from The Church’s Year of Grace, Pius Parsch.

**Patron:** against hemorrhages; authors; blind people; blindness; cutlers; dysentery; eye disease; eye problems; glaziers; hemorrhages; laborers; martyrs; peasants; Perugia, Italy; saddlers; salesmen; stained glass workers; Syracuse, Sicily; throat infections; writers.
Symbols: Lamp; dagger; three crowns; cauldron; two oxen; stake and fagots; cup; sword through his neck; poniard; ropes; eye held in pincers; awl; cord; eyes on a dish or book; swords.

Often portrayed as: Woman hitched to a yoke of oxen; woman in the company of Saint Agatha, Saint Agnes of Rome, Barbara, Catherine of Alexandria, and Saint Thecla; woman kneeling before the tomb of Saint Agatha.

Things to Do:

- Choose one of the customs for St. Lucy’s feast and try it with your family. See Celebrating for the Feast of St. Lucy, Swedish Lucia Feast, and St. Lucia Devotions.
- Select one of the recipes for this feast to prepare. Here is a recipe for cuccia, an Italian dish. This is another version.
- Say a prayer to St. Lucy for those who are physically and spiritually blind.
- Read the Life of St. Lucy taken from Ælfric’s Lives of the Saints written in the 10th century.
- For St. Lucia Swedish resources, see Hemslöjd. Especially recommended are the St. Lucia’s Crowns, either plastic to wear or brass for display, the books Lucia, Child of Light: The History and Traditions of Sweden’s Lucia Celebration and Lucia Morning in Sweden.

Daily Readings for: December 13, 2019
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: May the glorious intercession of the Virgin and Martyr Saint Lucy give us a new heart, we pray, O Lord, so that we may celebrate her heavenly birthday in this present age and so behold things eternal. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

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RECIPES

- *Leissi Katter* (St. Lucy’s Cats)
- *Lussekatter* (Lucia Buns)
- Frico
- Luciabullar (Luciakatter)
- Lussekake
- Mormor’s Kakor
- Oatmeal Lace Cookies
- Pepparkakor (Ginger Cookies)
- Pepparkakor I (Ginger Snaps)
- Saffron Bread
- Spritz Cookies II
- St. Lucia Crown
- St. Lucy’s Cats (*lussekatter*)

ACTIVITIES

- Celebrating for the Feast of St. Lucy
- Christmas Wheat
- Description of Ember Days
- St. Lucia Devotions
- St. Lucy Party (For Girls)
- St. Lucy’s Day
- Swedish Lucia Feast
- St. Lucy and the Christmas Wheat

PRAYERS

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www.catholicculture.org
• Advent Wreath Prayers I
• Advent Wreath Prayers II
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
• December Devotion: The Immaculate Conception
• Prayer in Honor of St. Lucy
• Christmas Anticipation Prayer
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

• Life of St. Lucy | Ælfric
• Light of St. Lucy | Daniel Stewart
• Painting Angels, Saints and Their Symbols | Maria Stella Ceplecha

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-13
Advent: December 14th

Memorial of St. John of the Cross, priest and doctor

St. John of the Cross (1542-1591) was born and died in Spain. His parents were poor and could not give him training in any trade. Hence he became the servant of the sick in the hospital of Medina. In 1563 he offered himself as a lay brother to the Carmelite friars, who, however, perceiving his unusual talents, had him ordained a priest. When he was about to join the more severe Order of the Carthusians, the saintly Teresa persuaded him to remain and help her in the reform of the Carmelite Order. This reform of his order caused him such sufferings and brought him many trials. But his sufferings served only to detach him from creatures. He had a great devotion to Our Lord’s Passion and voluntarily sought out humiliations. When Our Lord asked him what reward he would ask for his labors, John answered: “To suffer and to be despised for Thee.” He died of a cruel disease, embracing the crucifix. Because of his profound treatises on mystical theology Pope Pius XI proclaimed him Doctor of the Church. According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite St. John of Cross’ feast is celebrated on November 24.

Jesse Tree ~ King David

St. John of the Cross

Juan de Yepes was the Castilian son of a poor silk weaver of Fontiberos, Toledo, Spain and was born in 1542. His father was of noble birth; he had married much beneath him, and for that offense had been
entirely cut off by his family. He had taken to silk weaving as a means of livelihood, but had never been able to make much of it. Soon after the birth of Juan he died, worn out with the effort to keep his wife and three children. The family was left in direst poverty; the children grew up always underfed, so that to the end of his life Juan remained dwarfed in stature.

Unable to learn a trade, he became the servant of the poor in the hospital of Medina, while still pursuing his sacred studies. In 1563, being then twenty-one, he humbly offered himself as a lay-brother to the Carmelite friars, who, however, knowing his talents, had him ordained priest. He would now have exchanged to the severe Carthusian Order, had not St. Teresa of Avila, with the instinct of a saint, persuaded him to remain and help her in the reform of his own Order.

Thus he became the first prior of the Discalced (meaning “barefoot”) Carmelites. His reform, though approved by the general, was rejected by the elder friars, who condemned the saint as a fugitive and apostate, and cast him into prison, whence he only escaped, after nine months’ suffering, at the risk of his life. Twice again, before his death, he was shamefully persecuted by his brethren, and publicly disgraced. But his complete abandonment by creatures only deepened his interior peace and devout longing for heaven.

St. John was a great contemplative and spiritual writer. He was proclaimed Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius XI on August 24, 1926. He is the patron of contemplative life, mystical theology, mystics, and Spanish poets.

Excerpted from *Little Pictorial Lives of the Saints* © 1878 and *Saints for Sinners* by Alban Goodier, S.J.

"With what procrastinations do you wait, since from this very moment you can love God in your heart?"

Excerpted from *Prayer of a Soul Taken with Love* — St. John of the Cross

Mine are the heavens and mine is the earth. Mine are the nations, the just are mine and mine the sinners. The angels are mine, and the Mother of God, and all things are mine;
and God himself is mine and for me, because Christ is mine and all for me. What do you ask, then, and seek my soul? Yours is all of this, and all is for you. Do not engage your self in something less or pay heed to the crumbs that fall from your Father’s table. Go forth and exult in your Glory! Hide yourself in it and rejoice, and you will obtain the supplications of your heart.

Excerpted from  *Sayings of Light and Love*, 26-27 — St. John of the Cross

**Patron:** Contemplative life; contemplatives; mystical theology; mystics; Spanish poets

**Things to Do:**

- See *Celebrating the Feast of St. John of the Cross* for ideas.
- Read more about *St. John of the Cross* at the ICS website.
- Three of his works, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, *Dark Night of the Soul* and *Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridgegroom Christ* are available online at the Christian Classics Ethereal Library.

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**Daily Readings for: December 14, 2019**

*(Readings on USCCB website)*

**Collect:** O God, who gave the Priest Saint John an outstanding dedication to perfect self-denial and love of the Cross, grant that, by imitating him closely at all times, we may come to contemplate eternally your glory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- Carmelite Sundaes
- Gazpacho III
- Oatmeal Carmelite Bars
ACTIVITIES

- Celebrating for the Feast of St. John of the Cross
- Namedays
- What is a Nameday?

PRAYERS

- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
- Christmas Anticipation Prayer
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
- Litany of Saint John of the Cross

LIBRARY

- Demons According to St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross | Fr. Antonio Moreno O.P.
- Saint John of the Cross | Pope Benedict XVI

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-14
Advent: December 15th

Third Sunday of Advent

*Old Calendar: Third Sunday of Advent; Gaudete Sunday*

“Rejoice: the Lord is nigh.” As Christmas draws near, the Church emphasizes the joy which should be in our hearts over all that the birth of our Savior means for us. The great joy of Christians is to see the day drawing nigh when the Lord will come again in His glory to lead them into His kingdom. The oft-repeated Veni (“Come”) of Advent is an echo not only of the prophets but also of the conclusion of the Apocalypse of St. John: “Come, Lord Jesus,” the last words of the New Testament.

Today is known as Gaudete Sunday. The term Gaudete refers to the first word of the Entrance Antiphon, “Rejoice”. Rose vestments are worn to emphasize our joy that Christmas is near, and we also light the rose candle on our Advent wreath.

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**Jesse Tree ~ Jonah**

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**Christ Even Now on the Way to Bethlehem**

Evidently, in the mind of holy Church, neither the prophecy concerning Bethlehem Ephrata nor its fulfillment in the day of Caesar Augustus is to be considered merely a glorious divine disposition and achievement. No, the prophecy of Micheus is still being verified every day, but predominantly during the annual Advent season; for the selfsame incarnate eternal Son of God who journeyed to Bethlehem to be born there physically, now to the end of time comes to human souls as to spiritual Bethlehems, there to be born
anew, again and again.

But be sure to picture these merciful spiritual journeyings of Christ to the Bethlehem of souls as all too often sadly realistic spiritual repetitions of His first long journey over the rugged road from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Meditate long on the wanton and malicious opposition He encounters on His way to them from souls that leave their senses and heart and mind to be ruled by earthly vanities, and their whole selves to be willing victims of the sensual and selfish illusions and witcheries of the seven capital vices.

Can you still fail to see why Isaias and the Baptist compare the hardships of the way of the world’s Messiah-King to souls with a rough, crooked, and almost impassable road up steep hills and down precipitous valleys and through dangerous mountain passes? Do you wonder that these prophets of His coming insist so strongly that merely sentimental longings and routine prayers, however multiplied, cannot prepare us worthily for the entrance He must expect and the welcome He craves?

Pray very honestly, therefore, that you may begin to see the practical reasons for the Church’s crying out in the desert world, and even into your own interior soul and heart:

“Prepare ye the way of the Lord: Make straight in the wilderness His paths; Every valley shall be exalted; Every mountain and hill shall be made low; And the crooked shall be made straight; And the rough ways plain” (Is. 40:3, 4). Then shall you see the salvation of God!

Excerpted from Our Way to the Father by Rev. Leo M. Krenz, S.J.

Commentary for the Readings in the Extraordinary Form: Third Sunday of Advent

“I (John) am the voice of one crying in the desert,...but (pointing to Christ) in the midst of you there has stood One Whom you do not know” (Gospel).

This is known as “Rejoice” Sunday, from the opening word of the Introit. Despite our self-praised progress, real joy is missing from modern life. In such a “desert” we must look to Christ. Only He can “bring light to the darkness of our minds” (Prayer).
Only He can bless, deliver and forgive (Offertory). Only He can “say to the faint-hearted, ‘Take courage’” (Communion Verse).

During these days before Christmas “have no anxiety” about selecting or receiving mere tinsel gifts, but prepare “in…prayer…with thanksgiving” and “guard…your minds in Christ,” the true source of our joy (Epistle).

Excerpted from *My Sunday Missal*, Confraternity of the Precious Blood

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**Daily Readings for: December 15, 2019**

*(Readings on USCCB website)*

**Collect:** O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord’s Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- Beef Broth
- Flan
- Hazelnut Macaroons
- Jesse Tree Cookies
- Mole Poblano
- Rose Petal Pound Cake
- Sopa de espinaca con codito
- Springerle III
- Tacos

**ACTIVITIES**

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www.catholicculture.org
• Posters for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany
• Spiritual Crib

PRAYERS

• Advent Prayers
• Jesse Tree Prayer Service
• Advent Table Blessing 1
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

• John the Baptist, an Enduring Model of Fidelity to God | Pope John Paul II
• Rejoice, the Lord Is Near | Pope John Paul II
• Take Courage, for the Lord Is Near! | Pope John Paul II
• The Joy of Advent | Pope Benedict XVI
• We Are to Celebrate Joy So That the Liturgy Mirrors the Abundance of Good Things Provided by God | Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-15
Advent: December 16th

Monday of the Third Week of Advent

*Old Calendar: St. Eusebius, bishop and martyr; St. Adelaide, queen of Italy (Hist)*

We are the blind offspring of the children of pitiful Eve
Bringing with us the shadows born of an age-old error.
But when God deigned to assume the mortal form Of a human nature, then came forth from the Virgin A world of salvation…. —*Carmen* 4, Sedulius

According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, today is the feast of St. Eusebius which is celebrated in the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite on August 2. Historically it is also the feast of St. Adelaide, daughter of the king of Burgundy. Throughout her life, she received strong support from the abbots of Cluny, with whom she was on terms of close friendship.

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St. Adelaide

St. Adelaide was a truly remarkable woman. She was the daughter of the king of Burgundy, and was married to the son of the ruler of Provence as a means of ending a feud. When her husband was murdered by a rival prince, she was shut up in captivity until freed by Otto I, who became Holy Roman Emperor and Adelaide, his Empress. She ruled with her husband until his death, at which time her jealous daughter-in-law had her banished from the court twice! Yet she remained steadfast and faithful, known for her liberality in giving and her piety; and eventually she was restored to court as the regent for her grandson Otto III. She was active in the reforms of the great abbey at Cluny, and
reposed in 999. Despite her exalted status, she was a wife and mother, and lived both hard times and good, always faithful to her Lord, and always ready to give generously to those in need. She never took revenge on her political enemies once she gained the regency and it was said that her court was much like a monastery itself in its piety. She is a reminder to me that regardless of how much or how little I may have, my work remains the same.

Excerpted from Panagia Icons

**Patron:**

**Things to Do:**

- Read more about St. Adelaide [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

**Daily Readings for:** December 16, 2019
(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** Incline a merciful ear to our cry, we pray, O Lord, and, casting light on the darkness of our hearts, visit us with the grace of your Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- Chiresaye (Cherry Pudding Decorated with Flowers)

**ACTIVITIES**

- Advent and the Year of the Eucharist
- Christmas Plays, Los Pastores and Las Posadas

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www.catholicculture.org
Las Posadas II
O Antiphon Days
Posters for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany

PRAYERS

Advent Wreath Prayers I
Christmas Novena including the O Antiphons
Advent Wreath Prayers II
Novena to the Infant Jesus
Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
Christmas Novena - December 16 - 24
Christmas Anticipation Prayer
Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

None

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-16
Advent: December 17th

Tuesday of the Third Week of Advent; St. Jose Manyanet, priest

Old Calendar: St. Lazarus of Bethany

December 17 marks the beginning of the O Antiphons, the seven jewels of our liturgy, dating back to the fourth century, one for each day until Christmas Eve. These antiphons address Christ with seven magnificent Messianic titles, based on the Old Testament prophecies and types of Christ. The Church recalls the variety of the ills of man before the coming of the Redeemer. See O Come! The O Antiphons and Rejoice the Lord is Near! for more information on the O Antiphons by Jennifer Gregory Miller. Build an O Antiphon House with the instructions found here.

Today is the feast of Josep Manyanet y Vives who was born to a large and pious family. He was dedicated to Our Lady at age 5 by his mother. Educated by the Piarist Fathers in Barbastro, Spain, and then in seminaries at Lleida and Urgell in Spain. He founded the Congregation of the Sons of the Holy Family in 1864 and the Missionary Daughters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in 1874. Both were dedicated to serving the Christian family, teaching, and parish ministry. He wrote books and pamphlets encouraging devotion to the Holy Family, to help the spiritual formation of the members of his congregations, to help families in trouble, and about school management. He also
founded the magazine *La Sagrada Familia*.

Today, according to the *Roman Martyrology*, is the feast of St Lazarus known as the brother of St Martha and St Mary of Bethany. He was the man whom Jesus raised from the dead after having been dead and in his tomb for four days. The Bible does not trace his history after the miracle, but tradition says he became a missionary to Gaul, the first bishop of Marseilles, France, and a martyr in the persecutions of Domitian.

Those using the Jesse Tree should continue from today until Christmas by using symbols based on the “O” antiphons (see *Jesse Tree Instructions*).

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**O Wisdom**

Divine Wisdom clothes itself in the nature of a man. It conceals itself in the weakness of a child. It chooses for itself infancy, poverty, obedience, subjection, obscurity. “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the prudence of the prudent I will reject… . Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching, to save them that believe. For both the Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews, indeed, a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God… . But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong. And the base things of the world and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and the things that are not, that He might bring to naught the things that are” (I Cor. 1:19 ff.).

- Come, O divine Wisdom, teach us the way of knowledge. We are unwise; we judge and speak according to the vain standards of the world, which is foolishness in the eyes of God.
- Come, O divine Wisdom, give us the true knowledge and the taste for what is eternal and divine. Inspire us with a thirst for God’s holy will, help us seek God’s guidance and direction, enlighten us in the teachings of the holy gospel, make us submissive to Thy holy Church. Strengthen us in the forgetfulness of
self, and help us to resign ourselves to a position of obscurity if that be Thy holy will. Detach our hearts from resurgent pride. Give us wisdom that we may understand that “but one thing is necessary” (Luke 10:42). “For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?” (Matt. 16:26.) The Holy Spirit would have us know that one degree of grace is worth more than all worldly possessions.

Excerpted from The Light of the World by Benedict Baur, O.S.B.

1st O Antiphon:

Symbols: All-Seeing Eye and the Lamp

Come, and teach us the way of prudence.

O Wisdom, who came from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end and ordering all things mightily and sweetly, Come, and teach us the way of prudence.

O Sapientia, quae ex ore Altissimi prodiisti, attingens a fine usque ad finem fortiter, suaviterque disponens omnia: veni ad docendum nos viam prudentiae.

The “all-seeing eye” represents the all-knowing and ever-present God. During the late Renaissance, the eye was pictured in a triangle with rays of light to represent the infinite holiness of the Trinity. The lamp is a symbol of wisdom taken from the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25.

Recommended Readings: Proverbs 8:1-12

Today is Day Two of the Christmas Novena.

St. Josep Manyanet y Vives

Josep Manyanet was born within a large and Christian family on January 7, 1933 in Northeastern Spain, in the city of Tremp, province
of Lleida. He was baptized on the same day at his parish Church of our Lady of Valldeflors, patroness of the city. At a very early age, when he was five years old, he was offered to our Lady by his mother. He had to work to complete his schooling with the Piarist Fathers in Barbastro and at the Seminaries of Lleida and Urgell. He was ordained priest on April 9, 1859.

After twelve years of hard work in the Diocese of Urgell at the service of his bishop as private secretary, librarian of the seminary, administrator of the chancery and secretary for pastoral Visitations, he felt God’s call to become a religious priest and to found two religious congregations.

Founder and Apostle of the Holy Family
With the approval of his bishop, he founded, in 1864, the religious congregations of the Sons of the Holy Family Jesus, Mary and Joseph and, in 1874, the Missionary Daughters of the Holy Family of Nazareth with the mission to honor, imitate and propagate the example of the Holy Family of Nazareth and the Christian formation of families, especially through the catholic education of children and youth and through priestly ministry.

With constant work and prayer, with and exemplary life full of virtues, with loving dedication and solicitude for the souls, he guided and encouraged for almost forty years, the formation and expansion of his Institutes, opening schools and centers of ministry in several towns in Spain. Today both Institutes are present in several European countries, in North and South America and in Africa as well.

Specially called by God to present to the world the example of the Holy Family of Nazareth, he wrote several books and booklets to spread the devotion of the Holy Family. He founded the magazine La Sagrada Familia and promoted the idea of the construction of a Temple dedicated to the Holy Family. The Temple, as yet unfinished in Barcelona, was built by the architectural genius and Servant of God Antonio Gaudí, destined to perpetuate the virtues and examples of the Family of Nazareth and to be the universal spiritual home of all families.

His Train of Thought
Blessed Josep Manyanet endeavored to spread the Gospel, both through his preaching and his writings. He wrote many letters, books and booklets for the formation of the
members of his religious Institutes, for families and children and for the management of schools. One of the highlights is the *School of Nazareth* and *Home of the Holy Family* (Barcelona 1895), his spiritual autobiography in which through the dialogues of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, with a literary character called Desideria, describes a process of Christian and religious perfection inspired in the spirituality of the home and school of Nazareth.

His book *A Priceless Family Gem* (Barcelona 1899) is a guide for marriages and families, which reminds them of the dignity of the sacrament of marriage as a vocation and the important task of the Christian education of their children.

The *Spirit of the Holy Family* is a book of meditations dedicated to the members of his religious Institutes, where he describes their vocation, identity and mission within the society and the church. There is an edition of his *Selected Works* (Madrid 1991). A forthcoming edition of his Complete Works will enrich those already published. The first volume is already on the way.

**Illnesses and Death**

His many endeavors were not free of difficulties. He also had to endure physical illnesses along his life, but his constancy and fortitude, nourished by his humble obedience to the will of God, helped him to overcome all of them.

Because of his poor health, due to open sores on his side, which he labelled God’s mercies for 16 long years, on the 17th of December of 1901, full of virtues and good deeds, was called by God to his eternal home, in his school “Jesús, María y José” of Barcelona, central place of his work, surrounded by children, with the same simplicity that characterized all his life. His last words were his fervent prayer Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you.

His remains are kept in a burial chapel at the same school were he died, accompanied by the prayer and gratitude of his religious sons and daughters as well as the numerous youth, children and families that, because of his example, live their lives close to God and to his teachings.

**Witness to Holiness**

His saintly life impressed many people who came in contact with him. The Process of Canonization was formally introduced in 1956. Once the practice of all virtues in a heroic grade was officially recognized by the church in 1982 and proof of a healing miracle attributed to his intercession, Pope John Paul II declared him Blessed in 1984. Now with the approval of another miracle through his intercession, his canonization is

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www.catholicculture.org
The Righteous St Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary (Magdalene), lived in the village of Bethany, not far from Jerusalem. During His earthly life the Lord Jesus Christ often visited the house of Lazarus, whom He much loved and called His friend (John 11:3,11), and when Lazarus had died and lain four days already in the grave, the Lord raised him from the dead (John 11:1-44). (The Church remembers St Lazarus on the Saturday of the Sixth Week of Great Lent, “Lazarus Saturday.”)

Many of the Jews, when they heard about this, came to Bethany. Being persuaded of the reality of this most remarkable wonder, they became followers of Christ. Because of this the High Priests also wanted to kill Lazarus. Righteous Lazarus is mentioned in the Holy Gospel once more: when the Lord had come again to Bethany six days before the Passover, Lazarus was also there (John 12:1-2, 12:9-11). After his raising, St Lazarus lived another thirty years as a bishop on the island of Cyprus, where he spread Christianity and peacefully fell asleep in the Lord. The holy relics of St Lazarus were discovered in Kiteia. They were within a marble coffin, upon which was inscribed: “Lazarus of the Four-Days, the friend of Christ.” The Byzantine emperor Leo the Wise (886-911) gave orders to transfer the relics of St Lazarus to

scheduled to take place in Rome, on May 16, 2004.

Pope John Paul II has stated that the sanctity demonstrated by Josep Manyanet stems from the Holy Family. He was called by God, so that “in his name every family on earth may be blessed”. The Holy spirit guided him to boldly proclaim the “Gospel of the family”. His inspiration was that “all families may imitate and bless the Holy Family of Nazareth”. That is: “to build a Nazareth in every home”, and to make of every family a “Holy Family”.

His canonization brings forth the truth of his sanctity and the unending value of his message from Nazareth. That makes him a Prophet of the family and the protector of our families.

Excerpted from the Vatican website

**Things to Do:**

- Read this [biography](http://www.catholicculture.org) of St. Josep’s life.
- Read about the [Sons of the Holy Family](http://www.catholicculture.org) which St. Josep founded.
- Consider joining the [Holy Family Association](http://www.catholicculture.org) in which the laity participate in St. Josep’s order.
- If you understand Spanish you can watch this [life of St. Joseph](http://www.catholicculture.org) on YouTube.

**St. Lazarus of Bethany**

The Righteous St Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary (Magdalene), lived in the village of Bethany, not far from Jerusalem. During His earthly life the Lord Jesus Christ often visited the house of Lazarus, whom He much loved and called His friend (John 11:3,11), and when Lazarus had died and lain four days already in the grave, the Lord raised him from the dead (John 11:1-44). (The Church remembers St Lazarus on the Saturday of the Sixth Week of Great Lent, “Lazarus Saturday.”)

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[www.catholicculture.org](http://www.catholicculture.org)
Constantinople in the year 898 and place them within the church of the Righteous Lazarus.

The story of Lazarus is a preview of Jesus’ approaching death and resurrection. Lazarus stands for the fallen humanity about to be raised from the death of sin to life in God through Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection. The illness which Jesus allows Lazarus to undergo is the symbol of our false self with all its weakness, ignorance, and pride, together with all the damage lying in the unconscious from earliest childhood to the present moment. To raise Lazarus from this illness to life in the Spirit is the most profound meaning of the event. Lazarus’ resurrection manifests the full significance of Christ’s resurrection, which restores sinful humanity, not only to the divine life, but to its super-abounding fullness.

**Patron:** Diocese of Autun, France and archdiocese of Marseille, France.

**Things to do:**

- Read this [account of St. Lazarus of Bethany](#) at the The Military and Hospitaller Order of St. Lazarus website.
- Read about [Bethany](#), where Jesus raised St. Lazarus from the dead.
- Read about the [Agios Lazaros Church](#) in Cyprus.
- Read about the [translation](#) of the relics of St. Lazarus.
- Read about St. Lazarus at the Greek Orthodox

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**Daily Readings for:** December 17, 2019

(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** O God, Creator and Redeemer of human nature, who willed that your Word should take flesh in an ever-virgin womb, look with favor on our prayers, that your Only Begotten Son, having taken to himself our humanity, may be pleased to grant us a share in his divinity. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPE**

www.catholicculture.org
• Jesse Tree Cookies

ACTIVITIES

• Advent House
• Advent Hymn: Veni, Veni, Emmanuel or O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
• Christmas Plays, Los Pastores and Las Posadas
• Jesse Tree Instructions
• Las Posadas II
• O Antiphon Days
• O Antiphon Tree Decorations
• O Antiphons - December 17 - 24

PRAYERS

• Advent Tower
• Advent Wreath Prayers I
• Christmas Novena including the O Antiphons
• Advent Wreath Prayers II
• Novena to the Infant Jesus
• O Antiphons
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
• Christmas Anticipation Prayer
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
• Prayer to St. José Manyanet
• The O Antiphons Verses

LIBRARY

www.catholicculture.org
• Now Is The Time For Conversion To Peace | Pope John Paul II
• Waiting in Joyful Hope! | Bishop John C. Wester

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-17
Advent: December 18th
Wednesday of the Third Week of Advent

Today is the second of the O Antiphons, O Adonai (O Almighty God). As Moses approached the burning bush, so we approach the divine Savior in the form of a child in the crib, or in the form of the consecrated host, and falling down we adore Him. “Put off the shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground … I am who am.” “Come with an outstretched arm to redeem us.” This is the cry of the Church for the second coming of Christ on the last day. The return of the Savior brings us plentiful redemption.

O Lord and Ruler
Thou art He “who didst appear to Moses in the burning bush.” “I have seen the affliction of My people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry because of the rigor of them that are over the works. And knowing their sorrow, I am come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land into a good and spacious land, into a land that floweth with milk and honey” (Exod. 3:7 f.). Thus spoke the Lord to Moses from the bush which burned but was not consumed, which is a figure of God’s condescension to assume the weakness of human nature. The human nature of Christ is united to the burning divine nature, and yet it is not consumed.

As Moses approached the burning bush, so we approach the divine Savior in the form of a child in the crib, or in the form of the consecrated host, and falling down we adore Him. “Put off the shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground… . I am who am” (Exod. 3:5, 14).

O Adonai, almighty God! Mighty in the weakness of a child, and in the helplessness of the Crucified! Thou, almighty God, mighty in the wonders that Thou hast worked! Mighty in guiding, sustaining, and developing Thy Church! “The gates of hell shall not
prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

“Come with an outstretched arm to redeem us.” This is the cry of the Church for the second coming of Christ on the last day. The return of the Savior brings us plentiful redemption. “Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you” (Matt. 25-34).

Excerpted from *The Light of the World* by Benedict Baur, O.S.B.

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**2nd O Antiphon:**

**Symbols:** The Tablets

*Come and redeem us with outstretched arm.*

O Lord and Ruler of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the flame of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: Come and redeem us with outstretched arm.

*O Adonai, et dux domus IsraÄ«l, qui Moyse in igne flammae rubi apparuisti, et ei in Sina legem dedisti: veni ad redimendum nos in brachio extento.*

The tablets of stone are a picture of the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai. They may be used to represent the whole of God’s law, the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible, the Torah), or the entire Old Testament.

**Recommended Readings:** *Micheas 5:1-9*

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*Today is Day Three of the Christmas Novena.*

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**Daily Readings for:** December 18, 2019
(Readings on USCCB website)

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[www.catholicculture.org](http://www.catholicculture.org)
Collect: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we, who are weighed down from of old by slavery beneath the yoke of sin, may be set free by the newness of the long-awaited Nativity of your Only Begotten Son. Who live and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPES

- Rum Balls

ACTIVITIES

- Advent and the Year of the Eucharist
- Advent House
- Advent Hymn: Veni, Veni, Emmanuel or O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
- Christmas Plays, Los Pastores and Las Posadas
- Las Posadas II
- O Antiphon Days
- O Antiphon Tree Decorations
- O Antiphons - December 17 - 24

PRAYERS

- Advent Tower
- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Christmas Novena including the O Antiphons
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Novena to the Infant Jesus
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
- December Devotion: The Immaculate Conception
- Christmas Anticipation Prayer
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
• The O Antiphons Verses

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• What’s in a name? | Dr. Michael P. Foley

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-18
Advent: December 19th

Thursday of the Third Week of Advent

Today is the third of the O Antiphons. Christ the King, the Lord! Divine Wisdom, Adonai, the powerful God, is at the same time man with flesh and blood of the house of Jesse, the father of King David. Truly, the right of kingship has now passed from the house of David. The glory that once clothed the royal family has faded and withered, leaving only a blighted and withered root. But from this root is to spring a glorious blossom, the King of the world. “He shall rule from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Before Him the Ethiopians shall fall down and His enemies shall lick the ground. The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents: the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall serve Him” (Ps. 71:8-11). To Him God has said, “Thou art My Son…. I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession” (Ps. 2:7 f.).

O Root of Jesse

“Come to deliver us and tarry not.” The world cries out for Christ its King, who shall cast out the prince of this world (John 12:31). The prince of this world established his power over men as a result of original sin. Even after we had been delivered from the servitude of Satan through the death of Christ on the cross, the prince of this world attempts to exercise his power over us. “The devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour” (I Pet. 5:8). In these trying times, when faith in Christ and in God has largely disappeared, when the propaganda of a pagan culture is broadcast everywhere, and the forces of evil and falsehood rise up to cast God from His throne, who does not feel the power of the devil? Does it not appear that we are approaching that time when Satan will be released from the depths of hell to work his wonders and mislead, if possible, even the elect? (Apoc. 20:2; Matt. 24:24.)
“Come, tarry not.” Observe how thoroughly the world of today has submitted to the reign of Satan. Mankind has abandoned the search for what is good and holy. Loyalty, justice, freedom, love, and mutual trust are no longer highly regarded. Establish, O God, Thy kingdom among us, a kingdom established upon truth, justice, and peace. “Come, tarry not.” “Thy kingdom come.”

Excerpted from  *The Light of the World* by Benedict Baur, O.S.B.

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**3rd O Antiphon:**

**Symbols:** Plant with Flower

*Come to deliver us, and tarry not.*

O Root of Jesse, who stands for an ensign of the people, before whom kings shall keep silence and unto whom the Gentiles shall make supplication: Come to deliver us, and tarry not.

*O Radix Jesse, qui stas in signum populorum, super quem continebunt reges os suum, quem gentes deprecabuntur: veni ad liberandum nos, jam noli tardare.*

The flower which springs up from the root of Jesse is another figure of Christ. Isaiah prophesied that the Savior would be born from the root of Jesse, that He would sit upon the throne of David, and in Christ this prophecy is fulfilled.

**Recommended Readings:**  *Isaias* 11:1-12

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**Today is Day Four of the Christmas Novena.**

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**Daily Readings for:** December 19, 2019  
(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** Grant, we pray, almighty God, that the coming solemnity of your Son may bestow healing upon us in this present life and bring us the rewards of life
eternal. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPIES**

- Sugar Cookies with Nuts

**ACTIVITIES**

- Advent Hymn: Veni, Veni, Emmanuel or O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
- Christmas Plays, Los Pastores and Las Posadas
- O Antiphon Days
- O Antiphon Tree Decorations
- O Antiphons - December 17 - 24

**PRAYERS**

- Advent Tower
- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Christmas Novena including the O Antiphons
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Novena to the Infant Jesus
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
- Christmas Anticipation Prayer
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
- The O Antiphons Verses

**LIBRARY**

- Now Is The Time For Conversion To Peace | Pope John Paul II

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www.catholicculture.org
View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-19
Advent: December 20th

Friday of the Third Week of Advent

*Old Calendar: St. Dominic of Silos*

Today is the fourth of the O Antiphons. O sublime majesty of the coming Redeemer! To Him has been delivered the key, the government of the house of David (Is 22:22). Boundless is His power over the graces and privileges of the Church, over the souls and hearts and the wills of men. He holds the destiny of the Church in the palm of His hand. He is Master of the storms that arise to destroy the Church and the souls committed to her. He is capable of dealing with the false principles and the errors that threaten her doctrines. He has overcome the devil and his associates, the world, the flesh and its tribulations. To Him all power is given (Matt. 28:18). “He shall open and none shall shut” (Is 22:22). Against the power that is His all other forces are powerless. The destiny of souls and the government of the Church are placed in His hand. He is the Lord of all. O Key of David, I believe in Thy power; and in the many difficult situations that confront the Church and my own soul, I place my trust in Thee.

Today is the feast of St. Dominic of Silos, an abbot who lived in Spain in the 11th century.

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**O Key of David**

“Come, lead the captives from their prison.” With the key of His almighty power, the Redeemer has opened the prison in which poor, sinful man was languishing in darkness and in the shadow of death.
Key of David, come and deliver the captives from their prison. The Church wishes that by the practice of virtue we should free ourselves from sin and unfaithfulness. She asks God that He may spare us from punishment, deliver us from His wrath, from an evil death, and from hell. The Church prays that God may free us from a heart that clings to the world, from a spirit that is pleased with worldliness, from a human respect that degrades us. She urges us to return kindness and affection for scorn, love and compassion for persecution. Our Holy Mother the Church prays that we may be delivered from ourselves, from our self-love, and from all our secret sins. She prays that God may detach our hearts from all that can bind them to earth, for he who has been freed from the things of the earth is free with the freedom of Christ.

Key of David, come and deliver the captives from their prison. By Thy coming free us from all that separates us from God. Bring us freedom and redemption; incline us to surrender ourselves completely to God. So all pray for each, and each for all.

Excerpted from *The Light of the World* by Benedict Baur, O.S.B.

4th O Antiphon:

**Symbols:** Key

*Come, and bring forth the captive from his prison.*

O Key of David, and Scepter of the House of Israel, who opens and no man shuts, who shuts and no man opens; come and bring forth the captive from his prison, he who sits in darkness and in the shadow of death.

*O Clavis David, et sceptrum domus Israël, qui aperis, et nemo claudit, claudis, et nemo aperuit: veni, et educ vinctum de domo carceris, sedentem in tenebris, et umbra mortis.*

The key is the emblem of authority and power. Christ is the Key of the House of David who opens to us the full meaning of the scriptural prophecies, and reopens for all mankind the gate of Heaven.

**Recommended Readings:** *Isaias* 22:22-25
Today is **Day Five of the Christmas Novena.**

**St. Dominic of Silos**

St. Dominic of Silos was defender of the faith. Born in Canas, Navarre, Spain, circa 1000, he entered the Benedictines at San Millan de la Cogolla. King Garcia III of Navarre challenged him when he became abbot of the monastery, and Dominic refused to surrender part of the Benedictine lands to the crown. For this he was exiled, going to King Ferdinand I of Castile and Leon, who made him abbot of St. Sebastian Abbey at Silos, now called St. Dominic’s.

Dominic reformed the abbey, built the cloisters in Romanesque style, and started a scriptorium that became famous throughout the region. One of the most beloved saints in Spain, Dominic also rescued Christian slaves from the Moors.

Dominic’s shrine is noted for its place in the birth of Dominic de Guzman, the founder of the Order of Preachers. Dominic de Guzman’s mother begged for a child there. Dominic was also noted for miracles of healing. Excerpted from Evangelizo.org 2001-2014

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**Daily Readings for: December 20, 2019**

*(Readings on USCCB website)*

**Collect:** O God, Creator and Redeemer of human nature, who willed that your Word should take flesh in an ever-virgin womb, look with favor on our prayers, that your Only Begotten Son, having taken to himself our humanity, may be pleased to grant us a share in his divinity. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**Recipes**

www.catholicculture.org
- Plain Cookies

ACTIVITIES

- Advent Hymn: Veni, Veni, Emmanuel or O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
- Christmas Plays, Los Pastores and Las Posadas
- Las Posadas II
- O Antiphon Days
- O Antiphon Tree Decorations
- O Antiphons - December 17 - 24

PRAYERS

- Advent Tower
- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Christmas Novena including the O Antiphons
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Novena to the Infant Jesus
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
- Christmas Anticipation Prayer
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
- The O Antiphons Verses

LIBRARY

- Christmas Incorporates Mystery of Easter | Pope John Paul II

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

www.catholicculture.org
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-20
Advent: December 21st

Saturday of the Third Week of Advent; Optional Memorial of St. Peter Canisius, priest and doctor

*Old Calendar: St. Thomas, apostle*

St. Peter Canisius (1521-1597) was born at Nijmegen, Holland, at the very time that Luther began to rebel against the Church and St. Ignatius Loyola was laying the foundations of the Jesuit Order. After studying the arts, civil law and theology, St. Peter joined the Jesuit Order and was ordained a priest in 1546. He is noted especially for the following services to the Church: he defended the Catholic faith against the Protestants; by preaching, writing, founding colleges and seminaries, he caused Catholic life to flourish; he rendered invaluable services to the ecumenical Council of Trent; he wrote many Catechisms which were translated into twelve languages in his own life time. He died in Fribourg, Switzerland.

According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, today is the feast of St. Thomas, now celebrated July 3. Previously St. Peter Canisius’ feast was celebrated on April 27.

Today is the fifth of the O Antiphons. It is the Sun, the Redeemer, whom we await. “I am the light [the sun] of the world” (John 8:12). Christ is the light of the world because of the faith which He has infused into souls. He has enlightened the world by His teaching and by the example of His life. In the crib, in Nazareth, on the cross on Calvary, in the tabernacle of our churches, He answers the eternal questioning of the benighted soul.
O Radiant Dawn
O eternal Sun, come and enlighten us, for where Thou art not, there is darkness, death, and wickedness. “Come and enlighten all who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.”

“But now [you are] light in the Lord” (Eph. 5:18). In the Church the light has now appeared to us on the first Christmas night, on the day of our baptism, daily in the Mass and at the time of Holy Communion, and in the many inspirations and promptings of grace. How thankful we should be for this light, which is Christ.

But we have yet to reach the full measure of the stature of Christ. Alas! we let ourselves be burdened by earthly sorrow, we are distracted by the excitement of the moment, and our spiritual growth is hampered by our attachment to the things of this world. Fervently we should repeat that plea of Holy Mother the Church. “O dawning Sun of righteousness, come and enlighten us, who yet sit in the darkness of suffering, of human reasoning, and of self-love.”

The light of Christ will be revealed perfectly only when we meet Him at the time of His second coming. Then we shall be brought into the light of glory, and we shall “shine as the sun in the kingdom of the Father” (Matt. 13:48). “Sown in corruption we shall rise in incorruption” (I Cor. 15:42). May the day of enlightenment come soon!

Excerpted from *The Light of the World* by Benedict Baur, O.S.B.

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5th O Antiphon:

**Symbols:** Sun with Rays

*Come, and shine on those seated in darkness, and in the shadow of death.*

O Dawn, splendor of eternal light, and sun of justice, come, and shine on those seated in darkness, and in the shadow of death.

*O Oriens, splendor lucis aeternae, et sol justitiae:*
veni, et illumina sedentes in tenebris, et umbra mortis.

Just as the natural sun gives light and life to all upon whom its rays fall, so Christ, the Rising Dawn, dispels darkness and brings eternal life and light.

**Recommended Readings:** *Malachias* Æ 4:2-6

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**Today is Day Six of the Christmas Novena.**

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**St. Peter Canisius**

Peter Canisius, the remarkable Jesuit who almost single-handedly reevangelized Central Europe, founded dozens of colleges, contributed to the rebirth of Catholicism by his prodigious writings, and laid the groundwork for the Catholic Reformation north of the Alps. He was born at Nijmegen, Holland, in 1521, and his father was an instructor to princes in the court of the duke of Lorraine. St. Peter Canisius was part of a movement for religious reform as a very young man and in 1543, after attending a retreat given by Blessed Peter Favre, joined the Jesuits and was the eighth professed member of the Society of Jesus.

He worked first in the city of Cologne, becoming a spokesman for the Catholic party. He became a consultor to the cardinal of Augsburg at the Council of Trent and in 1547 was called by St. Ignatius to Rome. He was sent to Sicily to teach, then, after his solemn profession in Rome, was sent back to Germany as the first superior of the German province of the Jesuits.

Peter next began to restore and found colleges, first in Vienna and Prague, and then in Munich, Innsbruck, and throughout northern Germany. He attracted vocations to the Jesuits, and the society began to flourish in Central Europe. He organized the Jesuits into a compact unit and made the society a leading force in the Counter-Reformation. He was in contact with all the Catholic leaders in Germany, and wrote fourteen hundred letters giving support to those laboring for reform. He was the adviser of the emperor and the confidante of three popes. He was consulted by papal legates and nunciatures and was a severe critic of religious and clerical life in post-Reformation Germany.
He recommended far-reaching reforms and had a profound effect upon the education and spiritual life of the clergy. Through his efforts, seminaries were founded, and the popes sent him on important diplomatic missions. In the midst of his many labors, he edited and published editions of the Fathers of the Church, catechisms, spiritual manuals, and textbooks that went into countless editions even in his own lifetime.

He died on December 21, 1597, at Fribourg, Switzerland, and was canonized and declared a Doctor of the Church in 1925.

**Patron:** Germany; Catholic press; catechism writers.

**Things to Do:**

- See Celebrating the Feast of St. Peter Canisius and Celebrating the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle (Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite) for ideas.

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**Daily Readings for: December 21, 2019**

(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** O God, who for the defense of the Catholic faith made the Priest Saint Petr Canisius strong in virtue and in learning, grant, through his intercession, that those who seek the truth may joyfully find you, their God, and that your faithful people may persevere in confessing you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Hear in kindness, O Lord, the prayers of your people, that those who rejoice at the coming of your Only Begotten Son in our flesh may, when at last he comes in glory, gain the reward of eternal life. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- *Kletzenbrot* (Christmas Fruit Bread)

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www.catholicculture.org
- *Paté de Noel* (Christmas Pie)
- *Risengroed* (Rice Pudding)
- Christmas Baking: Dried Fruit Bread
- Christmas Baking: Kletzenbrot
- Cocoanut Busserln (Meringues)
- Farina Pudding
- Frumety I
- Frumety Pudding II
- Krabeli (Springerle)
- Lamb Pie with Poppy Seed Crust
- Lebkuchen I
- Lebkuchen II
- Lebkuchen III (Inexpensive)
- Lebkuchen IV
- Marzipan Cookies
- Nut Busserln (Meringues)
- Rum Balls
- Rum Stangerln (Rum Slices)
- Spanish Wind

**ACTIVITIES**

- Advent House
- Advent Hymn: Veni, Veni, Emmanuel or O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
- O Antiphons - December 17 - 24
- Advent and the Year of the Eucharist
- A-Thomasing
- Christmas Plays, Los Pastores and Las Posadas
- Las Posadas II
• Catechesis for the Feast of St. Thomas
• Celebrating for the Feast of St. Peter Canisius
• Celebrating on December 21, the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite

PRAYERS

• Advent Tower
• Advent Wreath Prayers I
• Christmas Novena including the O Antiphons
• Advent Wreath Prayers II
• Novena to the Infant Jesus
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
• Christmas Anticipation Prayer
• The O Antiphons Verses

LIBRARY

• Saint Peter Canisius | Pope Benedict XVI

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-21
Advent: December 22nd

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Old Calendar: Fourth Sunday of Advent

“Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.” But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ’Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Sunday Readings

The first reading is taken from Isaiah 7:10-14. The Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel’ (Is 7:14). This well-known affirmation by the prophet Isaiah announces the coming of the Messiah into human history. It already gives us a taste of the proximity of that marvelous, stupendous day which will be the ’dies natalis’ of Jesus. It was foretold by the prophets and proclaimed throughout the whole of Sacred Scriptures that He would be the One who would fulfil and bring them to completion. Our God will be incarnated and born due to the generous willingness of the ‘Virgin’ who, from the very beginning of time, was chosen to be the Mother of the Savior.

The second reading is from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans 1:1-7. St. Paul opens his letter to the Jewish and Gentile converts of Rome, the first generation of Christians in the capital city of the empire, by stating that he is an Apostle chosen by Christ to spread the good news of the Incarnation. He calls this news the Gospel of God," for it is an account of that almost incredible act of God’s love for us. God sent his
divine Son, as man among us in this work, in order that we might be with the three
divine Persons for all eternity in the next world.

The Gospel is from Matthew 1:18-24. “How unsearchable are the judgements of
God and how inscrutable his ways!” as St. Paul says to the Romans (11:33). If God had
preserved the kingdom of Judah (which he could so easily have done), and if the
Messiah, the son of David, were to be born in the royal palace in Jerusalem, it would be
natural and we would almost say, more fitting the dignity of the Messiah. Instead, God
allowed the kingly line, and the throne of Judah, to disappear, and he chose a humble
carpenter of Nazareth, a true descendant of David but a lowly one, to be the foster-father
of his divine Son, when he took human nature and came on earth to “dwell among us.”
But God’s ways are not our ways. It is not by their social standing, nor by their
bank-accounts, that God values men. Virtue is the scale he uses when weighing men. In
God’s eyes, no king sat on the throne of Judah, not even David himself, who was more
acceptable to God as foster-father for his Son, than the carpenter of Nazareth.

This is the last Sunday of our preparation for Christmas, the anniversary of Christ’s
birth. Like Joseph, we can all feel unworthy of the honor of welcoming him into our
hearts and our homes. We are indeed unworthy, not because we have little of this
world’s goods, but because we have so little humility, so little charity, so little faith and
trust in God’s goodness. Let us try to imitate Joseph and Mary, the humblest of the
humble, the kindliest of the kindly, and the greatest-ever believers in God’s goodness
and mercy. We can never hope to equal them, but we can follow them humbly, from afar.

The feast of Christmas should draw the hearts of every child of God towards the
furnace of divine love. In the manger, the infinite love of God for us miserable sinners is
dramatically and forcefully portrayed before our eyes. In that helpless Baby, represented
by a statue, we know that the person, and the power, of the omnipotent Creator and
sustainer of the universe lie hidden “He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave” for
us. He became a creature, like ourselves, so that he would make us sharers in his divine
nature. He came on earth to bring us to heaven. He hid his divine nature so that he could
cover us with it.

“Unsearchable indeed are the judgements of God, and inscrutable his ways.” But
though we are unworthy of his infinite love, it nevertheless stands out as clear as the
noonday sun in the Incarnation. We realize that we can never make ourselves worthy of
this infinite love, but let us imitate Joseph and accept the honor which God is giving us,
as we trust that he will continue to make us daily less unworthy.

Excerpted from The Sunday Readings by Fr. Kevin O’Sullivan, O.F.M.
O King of the Gentiles

“Come and save man, whom Thou hast made out of dust.” What is man? He is but a particle of dust, an insignificant creature who has further separated himself from God through sin. He has been cut off from the fountain of truth and banished from God to darkness and misery. Still in the ruins there dwells a spirit that possesses a capacity for truth. In these ashes there is yet a spark that may be fanned to life to burn with the brilliance of divine life. But only God can revive this flame. For this reason the Church cries out, “Come and save man, whom Thou hast made out of dust.” Save him who is so weak, so miserable and helpless. Remember his nothingness. Consider the many enemies who lay snares to rob him of divine life and to entice him into sin. Think of his obscured knowledge and his proneness to evil, of his tendency to error, and his weakness in the face of temptation. Guard him from the enticements of the world; shelter him from the poison of erroneous teaching; deliver him from the devil and his angels.

During these days before Christmas, the Church contemplates the overwhelming misery of unregenerated mankind. She cries out, “Come and save man, whom Thou hast made out of dust.”

Jesus is King of all nations. “The kings of the earth stood up and the princes met together against the Lord and against His Christ. Let us break their bonds asunder, and let us cast away their yoke from us. He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them, and the Lord shall deride them. Then shall He speak to them in His anger and trouble them in His rage. But I am appointed king by Him over Sion, His holy mountain. … The Lord hath said to Me; Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession” (Ps. 2:2-8). Well may Herod seek the life of the newborn king. Indeed, many kings and tribes and nations in the course of time shall deprecate the divine King, Christ. But to Him has been given all power in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). Before Him every knee shall bend, and every tongue shall confess that He is the Lord (Phil. 2:10f.).

The more the mighty condemn the kingship of Christ, the more shall He be exalted by the Father.

Now He comes to us in the form of a lovely child. One day in the presence of the Roman governor He will assert His right to kingship. But after this one public confession
of His royal origin He withdraws again into the obscurity which He had freely chosen. For the present He is satisfied with this manifestation of His royal dignity. The day will come, however, when He will manifest it with power and majesty as He comes again on the clouds of heaven. Before all nations God will declare: “I have anointed Him King of Sion. My holy mountain.” All men shall pay Him homage as king; all nations shall acclaim Him the King of Glory.

Excerpted from *The Light of the World* by Benedict Baur, O.S.B.

**6th O Antiphon:**
Symbols: Crown and Scepter

*Come, and deliver man, whom You formed out of the dust of the earth.*

O King of the Gentiles and their desired One, the Cornerstone that makes both one; Come, and deliver man, whom You formed out of the dust of the earth.

*O Rex Gentium, et desideratus earum, lapisque angularis, qui facis utraque unum: veni, et salva hominem, quem de limo formasti.*

The crown and scepter signify Christ’s universal kingship. As we sing in the fifth O Antiphon, Christ is not only the King of the Jewish nation, but the “Desired One of all,” the cornerstone which unites both Jew and Gentile.

**Recommended Readings:** *Apocalypse* 15:1-4

Today is Day Seven of the Christmas Novena.

**Commentary for the Readings in the Extraordinary Form: Fourth Sunday of Advent** “John, the son of Zachary,” to a world now awaiting its God, pleads for our final pre-Christmas “make ready.”
“Make ready the way of the Lord, make straight His paths” (Gospel).

Heroically, in the desert, he warns against the softness of life in the city, pictured in the background. Alive to the danger of a “soft garments” life, he is seen in a rough “garment of camel hair,” carrying a baptismal shell, “preaching a baptism of repentance.”

Excerpted from *My Sunday Missal*, Confraternity of the Precious Blood

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**Daily Readings for: December 22, 2019**  
(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- German Cinnamon Stars

**ACTIVITIES**

- Christmas Tree
- Posters for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany
- Religion in the Home for Elementary School: December
- Religion in the Home for Preschool: December

**PRAYERS**
• Hungarian wheat
• Advent Prayers
• Jesse Tree Prayer Service
• Advent Table Blessing 1
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

• Christ Was Born for Our Salvation | Pope John Paul II

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-22
Advent: December 23rd

Monday of the Fourth Week of Advent;
Optional Memorial of St. John of Kanty, priest

Today the Church celebrates the optional memorial of St. John of Kanty, priest. Born in Kanty (Cracow, Poland), he taught at the university and became pastor of a parish. He was distinguished for his piety and love of neighbor.

We reach the culmination of the O Antiphons today. In previous antiphons our cry was directed to the Messiah as He manifested Himself to the Chosen People, to the Gentiles, and in nature; now He is addressed in person and asked to remain with us as Emmanuel.

Reading this final antiphon gives the feeling that a climax has indeed come. The very term Emmanuel, God with us, reveals the kindly, human heart of Jesus — He wants to be one of us, a Child of man, with all our human weakness and suffering; He wants to experience how hard it is to be man. He wants to remain with us to the end of time, He wants to dwell within us, He wants to make us share His nature.

O Emmanuel

“O Emmanuel (God with us), our King and Lawgiver, Thou expected one of the nations and their Redeemer, come and save us, O Lord our God.”

Now we are about to receive the Savior, Emmanuel, God with us. God’s only-begotten Son, born of the Father before all time, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, one being with the Father, is about to be born in time. For the salvation of men, He has

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come down upon earth and is conceived by the Holy Ghost in a virgin. He shall be called God with us, and yet He will be one in nature with us. He is to be like to us in all things except sin. He wills to share our poverty and to pray and suffer with us; He assumes our guilt. He is God with us in every phase of our life; He even takes our place on the cross, He remains with us in Holy Communion, in our daily Mass, and in our tabernacles. At some time in the future He will still be God with us in His beautiful heaven. All this He has done for us even though we have repeatedly turned our back on Him.

Come and save us. “The great God is with us. He has come, not to destroy the sinful world, as He once destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha, but to redeem it from its sins. This redemption is to be accomplished at the cost of great personal sacrifice to Him. As if this did not satisfy the burning ardor of His love, He wills to remain with us in our tabernacles. He incorporates us into Himself and shares His very life with us. We are engrafted in Him as a branch might be grafted to a new tree. "I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5). God with us! We are united to Christ as a limb is united to a body, as a branch is united to a vine. We now belong to Christ and no longer to ourselves. We are one with Him. What a grace, what greatness, what nobility have been conferred upon us! God looking upon us no longer sees miserable specimens of mankind, but members of Christ. When He looks upon Christ, He sees Christ and us as united in one body, as a tree united to its branches. Even the smallest leaf fluttering on the farthest branch belongs to that tree and lives by the sap of that tree. Could He have redeemed us in a more perfect manner than by thus implanting in us and infusing in us His divine life? Let us reflect upon this seriously.

God with us! It was that He might be with us that He came that first Christmas at Bethlehem. He came that He might lift me up from the dust, and that I might share in His life. He will return this Christmas that He may continue and complete that work. It is for the same purpose that He comes in every Holy Mass and Communion, and in each inspiration and grace He gives us. His final coming will be for the same purpose, and will have the further aim of sharing with us His glorified life in heaven. We shall then enjoy the perfect vision of God, perfect love, and the fulfillment of all our desires for all eternity. For all eternity!

Excerpted from *The Light of the World* by Benedict Baur, O.S.B.

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www.catholicculture.org
7th O Antiphon:

Symbols: Manger

Come to save us, O Lord our God.

O Emmanuel, God with us, our King and Lawgiver, the expected of the nations and their Savior: Come to save us, O Lord our God.

O Emmanuel, Rex et legifer noster, expectatio gentium, et Salvator earum: veni ad salvandum nos, Domine, Deus noster.

The manger reminds us of the simplicity and poverty surrounding the birth of Jesus and is representative of His life of humility.

Recommended Readings: Isaias 9:2-7

St. John of Kanty

John Cantius was born in the year 1397 in the Polish town of Kanty (whence his surname). He became a professor of theology, then parish priest; soon, however, he returned to the professor’s chair at the University of Cracow. On foot he visited the holy places of Rome and Palestine. One day, after robbers had deprived him of all his effects, they asked him whether he had anything more. The saint said no, but hardly had they gone when he remembered having sewn some gold pieces inside his clothing; immediately he followed and overtook them. The robbers, astonished at the man’s sense of truthfulness, refused to accept the money and returned to him the stolen luggage.

To guard himself and his household from evil gossip he wrote upon the wall of his room (after the example of St. Augustine): Conturbare cave, non est placare suave,
diffamare cave, nam revocare grave, i.e. “Guard against causing trouble and slandering others, for it is difficult to right the evil done.” His love of neighbor was most edifying. Often he gave away his own clothing and shoes; then, not to appear barefoot, he lowered his cassock so as to have it drag along the ground. Sensing that his death was near at hand, he distributed whatever he still had to the poor and died peacefully in the Lord at an advanced age. He is honored as one of the principal patrons of Poland.

**Patron:** Lithuania, Poland.

**Symbols:** Dressed in a professor’s gown with his arm around the shoulder of a young student whose gaze he directs towards heaven; giving his garments to the poor.

**Things to Do:**

- Since this day falls so close to Christmas, it would be a good time to perform acts of charity for the poor who will be suffering and alone during this holiday season. Contact your local council or St. Vincent de Paul organization in your parish to find out what families are needy. Make a food and gift basket to present to this family.
- Another good work would be taking the family to visit a nursing home. This time of year is quite depressing for those who do not have family.
- Take some time to learn a little about Poland and its culture and traditions.
- Serve some Polish food, like pierogies and kielbasa (Polish sausage). You can try to make these from scratch, or find them ready-made in your grocery store.
- Recite the Vespers hymn to St. John Kanty, *O Glory of the Polish Race*.

**Today is Day Eight of the Christmas Novena.**

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**Daily Readings for: December 23, 2019**

(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** Grant, we pray, almighty God, that by the example of the Priest Saint John of Kanty we may advance in knowledge of holy things and by showing
Almighty ever-living God, as we see how the Nativity of your Son according to the flesh draws near, we pray that to us, your unworthy servants, mercy may flow from your Word, who chose to become flesh of the Virgin Mary and establish among us his dwelling, Jesus Christ our Lord. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Almighty ever-living God, as we see how the Nativity of your Son according to the flesh draws near, we pray that to us, your unworthy servants, mercy may flow from your Word, who chose to become flesh of the Virgin Mary and establish among us his dwelling, Jesus Christ our Lord. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPIES

- Pirohi

ACTIVITIES

- Advent and the Year of the Eucharist
- Advent House
- Advent Hymn: Veni, Veni, Emmanuel or O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
- Christmas Plays, Los Pastores and Las Posadas
- Las Posadas II
- O Antiphon Days
- O Antiphon Tree Decorations
- O Antiphons - December 17 - 24

PRAYERS

- Advent Tower
- Advent Wreath Prayers I
- Christmas Novena including the O Antiphons
- Advent Wreath Prayers II
- Novena to the Infant Jesus
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
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**LIBRARY**

- None

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-23
Advent: December 24th

Christmas Eve

Old Calendar: Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord

“Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.” But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

The liturgical texts express wholehearted confidence in the imminent coming of the Redeemer. There is much joyous expectation. Most families have their own observances, customs that should be preserved from generation to generation. Today is the last day of our Christmas Novena.

Christmas Eve at Church

The entire liturgy of Christmas Eve is consecrated to the anticipation of the certain and sure arrival of the Savior: "Today you shall know that the Lord shall come and tomorrow you shall see His glory" (Invitatory of Matins for the Vigil of the Nativity). Throughout Advent we have seen how the preparation for Jesus’ coming became more and more precise. Isaiah, John the Baptist and the Virgin Mother appeared throughout the season announcing and foretelling the coming of the King. We learn today that
Christ according to His human nature is born at Bethlehem of the House of David of the Virgin Mary, and that according to His divine nature He is conceived of the Spirit of holiness, the Son of God and the Second Person of the Trinity.

The certitude of His coming is made clear in two images. The first is that of the closed gate of paradise. Since our first parents were cast forth from the earthly paradise the gate has been closed and a cherubim stands guard with flaming sword. The Redeemer alone is able to open this door and enter in. On Christmas Eve we stand before the gate of paradise, and it is for this reason that Psalm 23 is the theme of the vigil:

Lift up your gates, O princes, Open wide, eternal gates, That the King of Glory may enter in… .

Christmas Eve at Home

It must be so that the grown-ups may devote themselves with a quiet mind, unhindered by any commotion, to these great mysteries of the Holy Night, that in most Catholic countries the giving of gifts has been advanced to Christmas Eve.

Christmas Eve is an appropriate time for the exchange of gifts, after the Christ-Child has been placed in the manger, and the special prayers before the crib — and a round of Christmas carols — are over. If the gifts are given out before the Midnight Mass, the children can concentrate more easily on the great mystery which is celebrated, when the Greatest Gift is given to all alike, even those who have received no material expression of Christmas love. And then, too, Christmas Day with its two additional Masses can be devoted more to the contemplation of the Christmas mystery and the demands of Christmas hospitality.

The opening of the eternal gates through which the King of Glory may enter is indicated by the wreath on the door of our homes at Christmastide. The Advent wreath, which accompanied the family throughout the season of preparation may be taken down. The violet ribbons are
removed, and it is gloriously decorated with white and gold. It is then placed upon the door as a symbol of the welcome of Christ into our city, our home and our hearts. On Christmas Eve the whole house should be strewn with garlands and made ready for the Light of the World. The crib is set in a special place of honor, for tonight the central figure of the Nativity scene is to arrive.

Today is Day Nine of the Christmas Novena.

Daily Readings for: December 24, 2019
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPES

- Cassata (Cream Tart)
- Kapusta Czerwona z Grzybamy (Red Cabbage and Mushrooms)
- Sandacz Pieczony (Baked Pike)
- Basic Sweet Dough
- Beet Soup
- Buche de Noel
- Bunuelous
- Carp
- Cheese Pierogi (Polish Filled Dumplings)
- Chocolate Cherry Fruit Cake
- Christmas Fruit Bread
- Christstollen I (Stollen)
- Christstollen III (Stollen)
- Christstollen IV (Stollen)
- Codfish
- Coffee Penuche
- Cranberry Foam Cocktail
- Cream Oyster Stew
- Eggnog II
- Eggnog III (Spanish)
- Eggnog Pie
- Fish Salad
- Five-Way Fudge
- German Cinnamon Stars
- Hot Buttered Rum
- Insalata di Rinforzo
- Mazurek with Fruit Topping (Polish Cake)
- Melachrino (Spice Cake)
- Mexican Cold Fish
- Mexican Fritters
- Mocha Butter Cream
- Old-Fashioned Bread Stuffing
- Pierogi (Potato Dumplings)
- Pockets with Cheese or Berries
- Popcorn Balls
- Potato Dumplings
- Quick Fudge
- Simmered Carp
- Six Christmas Dinner Menus
• Soft Molasses Cookies
• Spritz Cookies II
• Ten-Minute Marshmallow Nut Fudge
• Truffled Capon
• Vegetable Soup
• Walnut Butter Crunch
• Wayside Inn Pie
• Yule Log Coffee Cake

ACTIVITIES

• A Christmas Play
• Bread of Angels
• Christ-Candle
• Christmas Eve Celebrations
• Christmas Eve Midnight Mass
• Christmas Eve Supper
• Christmas Eve Supper
• Christmas Plays, Los Pastores and Las Posadas
• Christmas Song: The Shepherds’ Song
• Christmas Tree Decorations
• Decorating the Tree
• Irish Christmas Candles
• Oplatek, Old Polish Custom
• Origin of the Twelve Days of Christmas
• Polish Wigilia
• Santa Claus
• Slovakian Generous Supper
• The Christmas Wreath
• The Exchange of Gifts
• The Feasts of Light: Christmas, Epiphany and Candlemas

PRAYERS

• Advent Tower
• Advent Wreath Prayers I
• Blessing of the Christmas Crib
• Blessing of the Christmas Tree in the Home
• Christmas Eve Prayers
• Christmas Novena including the O Antiphons
• Enthroning the Christ Child
• Blessing of the Crib
• Advent Wreath Prayers II
• Christmas Baking and Bread Blessing
• Christmas Morning Prayers
• Christmas Evening Prayers
• Novena to the Infant Jesus
• Christmas Masses
• Blessing of the Christmas Tree
• Book of Blessings: Blessing of a Christmas Tree
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (2nd Plan)
• December Devotion: The Immaculate Conception
• Christmas Anticipation Prayer
• Book of Blessings: Blessing of the Christmas Tree for the Home (Shorter Rite)
• Book of Blessings: Blessing of a Christmas Tree
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Advent (1st Plan)
• Christmas Eve Ceremony: Blessing of the Crib

LIBRARY

• Celebrating Christmas: with the Accent on Christ | Unknown
• May Christ Teach us to be a Gift for Others | Pope John Paul II
• May the Light of this Night Shine Upon the Future | Pope John Paul II

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-24
Introduction to Christmas

Christmas is surely the most loved season of the Liturgical Year. Throughout this wonderful time there will always be much hustle and bustle, shopping and baking and gift giving. But precisely because of these human joys and preparations, it is important to learn to keep Christ in Christmas, to remain rooted in the fundamental spirituality of the Christmas Season. This is the joyful celebration of the coming of Our Lord and Savior.

Christmastide extends from First Vespers on Christmas Eve to the Baptism of Our Lord, which usually falls on the Sunday after Epiphany. The mystery of the Incarnate God is one so marvelous that Holy Mother Church celebrates it for eight days, each day of the Octave being considered a “little Christmas”. For the Eucharistic Liturgy, the Church is exultant in her finest vestments of white or gold, making use of incense, as well as extra flowers and candles, to underscore the festal observance of the Lord’s Nativity. The Gloria—that Christmas hymn of the angels—is sung once again. With uncontainable joy the faithful raise their voices in numerous carols; and with humble gratitude, they bend their knees during the Creed at the mention of the Incarnation.

There are four different Masses on Christmas—the Vigil Mass, Masses at Midnight, dawn and during the day—each with its own distinct Propers and Readings. The message of all the Readings is the same: ‘Today is born for us a Savior, God-with-us, the Light that the darkness cannot overcome.’ Only at the Midnight Mass, however, will the faithful hear chanted the Proclamation of the Birth of Our Savior according to the Roman Martyrology.

It is fitting that the Christmas Octave closes and the civil year begins with the celebration of the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary under her most exalted title, the Mother of God. Other feasts celebrated within the Octave include: the feast of the Holy Family, the feasts of St. John the Apostle, the Holy Innocents and St. Sylvester, and, in vestments of red, the feasts of the martyrs St. Stephen and St. Thomas Becket.

The magnificent feast of Epiphany is celebrated with the same degree of solemnity as Christmas. However, the Feast is not a repetition of the Christmas mystery, but rather the manifestation of Christ, the light to the nations. On this feast the Church proclaims the date of Easter thereby connecting and orientating all feasts to the greatest Christian Solemnity. With the feast of the Baptism of the Lord (Theophany) the season of Christmastide comes to a close.
Christmas in the domestic church is best observed by attendance at Midnight Mass, “an event of major liturgical significance” (Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy, #111). If that is not possible, the family may prepare for the feast by praying the Office of Readings before the crib on Christmas Eve. The Church encourages families to attend daily Mass and pray some hours of the Liturgy of the Hours every day during the Christmas Octave. Especially on the Feast of the Holy Family, the members of the family should try to attend Mass together and there renew both their marriage vows and the family’s entrustment to the patronage of the Holy Family.

The symbols of Christmas help to focus our spiritual attention. The crib and its Infant-occupant provide daily food for meditation on the simplicity and poverty, the humility and obedience of our Savior. The tree should remain decorated and lighted throughout Christmastide, or at least through the feast of Epiphany. Under the tree, among the gifts—reminders of Christ, the Gift of God’s infinite love—it is a wonderful practice to include some gifts for the poor, because the “poor belong to every family” (Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy, #109), and because the Son of God “who was rich…became poor for your sake” (2 Cor 8:9).

Many pious exercises are associated with the eve of the New Year, in Europe called simply St. Sylvester. Coming at the end of the civil year it affords the faithful an opportunity to reflect on how swiftly time passes, to do penance for sins committed during the year, and to give thanks to God for the myriad graces and blessing of the past year. The family might participate in a parish prayer vigil that concludes with Mass, or if that is not possible, a vigil could be held in the home before the crib.

In many cultures, Epiphany is the day on which gifts are exchanged, and homes are blessed and sprinkled with “Epiphany water”. On this feast, the Infant-King in his crib will wear a crown and a scarlet robe while Caspar, Melchoir and Balthasar inscribe their initials above the doorways of the domestic church. May it become “a shelter of health, chastity, self-conquest, humility, charity, mildness, obedience to the Commandments, and thanksgiving to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen” (Christmas to Candlemas in a Catholic Home, Epiphany blessing).

There are many more ideas for customs, traditions, prayers, activities and even recipes on our web site, beginning in the Christmas Workshop. Let us try to celebrate Christmas with the innocence and humility of children, always keeping in mind the wonderful birth of the Christ Child.

Christmas Workshop

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www.catholicculture.org
View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/intro-to-christmas/
Christmas: December 25th

Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

*Old Calendar: The Nativity of Our Lord*

Today the Church celebrates the Birth of Jesus Christ, the first day in the octave of Christmas. Throughout Advent the Church longed ardently for the coming of our Savior. Today she celebrates His birth with unrestrained joy. “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” The Son of God became man to give us a share in that divine life which is eternally His in the Blessed Trinity. Christmas time begins on December 24 with the first Vespers of the feast and ends on the feast of the Baptism of Christ. White vestments reappear in our churches as a sign of joy.

The Christmas feast is a festival full of joy. The Eternal Word has become Man and dwells among us. The longings of the patriarchs and prophets are fulfilled. With the shepherds we hurry to the manger and adore the Incarnate Son of God, who for us and for our salvation descended upon earth. The purpose of the Christmas feast is beautifully expressed in the Preface of the Nativity: “For by the mystery of the Word made flesh the light of Thy glory hath shone anew upon the eyes of our mind; so that while we acknowledge Him a God seen by men, we may be drawn by Him to the love of things unseen.”

During the Christmas season there is an extensive exchange of greetings and good wishes among friends. These greetings are a reminder of those “good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people, for this day is born to you a Savior Who is Christ the Lord.”

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www.catholicculture.org
(Lk. 2:11). They are a reminder, too, that all blessings and graces come to us from Christ: “Hath He not also with Him given us all things?” (Rom. 8:32).

During the Christmas season there is also an exchange of gifts. This custom should recall to us that on this day God Himself gave to us the greatest of all gifts, His beloved Son: “God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son” (John 3:16).

The Christmas tree, of which the first-known mention was made in 1605 at Strasbourg, was introduced into France and England in 1840. It symbolizes the great family tree of Christ which through David and Jesse has its roots in Abraham, the father of the chosen race. It is often laden with gifts to remind us that Christmas brought us the priceless gifts of grace and of eternal life. It is frequently adorned with lights that recall to us that Christ is the Light of the world enlightening those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Though not entirely unknown before, the custom of the Christmas Crib was adopted by St. Francis of Assisi at Greccio, Italy, on Christmas 1225. It is a concrete and vivid way of representing to ourselves the Incarnation and birth of Christ. It depicts in a striking manner the virtues of the newborn Savior, especially His humility, poverty, and charity.

About Christmas

Catholic Culture offers these links to help you experience the joy of Christmas by keeping a spiritual focus on the season.

Throughout this wonderful time there will always be much hustle and bustle, shopping and baking and gift giving. But we hope you will refer to the Catholic Culture calendar often for ideas and spiritual nuggets to increase your Christmas joy.

Let us try to celebrate Christmas with the innocence and humility of children always keeping in mind the wonderful birth of the Christ Child.

Joy to the world the Lord has come, let earth receive her King.
Christmas at Home and in the Liturgy

The Masses of Christmas

Put Christ Back in Christmas

Christmas - The First Day

The purest of Virgins gave us our God, who was this day born of her, clothed in the flesh of a Babe, and she was found worthy to feed him at her Breast: let us all adore Christ, who came to save us.

Ye faithful people, let us all rejoice, for our Savior is born in our world: this Day there has been born the Son of the great Mother, and she yet a pure Virgin.

O Queen of the world, and Daughter of a kingly race! Christ has risen from thy womb, as a Bridegroom coming from the bride-chamber: He that rules the stars lies in a Crib. —Â Antiphon from the ancient Church of Gaul

- Day One activity  (Christmas Drama)
- Day One recipe  (Breton Nut Bread)

Christmas: the Lord’s Birth

Today is the great solemnity that shows the world that the Word incarnate, the Savior of mankind, is finally born. God becoming truly man is an enormous event […]. Something truly happens that goes beyond any evolutionary process: the fusion of man and God, the creature and the Creator. It is not the progression of another step in the evolutionary process, but the eruption of a personal action, founded on love, that from this point forward reveals to men new space and possibilities. (Joseph Ratzinger in  God and the World: A Conversation with Peter Seewald, 2001, p. 197).

Christmas says to us: alone we can’t profoundly change the world to remedy it. Alone, we can make the world better or worse, but we can’t save it. Christ came
therefore, because left to ourselves; we couldn’t escape the ‘mortal disease’ that has enveloped us from the first moment of conception in our mother’s womb. This gives us hope, true hope, and true Christian optimism: I can’t do it but He is there! This is the mystery of grace synthesized in the human figure of God incarnate.

Christmas Eve and Christmas day are moments of contemplation. We consider, in many dimensions, the mystery of love that was incarnated for us. First of all, we contemplate the light and joy, without forgetting Jesus and Mary’s sorrows and sufferings, and the many difficulties that had surrounded them: the cold, the uncomfortable place, the dangers….. It would be good to accompany these thoughts by reciting and meditating slowly on the Holy Rosary, preferably in front of a crib.

‘Blessed grotto of Bethlehem that testified to the wonders! Who, in this hour would not turn our hearts? Who would not prefer the opulent palace of the King?’ (P. Guéranger,  L’Anno Liturgico, Alba 1959 [orig. franc. 1841], I, p122).

Listen to the way that St Bonaventura, the seraphic doctor, invites us to contemplate this scene in his ‘Meditation on the life of Jesus Christ’: ‘You have also lingered, bent your knee, adored the Lord God, venerated His Mother and greeted Joseph, the holy old man, with reverence. Therefore, kiss the feet of the baby Jesus, who lies in the manger, and pray that the Holy Virgin will allow you to hold Him. Take Him between your arms, hold Him and see His lovable face, kiss it with reverence and rejoice with Him. You can do this because He has come to bring salvation to sinners and He has humbly conversed with them, finally giving Himself as food’. (cit. in Guéranger, pp 136-137)

Christmas also reminds us of the great mystery of God’s people, of the Church acquired through Christ’s blood, animated by the life giving Spirit, governed by the legitimate shepherds in communion with the successor of Peter. On this day in which the Word came to earth, assuming human nature, body, and soul, how can we not think about His Mystical Body that is animated by the Holy Spirit? ‘For this reason, by no weak analogy, [the Church] is compared to the mystery of the incarnate Word. As the assumed nature inseparably united to Him, serves the divine Word as a living organ of salvation, so, in a similar way, does the visible social structure of the Church serve the Spirit of Christ, who vivifies it, in the building up of the body’ (Vatican II,  Lumen Gentium, n.8).
Holy Christmas also reminds us of the mystery of Mary as Mother of God, mother of the Incarnated Word, and mother of His mystical body, the Church. Christmas encourages us to contemplate Jesus together with Mary, reflecting on Jesus with ‘His mother’, as recounted many times in the Gospels. If our faith must be fully evangelical, it can not neglect a sane and profound devotion to the Mother of God, as she shows us the easiest way to reach Jesus.

From the Congregation for the Clergy

**Commentary for the Readings in the Extraordinary Form: Christmas**

“And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn” (Gospel).

Heroically, in the desert, he warns against the softness of life in the city, pictured in the background. Alive to the danger of a “soft garments” life, he is seen in a rough “garment of camel hair,” carrying a baptismal shell, “preaching a baptism of repentance.” This picture recalls the “triple” Birth of Jesus. (In homage, each priest is privileged to offer three Masses today.)

Our first duty is to adore Jesus as true God in His “eternal” birth as “Son of the Father;” to ignore Him would be everlasting folly (Introit).

Our second duty is to recognized Jesus as true Man in His “earthly” or temporal birth as “Son of Mary.”

Our third duty is to realize more and more the “spiritual” birth of Jesus in our souls at the time of our Baptism. Then were we “Christened, ” reborn as members of His Mystical Body.

We must grown with Him during the coming year, by “rejecting ungodliness,” by pursuing good works” (Epistle).

Excerpted from *My Sunday Missal*, Confraternity of the Precious Blood
Daily Readings for: December 25, 2019
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: O God, who gladden us year by year as we wait in hope for our redemption grant that, just as we joyfully welcome your Only Begotten Son as our Redeemer, we may also merit to face him confidently when he comes again as our Judge. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPES

- Bobajka (Poppy Seed Potato Strips)
- Cassata (Cream Tart)
- Rolada z Befsztyka (Steak Rolls)
- Turrón (Soft Spanish Almond Nougat)
- VánoÄka (Czech Braided Bread)
- Almond Macaroon Cakes
- Arroz Dulce
- Basic Sweet Dough
- Bishopwyn II (Bishop’s Wine)
- Biskkupsky Chelbicek
- Breton Nut Bread
- Brioche
- Buche de Noel
- Chocolate Cherry Fruit Cake
- Christmas Dessert: Rabanadas
- Christmas Dinner: Black Beans and Rice
- Christmas Dinner: Chestnut Stuffing
- Christmas Dinner: Rice with Chicken
- Christmas Fruit Bread
- Christmas Lady Cookies (Meringues)
- Christmas Pie
- Christmas Pudding
- Christmas Punch
- Christmas Punch for Children
- Christmas Tree Cookie Decorations
- Christstollen I (Stollen)
- Christstollen II (Stollen)
- Christstollen III (Stollen)
- Christstollen IV (Stollen)
- Christstollen VI (Stollen)
- Coffee Braid
- Coffee Penuche
- Cole Slaw with Boiled Dressing
- Corn Meal Meat Pie
- Cranberry Foam Cocktail
- Cranberry Muffins
- Cream Oyster Stew
- Eggnog I
- Eggnog II
- Eggnog III (Spanish)
- Eggnog Pie
- Five-Way Fudge
- Fondant Icing
- Fruit Punch for Children, with variations
- Galette
• German Cinnamon Stars
• Hard Sauce
• Krabeli (Springerle)
• Lamb’s Wool IV
• Lemon Sauce
• Melachrino (Spice Cake)
• Mincemeat for Pie
• Mocha Butter Cream
• Norwegian Berlinerkranser
• Oatmeal Lace Cookies
• Old-Fashioned Bread Stuffing
• Plum Pudding Coffee-Brandy Ice Cream Sauce
• Plum Pudding I
• Plum Pudding II
• Plum Pudding III
• Plum Pudding IV
• Plum Pudding Rum Sauce I
• Plum Pudding Rum Sauce II
• Plum Pudding V
• Popcorn Balls
• Quick Fudge
• Rich Dark Fruit Cake II
• Roast Goose V (with Sauerkraut)
• Rum Sponge Cake
• Sage and Onion Stuffing
• Six Christmas Dinner Menus
• Soft Molasses Cookies
• Sorrel Soup
• Springerle III
• Springerle IV or Anise Cookies
• Spritz Cookies II
• Spritz Cookies II
• St. Nicholas Breads
• Stuffed Turkey II
• Sugar Cookies with Nuts
• Ten-Minute Marshmallow Nut Fudge
• Thin Knots
• Three-Way Fruit Cake
• Torte
• Walnut Butter Crunch
• Wassail
• Wayside Inn Pie
• Yule Log
• Yule Log Coffee Cake
• Zimtstern (Swiss Cinnamon Stars)

ACTIVITIES

• A Christmas Play
• A Christmas Quiz
• A Russian German Christmas
• Celebrating Advent and Christmas
• Celebrating Christmas Day at Home
• Christ-Candle
• Christ-Guest at Christmas
• Christingles
• Christmas Crib
• Christmas Crib
• Christmas Folk Song: Shepherds, Up!
• Christmas Hymn: O Infant, God’s Eternal Son
• Christmas Ideas for Young Children
• Christmas in Ireland
• Christmas in the Polish Home
• Christmas Music: Caroling, Folk Dancing and Yodeling
• Christmas Pie
• Christmas Play
• Christmas Traditions
• Cooking for Christmas
• Day One ~ Christmas Drama for the Home
• Hymn: From Heaven High, O Angels, Come
• Hymns and Carols
• Irish Christmas Candles
• Making a Christ-Candle
• Meaning and History of Christmas
• Origin of the Twelve Days of Christmas
• Posters for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany
• Post-Midnight Mass Traditions
• Put Christ Back in Christmas
• The Exchange of Gifts
• The Masses of Christmas
• Giving of Presents

PRAYERS

• Blessing of the Christmas Crib
• Blessing of the Christmas Tree in the Home
• Meal Prayers for the Christmas Season
• Christmas Night Prayers
• Enthroning the Christ Child
• Blessing of the Crib
• Christmas Baking and Bread Blessing
• Christmas Morning Prayers
• Christmas Evenings Prayers
• Christmas Masses
• Christmas Table Blessing 1
• Christmas Table Blessing 2
• Christmas Table Blessing 3
• Christmas Table Blessing 4
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)
• Christmas Eve Ceremony: Blessing of the Crib

LIBRARY

• 07. A Child Is Born | Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty
• Jesus Christ Is the World’s True Wealth | Pope John Paul II

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-25
Christmas: December 26th

Feast of St. Stephen, first martyr

*Old Calendar: St. Stephen*

Today is the second day in the octave of Christmas. The Church celebrates the Feast of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Stoned outside Jerusalem, he died praying for his executioners. He was one of the seven deacons who helped the apostles; he was “filled with faith and with the Holy Spirit,” and was “full of fortitude.” The Church draws a comparison between the disciple and his Master, emphasizing the imitation of Christ even unto the complete gift of self. His name is included in the Roman Canon.

*Feast of St. Stephen - Day Two*

Saint Stephen is the first martyr of the Church, and is the patron of stonemasons, masons, bricklayers, deacons, headaches, and horses. His story comes from the Acts of the Apostles. He is usually pictured in deacon’s vestments, holding the symbol of martyrdom, a palm branch. Sometimes he has a stone in his left hand, to indicate his death by stoning. He is depicted in many images wearing a wreath, which refers to the origin of his name, the Greek word *Stephanos* meaning “wreath.”

"If you know what witness means, you understand why God brings St. Stephen, St. John, and the Holy Innocents to the crib in the cave as soon as Christ is born liturgically. To be a witness is to be a *martyr*. Holy Mother Church wishes us to realize that we were born in baptism to become *Christ* — He
who was the world’s outstanding Martyr." — *Love Does Such Things*, by Rev. M. Raymond, O.C.S.O.

- **Day Two activity** *(Boxing Day)* *(Christmas Drama)*
- **Day Two recipe** *(St. Stephen’s Horns)*

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**St. Stephen**

The deacon Stephen, stoned in Jerusalem two years after the death of Christ, has always been the object of very special veneration by the faithful. He is the first martyr. The account in the Acts of the Apostles relating his arrest and the accusations brought against him emphasize the parallel with our Saviour’s trial; he was stoned outside the city wall and died, like his Master, praying for his executioners.

Stephen belongs to the group of seven deacons whom the Apostles associated with their work in order to lighten their load. He was “filled with faith and with the Holy Spirit,” “full of grace and strength” he showed himself as a man of God, radiating divine grace and apostolic zeal. As the first witness to Christ he confronted his opponents with quiet courage and the promise made by Jesus (Mark 13.11) was fulfilled: “…Disputing with Stephen they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke.”

In St. Stephen, the first martyr, the liturgy emphasizes the imitator of Christ even to the extent of the complete gift of self, to the extent of that great charity which made him pray in his suffering for his executioners. By establishing the feast on the day after Christmas the Church draws an even closer comparison between the disciple and the Master and thus extends his witness to the whole mission of the redeeming Messiah.

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**Professing the Christian Faith Demands the Heroism of the Martyrs**

On the day after the solemnity of Christmas, we celebrate today the feast of St. Stephen, deacon and first martyr. At first glance, to join the memory of the “protomartyr” and the birth of the Redeemer might seem surprising because of the contrast between the peace and joy of Bethlehem and the tragedy of St.
Stephen, stoned in Jerusalem during the first persecution against the nascent Church.

In reality, this apparent opposition is surmounted if we analyze in greater depth the mystery of Christmas. The Child Jesus, lying in the cave, is the only-begotten Son of God who became man. He will save humanity by dying on the cross.

Now we see Him in swaddling clothes in the manger; after His crucifixion, He will again be wrapped in bandages and placed in the sepulcher. It is no accident that the Christmas iconography sometimes represents the divine newborn Child lying in a small sarcophagus, to indicate that the Redeemer was born to die, He was born to give His life in ransom for all.

St. Stephen was the first to follow in the steps of Christ with martyrdom: like the divine Master, he died forgiving and praying for his executioners (cf. Acts 7:60). During the first four centuries of Christianity all the saints venerated by the Church were martyrs.

They are a countless multitude, which the liturgy calls “the white army of martyrs,” (martyrum candidatus exercitus). Their death was not a reason for fear and sadness, but of spiritual enthusiasm, which always gave rise to new Christians. For believers, the day of death, and even more so, the day of martyrdom, is not the end of everything, but rather the “passage” to immortal life, it is the day of the final birth, the “dies natalis.” Thus is understood the link that exists between the “dies natalis” of Christ and the “dies natalis” of St. Stephen. If Jesus had not been born on earth, men would not have been able to be born for heaven. Precisely because Christ was born, we are able to be “reborn.”

Also Mary, who took the Redeemer in her arms in Bethlehem, suffered an interior martyrdom. She shared His Passion and had to take Him, once again, in her arms when they took Him down from the cross. To this Mother, who felt the joy of the birth and the anguish of the death of her divine Son, we entrust those who are persecuted and those who are suffering, in different ways, for witnessing and serving the Gospel.

With special spiritual closeness, I am also thinking of the Catholics who maintain their fidelity to the See of Peter without giving in to compromises, at times even at the cost of grave sufferings. The whole Church admires their example and prays that they will have the strength to persevere, knowing that their tribulations are a source of victory, though for the moment they might seem to be a failure.

Angelus Message, Pope Benedict XVI, December 26, 2006
**Patron:** Casket makers; coffin makers; deacons; headaches; horses; masons; diocese of Owensboro, Kentucky; stone masons.

**Symbols:** Deacon carrying a pile of rocks; deacon with rocks gathered in his vestments; deacon with rocks on his head; deacon with rocks or a book at hand; stones; palm of martyrdom.

**Things to Do:**

- Read Pope John Paul II’s 2003 *Angelus Message* for the Feast of St. Stephen.

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**Daily Readings for: December 26, 2019**

(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** Grant, Lord, we pray, that we may imitate what we worship, and so learn to love even our enemies, for we celebrate the heavenly birthday of a man who know how to pray even for his persecutors. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- Gingersnaps
- Roast Suckling Pig
- Saint Stephen’s Scrambled Eggs
- St. Stephen’s Day Stew
- St. Stephen’s Horns
- Whiskey Punch

**ACTIVITIES**

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www.catholicculture.org
• “Boxing” Day
• Acting St. Wenceslas’ Story at Preschool Age
• Celebrating St. Stephen’s Day
• Christmas and the Eucharist
• Christmas Play
• Customs of St. Stephen’s Day
• Day Two ~ Activities for the Feast of St. Stephen
• Feast of St. Stephen
• St. Stephen’s Day
• St. Stephen’s Day Customs
• Story of St. Wenceslas by Joan Windham
• Story of St. Wenceslaus
• What is a Nameday?
• Boxing Day — St. Stephen

PRAYERS

• Christmas Morning Prayers
• Christmas Evening Prayers
• St. Stephen’s Day Night Prayers
• Christmas Table Blessing 1
• Christmas Table Blessing 2
• Christmas Table Blessing 3
• Christmas Table Blessing 4
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)
• Litany of St. Stephen, Protomartyr
St. Stephen: Meditation upon Sacred Scripture in Order to Understand the Present | Pope Benedict XVI

Stephen, the Protomartyr | Pope Benedict XVI

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-26
Christmas: December 27th

Feast of St. John, apostle and evangelist

Old Calendar: St. John

Today is the third day in the octave of Christmas. The Church celebrates the Feast of St. John, apostle and evangelist. Born in Bethsaida, he was called while mending his nets to follow Jesus. He became the beloved disciple of Jesus. He wrote the fourth Gospel, three Epistles and the Apocalypse. His passages on the pre-existence of the Word, who by His Incarnation became the light of the world and the life of our souls, are among the finest of the New Testament. He is the evangelist of the divinity of Christ and His fraternal love. With James, his brother, and Simon Peter, he was one of the witnesses of the Transfiguration. At the Last Supper, he leans on the Master’s breast. At the foot of the cross, Jesus entrusts His Mother to his care. John’s pure life kept him very close to Jesus and Mary in years to come. John was exiled to the island of Patmos under Emperor Domitian.

Feast of Saint John - Day Three

St. John was born in Bethsaida, and like his brother James, was a fisherman. He was called while mending his nets to follow Jesus. He became the beloved disciple of Jesus. He wrote the fourth Gospel, three Epistles and the Apocalypse. His passages on the pre-existence of the Word, who by His Incarnation became the light of the world and life of our souls, are among the finest of the New Testament.

He is the evangelist of the divinity of Christ and His
fraternal love. With James, his brother and Simon Peter, he was one of the witnesses of the Transfiguration. At the Last Supper, he leans on the Master’s breast. At the foot of the cross, Jesus entrusts His Mother to his care. John’s pure life kept him very close to Jesus and Mary. In years to come John was exiled to the island of Patmos under Emperor Domitian, but lived to an old age. — From the Daily Roman Missal

- Day Three activity (Blessing of Wine)
- Day Three Recipe (St. John’s Wine)

St. John
St. John, the Evangelist, who is styled in the Gospel, “the beloved disciple”, was a Galilean, son of Zebedee and Salome, and brother to St. James the Greater, both of whom were fishermen. The two were called by Jesus to be disciples as they were mending their nets by the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus showed St. John particular instances of kindness and affection above all the rest. He had the happiness to be present with Peter and James at the Transfiguration of Christ, and was permitted to witness His agony in the Garden. He was allowed to rest on Our Savior’s bosom at the Last Supper, and to him Jesus confided the care of His holy Mother as He hung dying on the Cross.

St. John was the only one of the Apostles who did not forsake the Savior in the hour of His Passion and Death.

It seems that St. John remained for a long time in Jerusalem, but that his later years were spent at Ephesus, whence he founded many churches in Asia Minor. St. John wrote his Gospel after the other Evangelists, about sixty-three years after the Ascension of Christ; also three Epistles, and the wonderful and mysterious Book of the Apocalypse or Revelation. He was brought to Rome and, according to tradition, was cast into a caldron of boiling oil by order of Emperor Domitian. Like the Three Children in the fiery furnace of Babylon, he was miraculously preserved unhurt.

He was later exiled to the Island of Patmos, where he wrote the Apocalypse, but afterwards returned to Ephesus.

In his extreme old age he continued to visit the churches of Asia. St. Jerome relates
that when age and weakness grew upon him so that he was no longer able to preach to
the people, he would be carried to the assembly of the faithful by his disciples, with great
difficulty; and every time said to his flock only these words: “My dear children, love one
another.”

St. John died in peace at Ephesus in the third year of Trajan (as seems to be gathered
from Eusebius’ history of the Saint); that is, the hundredth of the Christian era, or the
sixty-sixth from the crucifixion of Christ, St. John then being about ninety-four years
old, according to St. Epiphanus.

Excerpted from *Heavenly Friends*, St. Paul Editions

**Patron:** Against poison; art dealers; authors; bookbinders; booksellers; burns;
compositors; editors; engravers; friendships; lithographers; painters; papermakers;
poisoning; printers; publishers; tanners; theologians; typesetters; writers; Asia Minor;
Taos, New Mexico; Umbria, Italy; diocese of Cleveland, Ohio; diocese of Milwaukee,
Wisconsin.

**Symbols:** Cup or chalice and serpent (cup or sorrow foretold by Jesus); eagle rising out
of a cauldron (refers to being a martyr of spirit, but not in deed); serpent entwined on a
sword; grave; Prester John seated on tomb, with book, orb, and sword; eagle on a closed
book; scroll of his Gospel; scroll of the Apocalypse; nimbed eagle; book.

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**Daily Readings for:** December 27, 2019

(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** O God, who through the blessed Apostle John have unlocked for us the
secrets of your Word, grant, we pray, that we may grasp with proper understanding
what he has so marvelously brought to our ears. Through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God,
for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

* Apostles Cookies

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www.catholicculture.org
Mulled Rosé Punch
St. John’s Wine (Mulled Wine)

ACTIVITIES

- St. John’s Wine
- Christmas Play
- Origin of the Twelve Days of Christmas
- Apostle Cookies
- Celebrating St. John the Apostle
- St. John the Evangelist

PRAYERS

- Blessing of Wine for the Feast of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist
- Christmas Morning Prayers
- Christmas Evening Prayers
- St. John’s Wine
- Christmas Table Blessing 1
- Christmas Table Blessing 2
- Christmas Table Blessing 3
- Christmas Table Blessing 4
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
- Day Three ~ Blessing of Wine for the Feast of St. John the Apostle
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)
- A Child’s Gospel Night Prayer
- Roman Ritual: Blessing of Wine on the Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
- Roman Ritual: Another Form for Blessing Wine on the Feast of St. John,
Apostle and Evangelist

- Roman Ritual: Blessing of Wine for the Sick

**LIBRARY**

- Hauerietis Aquas (On the Sacred Heart) | Pope Pius XII
- The Sacred Heart And The Eucharist | Fr. John A. Hardon S.J.

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-27
Christmas: December 28th

Feast of the Holy Innocents, martyrs

Old Calendar: The Holy Innocents

“A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

During this octave of Christmas the Church celebrates the memory of the small children of the neighborhood of Bethlehem put to death by Herod. Sacrificed by a wicked monarch, these innocent lives bear witness to Christ who was persecuted from the time of His birth by a world which would not receive Him. It is Christ Himself who is at stake in this mass-murder of the children; already the choice, for or against Him, is put clearly before men. But the persecutors are powerless, for Christ came to perform a work of salvation that nothing can prevent; when He fell into the hands of His enemies at the time chosen by God it was to redeem the world by His own Blood.

Our Christmas joy is tempered today by a feeling of sadness. But the Church looks principally to the glory of the children, of these innocent victims, whom she shows us in heaven following the Lamb wherever He goes.

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Feast of the Holy Innocents - Day Four

The Holy Innocents saved the Child Jesus from death by King Herod by the shedding of their own blood. The Holy Innocents are the special patrons of small children, who can please the Christ Child by being obedient and helpful to parents, and by sharing their toys and loving their siblings and playmates.
The feast of the Holy Innocents is an excellent time for parents to inaugurate the custom of blessing their children. From the Ritual comes the form which we use on solemn occasions, such as First Communion. But parents can simply sign a cross on the child’s forehead with the right thumb dipped in holy water and say: May God bless you, and may He be the Guardian of your heart and mind—the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

- **Day Four activity** *(Holy Innocents)*
- **Day Four recipe** *(Blanc Mange)*

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**The Holy Innocents**

Today, dearest brethren, we celebrate the birthday of those children who were slaughtered, as the Gospel tells us, by that exceedingly cruel king, Herod. Let the earth, therefore, rejoice and the Church exult — she, the fruitful mother of so many heavenly champions and of such glorious virtues. Never, in fact, would that impious tyrant have been able to benefit these children by the sweetest kindness as much as he has done by his hatred. For as today’s feast reveals, in the measure with which malice in all its fury was poured out upon the holy children, did heaven’s blessing stream down upon them.

“Blessed are you, Bethlehem in the land of Judah! You suffered the inhumanity of King Herod in the murder of your babes and thereby have become worthy to offer to the Lord a pure host of infants. In full right do we celebrate the
heavenly birthday of these children whom the world caused to be born unto an eternally blessed life rather than that from their mothers’ womb, for they attained the grace of everlasting life before the enjoyment of the present. The precious death of any martyr deserves high praise because of his heroic confession; the death of these children is precious in the sight of God because of the beatitude they gained so quickly. For already at the beginning of their lives they pass on. The end of the present life is for them the beginning of glory. These then, whom Herod’s cruelty tore as sucklings from their mothers’ bosom, are justly hailed as "infant martyr flowers"; they were the Church’s first blossoms, matured by the frost of persecution during the cold winter of unbelief.

— St. Augustine

Things to Do:

- Read this article by Mgr. Luciano Alimandi on the humility of children.

Daily Readings for: December 28, 2019
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: O God, whom the Holy Innocents confessed and proclaimed on this day, not by speaking but by dying, grant, we pray, that the faith in your which we confess with our lips may also speak through our manner of life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPES

- Almond and Honey Ring
- Blanc Mange
- Innocents’ Pabulum
- Oven-Baked Rice Pudding
- Christ’s Diapers
ACTIVITIES

- Celebrating the Holy Innocents
- Christmas Play
- Day Four ~ Celebrating the Feast of the Holy Innocents
- Feast of the Holy Innocents—The Youngest’s Day

PRAYERS

- Roman Ritual: Blessing of Children
- Blessing of Children on Holy Innocents
- Christmas Morning Prayers
- Christmas Evening Prayers
- Holy Innocents or Childermas Day: Parental Blessing of Children
- Christmas Table Blessing 1
- Christmas Table Blessing 2
- Christmas Table Blessing 3
- Christmas Table Blessing 4
- Book of Blessings: Blessing of Children
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
- Parental Blessing
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

- Bring Back the Creche! | John Phillips
- The Hope of Salvation for Infants Who Die Without Being Baptized | International Theological Commission
View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-28
Christmas: December 29th

Feast of the Holy Family

*Old Calendar: Sunday in Octave of the Nativity*

Scripture tells us practically nothing about the first years and the boyhood of the Child Jesus. All we know are the facts of the sojourn in Egypt, the return to Nazareth, and the incidents that occurred when the twelve-year-old boy accompanied his parents to Jerusalem. In her liturgy the Church hurries over this period of Christ’s life with equal brevity. The general breakdown of the family, however, at the end of the past century and at the beginning of our own, prompted the popes, especially the far-sighted Leo XIII, to promote the observance of this feast with the hope that it might instill into Christian families something of the faithful love and the devoted attachment that characterize the family of Nazareth. The primary purpose of the Church in instituting and promoting this feast is to present the Holy Family as the model and exemplar of all Christian families.

— Excerpted from *With Christ Through the Year*, Rev. Bernard Strasser, O.S.B.

The feast of St. Thomas Becket, which is ordinarily celebrated today, is superseded by the Sunday liturgy.

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**Feast of the Holy Family - Day Five**

Today is the feast day of the Holy Family, but also every family’s feast day, since the Holy Family is the patron and model of all Christian families. Today should be a huge family
feast, since it is devoted entirely to the Holy Family as a model for the Christian family life. As Rev. Edward Sutfin states:

“The children must learn to see in their father the foster-father St. Joseph, and the Blessed Mother as the perfect model for their own mother. The lesson to be learned is both practical and theoretical, in that the children must learn how to obey and to love their parents in thought, word and action, just as Christ was obedient to Mary and Joseph. Helping mother in the kitchen and in the house work, and helping father in his odd jobs about the home thus take on a new significance by being performed in a Christ-like spirit.” (True Christmas Spirit, ©1955, St. Meinrad Archabbey, Inc.)

- Day Five activity (Holy Family Celebration)
- Day Five recipe (Popcorn Balls)

The Holy Family

Marriage is too often conceived as the sacrament which unites a man and a woman to form a couple. In reality, marriage establishes a family, and its purpose is to increase the number of the elect, through the bodily and spiritual fecundity of the Christian spouses.

1. Every marriage intends children. Although Mary and Joseph were not united in a carnal way, their marriage is a true marriage: an indissoluble, exclusive union, wholly subordinated to the child. Mary and Joseph are united only in order to bring Jesus into the world, to protect and raise him. They have only one child, but he contains the whole of mankind, even as Isaac, an only child, fulfilled the promise made to Abraham of a countless progeny.

2. The purpose of every marriage is to establish a Christian family. The Holy Family observed the religious laws of Israel; it went in pilgrimage to Jerusalem every year with other Jewish families (Lk. 2:41). Jesus saddens and amazes his father and his mother because to their will and company he prefers “to be in his Father’s house”. Thus it may happen that God’s will obliges the family to make disconcerting sacrifices. Yet every
Christian family must live in harmony and in prayer, which are the pledges of joy and union.

3. “He remained obedient to them.” Jesus was God. And through the fullness of grace Mary stood above Joseph. Nevertheless — if we except the event in the Temple — Joseph remained the head of the family; he took the initiative (as when the Holy Family fled to Egypt), and in Nazareth Jesus obeyed his parents.

Excerpted from *Bread and the Word*, A.M. Roguet

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**The Holy Family: Jesus, Mary and Joseph**

The devotion to the Holy Family was born in Bethlehem, together with the Baby Jesus. The shepherds went to adore the Child and, at the same time, they gave honor to His family. Later, in a similar way, the three wise men came from the East to adore and give honor to the newborn King with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh that would be safeguarded by His family.

We can go further to affirm that in a certain sense Christ, Himself, was the first devotee of His family. He showed His devotion to His mother and foster father by submitting Himself, with infinite humility, to the duty of filial obedience towards them. This is what St Bernard of Clairvaux said in this regard, ‘God, to whom angels submit themselves and who principalities and powers obey, was subject to Mary; and not only to Mary but Joseph also for Mary’s sake [...]. God obeyed a human creature; this is humility without precedent. A human creature commands God; it is sublime beyond measure.’ (*First Homily on the ‘Missus Est’*).

Today’s celebration demonstrates Christ’s humility and obedience with respect to the fourth commandment, whilst also highlighting the loving care that His parents exercised in His keeping. The servant of God, Pope John Paul II, in 1989, entitled his Apostolic Exhortation, ‘Redemptoris Custos’ (Guardian of the Redeemer) which was dedicated to the person and the mission of Saint Joseph in the life of Christ and of the Church. After exactly a century, he resumed the teaching of Pope Leo XIII, for who Saint Joseph ‘... shines among all mankind by the most august dignity, since by divine will, he was the
guardian of the Son of God and reputed as His father among men’ (Encyclical Quamquam Pluries [1889] n. 3). Pope Leo XIII continued, ‘... Joseph became the guardian, the administrator, and the legal defender of the divine house whose chief he was.[...] It is, then, natural and worthy that as the Blessed Joseph ministered to all the needs of the family at Nazareth and girt it about with his protection, he should now cover with the cloak of his heavenly patronage and defend the Church of Jesus Christ.’ Not many years before, blessed Pope Pius IX had proclaimed Saint Joseph, ‘Patron of the Catholic Church’ (1870)

Almost intuitively, one can recognize that the mysterious, exemplary, guardianship enacted by Joseph was conducted firstly, in a yet more intimate way, by Mary. Consequently, the liturgical feast of the Holy Family speaks to us of the fond and loving care that we must render to the Body of Christ. We can understand this in a mystical sense, as guardians of the Church, and also in the Eucharistic sense. Mary and Joseph took great care of Jesus’ physical body. Following their example, we can and must take great care of His Mystical Body, the Church, and the Eucharist which He has entrusted to us. If Mary was, in some way, ‘the first tabernacle in history’ (John Paul II Ecclesia de Eucharistia, n. 55) then we the Tabernacle in which Our Lord chose to reside in person, in His Real Presence, was also entrusted to us. We can learn from Mary and Joseph! What would they ever have overlooked in the care of Jesus’ physical body? Is there something, therefore, that we can withhold for the right and adoring care of His Eucharistic Body? No amount of attention, no sane act of love and adoring respect will ever be too much! On the contrary, our adoration and respect will always be inferior to the great gift that comes to us in the Holy Eucharist.

Looking at the Holy Family, we see the love, the protection, and the diligent care that they gave to the Redeemer. We can not fail to feel uneasiness, perhaps a shameful thought, for the times in which we have not rendered the appropriate care and attention to the Blessed Eucharist. We can only ask for forgiveness and do penance for all the sacrilegious acts and the lack of respect that are committed in front of the Blessed Eucharist. We can only ask the Lord, through the intersession of the Holy Family of Nazareth, for a greater love for their Son Incarnate, who has decided to remain here on earth with us every day until the end of time.

From the Congregation for the Clergy

Things to Do:

www.catholicculture.org
• Let us imitate the Holy Family in our Christian families, and our family will be a
cell and a prefiguration of the heavenly family. Say a prayer dedicating your
family to the Holy Family. Also pray for all families and for our country to
uphold the sanctity of the marriage bond which is under attack.

• Read more about Pope Leo XIII who instituted the Feast of the Holy Family and
read his encyclical On Christian Marriage. You can also check out the Vatican’s
page of Papal documents on the Family.

• Read the explanation of Jesus’ knowledge in the activities section. Read Pope
Pius X’s Syllabus of Errors which condemns the modernist assertion that Christ
did not always possess the consciousness of His Messianic dignity.

• Have the whole family participate in cooking dinner. You might try a Lebanese
meal. Some suggestions: stuffed grape leaves, stuffed cabbage rolls, lentils and
rice, spinach and meat pies, chicken and dumplings, hummus, Lebanese bread,
tabbouleh — a Lebanese salad and kibbi, a traditional Lebanese dish of specially
ground meat mixed with spices and cracked wheat. This is the same kind of food
that Mary served Jesus and St. Joseph. It’s healthy and delicious.

Commentary for the Readings in the
Extraordinary Form: Sunday in the
Octave of the Nativity  “Behold, this
Child is destined for the fall and for the
rise of many in Israel” (Gospel).

This prophecy that Jesus is also “a
sign that shall be contradicted,” indicates
what we, too, may expect as “sons of God”; yet it strengthens our hope, if we but
place ourselves daily under Mary’s care; then the last words of the Gospel may also
be applied to us: “the Child grew and became strong…full of wisdom.”

Yes, we are the “sons” and heirs” of God, Whom we can call “Father,” because of
“His Son, born of a woman,” Mary (Epistle). Hence, Jesus, our Brother, actually
“leapt down from heaven…with beauty…with strength” (Introit), to “direct our
actions” in His “Name”(Prayer).

In the Gradual we offer our “good word” of gratitude for the final victory. Then
we will realize that Antichrists “who sought the Child’s life are dead” (Communion Verse).

Excerpted from *My Sunday Missal*, Confraternity of the Precious Blood

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**Daily Readings for: December 29, 2019**
*(Readings on USCCB website)*

**Collect:** O God, who were pleased to give us the shining example of the Holy Family, graciously grant that we may imitate them in practicing the virtues of family life and in the bonds of charity, and so, in the joy of your house, delight one day in eternal rewards. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- Stuffed Cabbage Rolls

**ACTIVITIES**

- Christmas at Home and in the Liturgy
- Day Five ~ Activities for the Feast of the Holy Family
- Explanation of the Verse: ‘Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature’
- Feast of the Holy Family
- Feast of the Holy Family - II
- Introducing the Holy Family to Your Baby
- The Home, a Training Ground

**PRAYERS**

- Consecration of the Family to the Holy Family I
• Consecration of the Family to the Holy Family II
• Parents’ Prayer for Children
• Consecration to the Holy Family
• Christmas Table Blessing 1
• Christmas Table Blessing 2
• Christmas Table Blessing 3
• Christmas Table Blessing 4
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
• Parental Blessing
• Prayer to the Holy Family
• Prayer of Parents for Their Children
• Novena to the Holy Family
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

• Benedict XVI Angelus Address for Feast of the Holy Family 2010 | Pope Benedict XVI
• Christian Marriage: a Covenant of Love and Life | Cardinal Bernard Law
• Holy Family Teaches Us What Is Essential | Pope John Paul II
• Indulgenced Prayer for a Christian Family | Unknown

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-29
Christmas: December 30th

Sixth day in the Octave of Christmas

It would be ideal if we could devote several days of the Christmas octave to quiet contemplation, entering ever more deeply into the sweet and profound mystery of the Incarnation; yet much of the time is devoted to the saints. All the more precious, therefore, is this day, an unencumbered Christmas day.

December 30, Sixth Day in the Octave of Christmas - Day Six

God is your beatitude. The things of time are toys. You are eternity’s child and your eternity has already begun! There is a compelling urgency to every day and every hour of the day. In it we are to witness to the truth — that God greeted and gifted us at Christmas.

If you know what witness means, you understand why God brings St. Stephen, St. John, and the Holy Innocents to the crib in the cave as soon as Christ is born liturgically. To be a witness is to be a martyr. Holy Mother Church wishes us to realize that we were born in baptism to become Christ — He who was the world’s outstanding Martyr. — Love Does Such Things, by Rev. M. Raymond, O.C.S.O.

- **Day Sixth activity** *(Gingerbread Bowls)*
- **Day Sixth recipe** *(Lamb’s Wool)*

www.catholicculture.org
God became Man. Utterly incomprehensible is this truth to our puny human minds! That the eternal God whom heaven and earth cannot contain, who bears the world in His hand as a nutshell, before whom a thousand years are as one day — that this eternal, omnipotent God should become Man! Would it not have been a tremendous condescension if for the redemption of mankind He had simply sent an angel? Would it not have proven His loving mercy had He appeared for a mere moment in the splendor of His majesty, amid thunder and lightning, as once on Sinai? No, such would have shown far too little of His love and kindness. He wanted to be like us, to become a child of man, a poor child of poorest people; He wished to be born, in a cave, in a strange land, in hostile surroundings. Cold wind, hard straw, dumb animals — these were there to greet Him. The scene fills us with amazement; what other can we do than fall down in silence and adore!

In heaven only will we comprehend the profound implications of Christ’s redemptive acts, surely one of the exquisite joys of celestial blessedness. But some points Mother Church allows us to anticipate here below. She, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, is ever the recollected woman “who meditates on all the words of God and keeps them in her heart.” She tells us: God became Man that we might share His divine nature. Isn’t that mankind’s long-cherished dream? “You shall be as God, knowing good and evil,” Satan whispered into man’s ear in paradise; and his whisper was believed. What a miserable betrayal! Indeed, man experienced good and evil, but he had not turned divine. Thousands upon thousands of years of dreadful distance from divinity, with nought but failure in scanning the skies! Not by pride can man become God, but by submission, humility.

Bethlehem gave the great revelation. God put on the beggar’s garb, became a tiny, crying Babe in order to show man how to become divine. In paradise a fallen angel had promised: Eat of this fruit and you will be like God. He ate and became a prisoner of hell. On Christmas night another angel (the Church) stands before man, offers him a Good and says: Eat of this and you will be like God. For the divine Food, the Flesh of the incarnate Son of God, makes us “partakers of the divine nature.”

— The Church’s Year of Grace, Pius Parsch
Daily Readings for: December 30, 2019
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that the newness of the Nativity in the flesh of your Only Begotten Son may set us free, for ancient servitude holds us bound beneath the yoke of sin. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPES

- Day Six Activity ~ Christmas Gingerbread Bowls

ACTIVITIES

- Christmas Play
- Origin of the Twelve Days of Christmas

PRAYERS

- Christmas Morning Prayers
- Christmas Evening Prayers
- Christmas Table Blessing 1
- Christmas Table Blessing 2
- Christmas Table Blessing 3
- Christmas Table Blessing 4
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

- None
View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-30
Christmas: December 31st

Optional Memorial of St. Sylvester I, pope

*Old Calendar: St. Sylvester I*

Today is the seventh day in the octave of Christmas. The Church celebrates the optional memorial of St. Sylvester I, pope and confessor. He ruled the Church during the reign of Constantine when the Arian heresy and the Donatist schism had provoked great discord. He convoked the first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea.

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**Seventh Day in the Octave of Christmas - Day Seven**

The last day of the year is also the feast of St. Sylvester — bishop of Rome in 314. Constantine gave him the Lateran Palace, which became the cathedral church of Rome. Many legends exist about Sylvester. He supposedly cured Constantine from leprosy and later baptized him on his deathbed. New Year’s Eve, along with its innocent gaiety, is really a day for serious reflection. On the eve of the civil New Year the children may join their parents in a holy hour, in prayer and thanksgiving for the gifts and benefits which God has given them in the past year, and to pray for necessary graces in the forthcoming civil year.

- **Day Seven activity** *(New Year’s Eve Party)*
- **Day Seven recipe** *(Silvesterpunsch)*
St. Sylvester

St. Sylvester, a native Roman, was chosen by God to govern His holy Church during the first years of Her temporal prosperity and triumph over Her persecuting enemies. Pope Melchiades died in January, 314. St. Sylvester was chosen as his successor. He governed the Church for more than twenty-one years, ably organizing the discipline of the Roman Church, and taking part in the negotiations concerning Arianism and the Council of Nicaea. He also sent Legates to the first Ecumenical Council.

During his Pontificate were built the great churches founded at Rome by Constantine — the Basilica and baptistery of the Lateran, the Basilica of the Sessorian palace (Santa Croce), the Church of St. Peter in the Vatican, and several cemeterial churches over the graves of martyrs. No doubt St. Sylvester helped towards the construction of these churches. He was a friend of Emperor Constantine, confirmed the first General Council of Nicaea (325), and gave the Church a new discipline for the new era of peace. He might be called the first “peace Pope” after centuries of bloody persecution. He also established the Roman school of singing. On the Via Salaria he built a cemeterial church over the Catacomb of St. Priscilla, and it was in this church that he was buried when he died on December 31, 335.

Numerous legends dramatize his life and work, e.g., how he freed Constantine from leprosy by baptism; how he killed a ferocious dragon that was contaminating the air with his poisonous breath. Such legends were meant to portray the effects of baptism and Christianity’s triumph over idolatry. For a long time the feast of St. Sylvester was a holyday of obligation. The Divine Office notes: He called the weekdays feria, because for the Christian every day is a “free day” (the term is still in use; thus Monday is feria secunda).

Compiled from Heavenly Friends, Rosalie Marie Levy and The Church’s Year of Grace, Pius Parsch
Collect: Come, O Lord, to the help of your people, sustained by the intercession of Pope Saint Sylvester, so that, running the course of this present life under your guidance we may happily attain life without end. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Almighty ever-living God, who in the Nativity of your Son established the beginning and fulfillment of all religion, grant, we pray, that we may be numbered among those who belong to him, in whom is the fullness of human salvation. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPES

- Admiralpunsch (Admiral Punch—New Year’s Eve Punch)
- Kalter Eierwein (Cold Egg Wine)
- Risgrynsgröt (Rice Porridge)
- Silvesterpunsch (Cold New Year’s Eve Punch)
- Silvesterpunsch (Sylvester Punch)
- Silvesterpunsch (Warm New Year’s Eve Punch)
- Dark Fruit Cake I
- Eggnog II
- Eggnog III (Spanish)
- Flaming Brandy Punch
- Herring Salad
- Jellied Pineapple Salad
- Kringler
- Mulled Wine I
- Mulled Wine II
- New Year’s Eve Punch
- New Year’s Eve: Midnight Buffet Menu
- White Fruit Cake

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ACTIVITIES

- Christmas Play
- Day Seven ~ Activities for New Year’s Eve
- Game of Thanks
- Gumdrop on a String
- Handkerchief Game
- I Want to Be Ready
- New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day
- New Year’s Eve Family Celebration
- New Year’s Eve Party
- Quotations Game
- Treasure Hunt

PRAYERS

- Christmas Morning Prayers
- Christmas Evening Prayers
- Christmas Table Blessing 1
- Christmas Table Blessing 2
- Christmas Table Blessing 3
- Christmas Table Blessing 4
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
- An Act of Consecration of the Human Race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

www.catholicculture.org
• None

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2019-12-31
Christmas: January 1st

Octave of Christmas and Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Holy Day of Obligation USA)

Old Calendar: Octave Day of Christmas; Circumcision of Our Lord

Today the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, our Lady’s greatest title. This feast is the octave of Christmas. In the modern Roman Calendar only Christmas and Easter enjoy the privilege of an octave. According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, today is the Solemnity of Circumcision of Our Lord.

“Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church’s Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary. Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the "Seat of Wisdom." — Catechism of the Catholic Church 721

A plenary indulgence may be gained by reciting or singing the hymn Veni Creator Spiritus on the first day of the year. This hymn is traditionally sung for beginnings of things, calling on the Holy Spirit before endeavoring something new.

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God - Day Eight

Although New Year’s Day is not celebrated by the Church, this day has been observed as a holy day of obligation since early
times due to the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Each family and country has different traditional foods to eat on New Year’s Day, with lentils being the main superstition: ill luck befalling those who do not eat lentils at the beginning of the year.

New Year’s is a day of traditional hospitality, visiting and good cheer, mostly with a secular view, but there is no reason that this day, too, could not be sanctified in Christ.

- **Day Eight activity**  *(New Year’s Day Party)*
- **Day Eight recipe**  *(New Year’s Pretzel)*

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**Daily Readings for: January 01, 2020**
(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:**  O God, who through the fruitful virginity of Blessed Mary bestowed on the human race the grace of eternal salvation, grant, we pray, that we may experience the intercession of her, through whom we were found worthy to receive the author of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- *Silvesterpunsch*  *(Sylvester Punch)*
- Almond Pretzels
- Basilopitta
- Black Bun
- Children’s Punch
- Eggnog I
- Eggnog II
- Eggnog III  *(Spanish)*

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• Glögg
• Glögg—non-alcoholic American Style
• God Cakes
• Initial Cookies
• Jellied Pineapple Salad
• Lemon Wafers
• Mexican Wedding Cookies
• New Year Cookies
• New Year’s Cake
• New Year’s Day Refreshments
• New Year’s Dinner Menu
• New Year’s Eve Punch
• New Year’s Eve: Midnight Buffet Menu
• New Year’s Kranz
• New Year’s Pretzel
• New Year’s Pretzel
• New Year’s Rolls
• Oliebollen I
• Oliebollen II
• Roast Beef and Individual Yorkshire Puddings
• Roast Suckling Pig
• Rum Rolls
• Scotch Shortbread
• Scripture Cake I
• Seed Cake
• Snow Balls
• Sweet Potato-Coconut Dessert
• Vasilopita I
• Vasilopita II
• Vasilopitta
• Wassail Bowl

ACTIVITIES

• Celebrating the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin
• Christmas and the Eucharist
• Christmas Play
• Day Eight ~ Activities for New Year’s Day
• Family and Friends of Jesus Scrapbook Album
• Feasts of Mary in the Family
• Feasts of Our Lady in the Home
• Hymn: Child Jesus So Dear
• Marian Hymn: ’Tis Said of Our Dear Lady
• Marian Hymn: A Single Branch Three Roses Bore
• Marian Hymn: Ave Maria Dear
• Marian Hymn: Beautiful, Glorious
• Marian Hymn: Lourdes Hymn or Immaculate Mary
• Marian Hymn: Mary the Dawn
• Marian Hymn: Salve Regina
• Marian Hymn: Stella Matutina
• Marian Hymn: Virgin Blessed, Thou Star the Fairest
• Mary Garden
• New Year’s Day Ceremony
• New Year’s Day, Honoring Godparents
• New Year’s Eve Activities
• New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day
• New Year’s Eve Family Celebration

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• New Year’s Eve Party
• New Year’s Family Resolutions
• New Year’s Visit
• Origin of the Twelve Days of Christmas
• Pomander
• Song for the New Year
• The Role of Woman as Mother
• What is a Nameday?

PRAYERS

• Christmas Morning Prayers
• Christmas Evening Prayers
• Christmas Table Blessing 1
• Christmas Table Blessing 2
• Christmas Table Blessing 3
• Christmas Table Blessing 4
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
• Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Litany of Loreto)
• New Year’s Prayer for Church and State
• Blessing for the New Year
• Veni, Creator Spiritus
• Prayer for Peace
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)
• St. Cyril of Alexandria’s Litany of Praise of the Mother of God
• Table Blessing for the Feasts of the Mother of God

LIBRARY

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• None

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgy/calendar/day.cfm?date=2020-01-01
Christmas: January 2nd

Memorials of St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen, bishops and doctors

*Old Calendar: Holy Name of Jesus*

Today the Church celebrates the memorial of St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen, bishops and doctors. This is the ninth day of the Christmas season. St. Basil was a brilliant student born of a Christian family in Caesarea, Cappadocia (Turkey). For some years, he followed the monastic way of life. He vigorously fought the Arian heresy. He became Bishop of Caesarea in 370. The monks of the Eastern Church today still follow the monastic rules which he set down.

St. Gregory was also from Cappadocia. A friend of Basil, he too followed the monastic way of life for some years. He was ordained priest and in 381 became Bishop of Constantinople. It was during this period when the Arian heresy was at its height. He was called “The Theologian” because of his great learning and talent for oratory.

According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite St. Basil is celebrated on June 14 and St. Gregory on May 9. Today is the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, which is celebrated on January 3 in the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite.

According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite today is the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus. In a *Motu Proprio* dated October 23, 1913, Pope St. Pius X moved this Feast to the Sunday between January 2-5, or January 2 if none of these days is a Sunday.
St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen - Day Nine

Although New Year’s Day is not celebrated by the Church, this day has been observed as a holy day of obligation since early times due to the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Each family and country has different traditional foods to eat on New Year’s Day, with lentils being the main superstition: ill luck befalling those who do not eat lentils at the beginning of the year.

New Year’s is a day of traditional hospitality, visiting and good cheer, mostly with a secular view, but there is no reason that this day, too, could not be sanctified in Christ.

- **Day Nine activity** *(Blessing of the Bread of St. Basil)*
- **Day Nine recipe** *(St. Basil’s Day Bread)*

St. Basil

St. Basil was born about 330, the oldest of four sons; three of his brothers became bishops, one of whom was St. Gregory of Nyssa. His pious grandmother Macrina exercised a great influence upon his religious education: “Never shall I forget the deep impression that the words and example of this venerable woman made upon my soul.” Between St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nazianzen an intimate friendship existed from youth to old age. Of Western monasticism St. Benedict was the father and founder, of Eastern monasticism, St. Basil.

As bishop, Basil was a courageous and heroic champion of the Catholic faith against the Arian heresy. In 372 Emperor Valens sent Modestus, the prefect, to Cappadocia to introduce Arianism as the state religion. Modestus approached the holy bishop, upbraided him for his teaching, and threatened despoliation, exile, martyrdom, and death. To these words of the Byzantine despot, Basil replied with the

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peace of divine faith: “Is that all? Nothing of what you mentioned touches me. We possess nothing, we can be robbed of nothing. Exile will be impossible, since everywhere on God’s earth I am at home. Torments cannot afflict me, for I have no body. And death is welcome, for it will bring me more quickly to God. To a great extent I am already dead; for a long time I have been hastening to the grave.” Astonished, the prefect remarked: “Till today no one has ever spoken to me so courageously.” “Perhaps,” rejoined Basil, “you have never before met a bishop.” Modestus hastened back to Valens. “Emperor,” he said, “we are bested by this leader of the Church. He is too strong for threats, too firm for words, too clever for persuasion.”

Basil was a strong character, a burning lamp during his time. But as the fire from this lamp illumined and warmed the world, it consumed itself; as the saint’s spiritual stature grew, his body wasted away, and at the early age of forty-nine his appearance was that of an old man. In every phase of ecclesiastical activity he showed superior talent and zeal. He was a great theologian, a powerful preacher, a gifted writer, the author of two rules for monastic life, a reformer of the Oriental liturgy. He died in 379, hardly forty-nine years old, yet so emaciated that only skin and bones remained, as though he had stayed alive in soul alone.

Patron: Cappadocia; hospital administrators; reformers; Russia.

Symbols: Supernatural fire, often with a dove present.

St. Gregory Nazianzen

Gregory, surnamed the “Theologian” by the Greeks, was born at Nazianz in Cappadocia in 339. He was one of the “Three Lights of the Church from Cappadocia.” To his mother, St. Nonna, is due the foundation for his saintly life as an adult. He was educated at the most famous schools of his time - Caesarea, Alexandria, Athens. At Athens he formed that storied bond of friendship with St. Basil which was still flaming with all the fervor of youthful enthusiasm when he delivered the funeral oration at the grave of his
friend in 381.

Gregory was baptized in 360, and for a while lived the quiet life of a hermit. In 372 he was consecrated bishop by St. Basil. At the urgent wish of Gregory, his father and bishop of Nazianz, he assisted him in the care of souls. In 381 he accepted the see of Constantinople, but grieved by the constant controversies retired again to the quiet life he cherished so highly and dedicated himself entirely to contemplation.

During his life span the pendulum was continually swinging back and forth between contemplation and the active ministry. He longed for solitude, but the exigencies of the times called him repeatedly to do pastoral work and to participate in the ecclesiastical movements of the day. He was unquestionably one of the greatest orators of Christian antiquity; his many and great accomplishments were due in great measure to his exceptional eloquence. His writings have merited for him the title of “Doctor of the Church.”

Excerpted from *The Church’s Year of Grace*, Pius Parsch.

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**Daily Readings for: January 02, 2020**

*(Readings on USCCB website)*

**Collect:** O God, who were pleased to give light to your Church by the example and teaching of the Bishops Saints Basil and Gregory, grant, we pray, that in humility we may learn your truth and practice it faithfully in charity. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- Basilopitta
- Candied Orange Peel
- Candy Cream Apricots
- Cherries Jubilee II
- Glaceed Fruits

[www.catholicculture.org](http://www.catholicculture.org)
• Glow Wine  
• Jiffy On-Fire Dessert  
• New Year’s Cake  
• Nut-Topped Dates  
• Snowballs on Fire  
• Stuffed Prunes  
• Sugarplums  
• Vasilopita I  
• Vasilopita II  
• Vasilopitta

ACTIVITIES

• Christmas and the Eucharist  
• Christmas Play  
• Day Nine ~ Activities for the Feast of St. Basil and St. Gregory  
• Namedays  
• Origin of the Twelve Days of Christmas  
• Teaching About Selfishness  
• What is a Nameday?

PRAYERS

• Christmas Morning Prayers  
• Christmas Evening Prayers  
• Christmas Table Blessing 1  
• Christmas Table Blessing 2  
• Christmas Table Blessing 3  
• Christmas Table Blessing 4
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
- Blessing of the Vasilopita or Bread of Saint Basil
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

- Sacramentum Caritatis | Pope Benedict XVI
- Saint Basil | Pope Benedict XVI
- St. Basil - Part 2 | Pope Benedict XVI
- St. Basil The Great | Eric J. Scheske
- The Saintly Scholars of the Church | Fr. Stephen McKenna

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2020-01-02
Christmas: January 3rd

Friday of the Weekdays of Christmas; Optional Memorial of the Most Holy Name of Jesus

Today the Church celebrates the optional memorial of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite this feast is celebrated on January 2. In the liturgical revisions of Vatican II, the feast was removed, though a votive Mass to the Holy Name of Jesus had been retained for devotional use. With the release of the revised Roman Missal in March 2002, the feast was restored as an optional memorial in the Ordinary Form on January 3.

The Church reveals to us the wonders of the Incarnate Word by singing the glories of His name. The name of Jesus means Savior; it had been shown in a dream to Joseph together with its meaning and to Our Lady at the annunciation by the Archangel Gabriel.

Devotion to the Holy Name is deeply rooted in the Sacred Scriptures, especially in the Acts of the Apostles. It was promoted in a special manner by St. Bernard, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. John Capistrano and by the Franciscan Order. It was extended to the whole Church in 1727 during the pontificate of Innocent XIII. The month of January has traditionally been dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus.

According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus which is kept on the First Sunday in the year; but if this Sunday falls on January 1, 6, or 7, the feast is kept on January 2.

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**Most Holy Name of Jesus - Day Ten**

The name of Jesus is a name of gladness, a name of hope

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and a name of love. A name of gladness, because if the remembrance of past transgressions afflicts us, this name comforts us, reminding us that the Son of God became man for this purpose, to make himself our Savior.

A name of hope, because he that prays to the Eternal Father in the name of Jesus may hope for every grace he asks for: If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.

A name of love. For the name of Jesus brings to our remembrance all the sufferings which Jesus has endured for us in his life and at his death. — Excerpted from St. Alphonsus de Liguori, *The Incarnation Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ*

- **Day Ten activity** *(Holy Name Activities)*
- **Day Ten recipe** *(Sugar Cookies)*

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**Holy Name of Jesus**

This feast marks no progress in the development of the Church year. It merely embellishes the occasion just observed when the Child received the Name Jesus as had been foretold by the angel. The feast is meant to impress on us Christians the dignity of the Holy Name. It is a relatively new feast, stemming out of devotional piety. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to find in it some liturgical or ancient Christian dogma. What did a name signify originally? The name should express the nature of a thing. Thus Adam in paradise gave the animals names in accordance with their being. Among the Jews God’s name expressed His essence, Yahweh, i.e., I (alone) am who am (and cause all else to be). The Jews had the highest respect for the name of God, a reverence that finds continuation in the Our Father: “Hallowed be Thy Name.”

Persons who played prominent roles in the history of salvation often received their names from God Himself. Adam — man of the earth; Eve — mother of all the living; Abraham — father of many nations; Peter — the rock. The Savior’s precursor was given
the name God assigned him. According to divine precedent, then, the name of the Redeemer should not be accidental, of human choosing, but given by God Himself. For His name should express His mission. We read in Sacred Scripture how the angel Gabriel revealed that name to Mary: “You shall call His name Jesus.” And to St. Joseph the angel not merely revealed the name but explained its meaning: “You shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” The Messiah should not only be the savior, but should be called Savior. With Jesus, therefore, the name actually tells the purpose of His existence. This is why we must esteem His name as sacred. Whenever we pronounce it, we ought to bow our heads; for the very name reminds us of the greatest favor we have ever received, salvation.

Excerpted from *The Church’s Year of Grace*, Pius Parsch

*His name was called Jesus, which was called by the Angel before He was conceived in the womb.*—LUKE ii. 21.

1. It is not difficult to meditate upon the Holy Name, or to use the Holy Name in prayer. More than any other name, perhaps alone among all proper names, it is appropriate to the One Who owned it. Usually the names of men are given at random; they mean nothing in themselves; a man who happens to be called John might just as well have been called Thomas or William; the mere name tells us nothing about him; it is a convenient means of distinguishing him from others, a label put upon him and little or no more. With a few human beings it has been otherwise: Adam, Abraham, Josue, John the Baptist were given names that signified the men on whom they were bestowed. But with none is this so true as it is with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. With care the Angel impressed it on His Mother’s mind: “Thou shalt call His name Jesus,” he said, and there followed the description of His future greatness. With care it was repeated to Joseph: Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.

2. The Name stands as a complete summary and description of our Lord’s character
and office, and it is under this aspect that it has been regarded by thousands of saints, whose hearts have melted at its mere sound. To them Jesus is their God, Jesus is their King, Jesus is their Redeemer, Jesus is their Mediator, Jesus is their Saviour, Jesus is their great Priest, Jesus is their Intercessor, Jesus is the Captain under Whom they fight, Jesus is the Leader Whom they follow, Jesus is their Teacher, Jesus is the Giver of their law, Jesus is the Spouse and Shepherd of their souls, Jesus is their Light, Jesus is their Life, Jesus is the Judge before Whom they rejoice to think that they must one day stand, Jesus is their final and eternal Reward, for which alone they live.

3. But He is also to them the mirror of all the most glorious and winning virtues. He is, and His Name tells them that He is, unbounded Charity, infinite Mercy, extremest Kindness, deepest Humility, most devoted Piety, transparent Simplicity, uttermost Poverty, Chastity without a stain. It is the prerogative of love to transform those who love into the likeness of Him Whom they love; and as the mere name of one who is loved cannot sound in the ear or be thought of in the mind without adding to the love which is already there, so the thought of the Holy Name and the mention of the Holy Name have a kind of sacramental power in the hearts of His saints. They seem to convey the grace which enables men to think like Him, to speak like Him, to act like Him, to sacrifice themselves like Him, and to Him, and for Him, and along with Him, to make Him known to others, not by word only, but also by reproduction of Him in themselves, and to win all men to love Him.

_Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within thee bless His Holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all He hath done for thee._ Ps. cii. i, 2.

1. The great saint of the Holy Name is St. Bernardine of Siena. In his missionary expeditions he carried it on a banner, and used it continually in his sermons. He has a long treatise on the Holy Name, which teems with matter for prayer. The Holy Name, he says, is first of all fruitful for beginners. For these, for sinners, "it shows the immense mercifulness of God, it enables a devout man to gain a victory in every conflict, whether with the devil, the flesh, or the world, it has the power of healing sickness when rightly used, it fills with joy and exultation those who are in any adversity." He quotes St. Peter, that "through His name all receive remission of sin who believe in Him"; St. John: “Your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake”; St. Peter again: “There is no other
name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved”; the prayer of the Church in the Acts of the Apostles, that God would “stretch forth his hand to signs and cures and wonders, to be done by the name of thy only Son Jesus”; the further statement in the Acts, that the Apostles went forth “from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.”

2. Next it is fruitful for the proficient.
“IT IS CHERISHED IN THEIR HEARTS AND FED UPON BY FAITH, IT IS TAKEN INTO THEIR MOUTHS AND PREACHED OR SPOKEN ABOUT, IT IS MADE THE SPRING OF THEIR ACTIONS, WHICH THEN BECOME A GREAT ACCUMULATION OF MERITS, IT IS APPROPRIATED IN A NEW WAY BY PERSEVERANCE, AND THEN IT BECOMES A PRINCIPLE OF ABIDING AND ENDURING LIFE, THE REMEDY OF THE FRAILTY AND FICKLENESS WHICH BELONG TO OUR POOR NATURE.”

By virtue of this Holy Name, he tells us, we ourselves have become the sons of God. In the virtue of this Holy Name St. Paul placed all his hope of doing good. The power of the Holy Name is the power of the Holy Ghost. And for its power of endurance he asks: “Art thou not refreshed as often as thou rememberest the name of Jesus? What is there equal to it for the feeding of the mind that thinks of it, for repairing weariness, for strengthening virtues, for nourishing good and upright ways, for fostering true affections?”

3. Lastly it is fruitful for those whom he calls the perfect. The first fruit is “the sweetness with which those who meditate upon it are filled,” according to the beautiful rhythm of St. Bernard, Jesu dulcis memoria. The second is the wonderful power which this Holy Name gives to the prayers and petitions of the devout soul. The third is the immense sweetness which it gives to those who continually renew its memory. The fourth is the triumph and glory which it will produce in eternity: “They shall glory in Thee, all who love Thy name/ And thus for the sake of the name of Jesus the whole soul will live, and be endowed and enriched and beautified with all its powers; it will be made like to God three and one, united to Him, enlightened by Him, and plunged in perfect peace through Him, for it is to live for ever in the state of perfect bliss, furnished with the accumulation of all good.”
Excerpted from *The Prince of Peace* by Alban Goodier

**Things to Do:**

- St. Bernardine of Siena (feast May 20) promoted devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. From the Catholic Culture Library: [St. Bernardino Fostered Holy Name Devotion](#).

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**Daily Readings for: January 03, 2020**

(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** O God, who founded the salvation of the human race on the Incarnation of your Word, give your peoples the mercy they implore, so that all may know there is no other name to be invoked but the Name of your Only Begotten Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Cast your kindly light upon your faithful, Lord, we pray, and with the splendor of our glory set their hearts ever aflame, that they may never cease to acknowledge their Savior and may truly hold fast to him. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- Initial Cookies

**ACTIVITIES**

- Christmas and the Eucharist
- Christmas Play
- Day Ten ~ Activities for the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus
- Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus

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Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus
Origin of the Twelve Days of Christmas
Revering His Holy Name
Story of the Holy Name of Jesus
What is a Nameday?

PRAYERS

Christmas Morning Prayers
Christmas Evening Prayers
Divine Praises
Christmas Table Blessing 1
Christmas Table Blessing 2
Christmas Table Blessing 3
Christmas Table Blessing 4
Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
January Devotion: The Holy Name of Jesus
Invocation or Ejaculation to the Most Holy Name of Jesus
Prayer/Hymn in Honor of the Most Holy Name of Jesus - Iesu, Dulcis Memoria
Prayer of Petition in honor of the Most Holy Name of Jesus
Act of Reparation for Blasphemies Uttered Against the Holy Name of Jesus
Litany of the Most Holy Name of Jesus
Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)
Novena for Pentecost
Novena in Honor of the Holy Name
A Holy Name Prayer (January 3)
The Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus | Fr. William Saunders

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2020-01-03
Christmas: January 4th

Memorial of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious

Born in New York, Elizabeth Seton married and became a mother of five children. After her husband’s death, she converted to Catholicism and founded the American Sisters of Charity, a community of teaching sisters which began Catholic schools throughout the United States, especially helping with the education of underprivileged children. Mother Seton laid the foundation of the American parochial school system and was the first native-born American to be canonized.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton - Day Eleven

Elizabeth Seton was born on August 28, 1774, of a wealthy and distinguished Episcopalian family. She was baptized in the Episcopal faith and was a faithful adherent of the Episcopal Church until her conversion to Catholicism. She established her first Catholic school in Baltimore in 1808; in 1809, she established a religious community in Emmitsburg, Maryland. After seeing the expansion of her small community of teaching sisters to New York and as far as St. Louis, she died on January 4, 1821, and was declared a saint by Pope Paul VI on September 14, 1975. She is the first native born American to be canonized a saint.

- **Day Eleven activity** *(Story Time)*
- **Day Eleven recipe** *(Colonial Wassail)*

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St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

This wife, mother and foundress of a religious congregation was born Elizabeth Ann Bayley on August 28, 1774 in New York City, the daughter of an eminent physician and professor at what is now Columbia University. Brought up as an Episcopalian, she received an excellent education, and from her early years she manifested an unusual concern for the poor.

In 1794 Elizabeth married William Seton, with whom she had five children. The loss of their fortune so affected William’s health that in 1803 Elizabeth and William went to stay with Catholic friends at Livorno, Italy. William died six weeks after their arrival, and when Elizabeth returned to New York City some six months later, she was already a convinced Catholic. She met with stern opposition from her Episcopalian friends but was received into full communion with the Catholic Church on March 4, 1805.

Abandoned by her friends and relatives, Elizabeth was invited by the superior of the Sulpicians in Baltimore to found a school for girls in that city. The school prospered, and eventually the Sulpician superior, with the approval of Bishop Carroll, gave Elizabeth and her assistants a rule of life. They were also permitted to make religious profession and to wear a religious habit.

In 1809 Elizabeth moved her young community to Emmitsburg, Maryland, where she adopted as a rule of life an adaptation of the rule observed by the Sisters of Charity, founded by St. Vincent de Paul. Although she did not neglect the ministry to the poor, and especially to Negroes, she actually laid the foundation for what became the American parochial school system. She trained teachers and prepared textbooks for use in the schools; she also opened orphanages in Philadelphia and New York City.

She died at Emmitsburg on January 4, 1821, was beatified by Pope John XXIII in 1963, and was canonized by Pope Paul VI in 1975.

Excerpted from Saints of the Roman Calendar by Enzo Lodi

Patron: Death of children; in-law problems; loss of parents; opposition of Church authorities; people ridiculed for their piety; Diocese of Shreveport, Louisiana; widows.

Things to Do:

- Meditate on these words of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, “What was the first rule of
our dear Savior’s life? You know it was to do His Father’s will. Well, then, the first end I propose in our daily work is to do the will of God; secondly to do it in the manner He wills; and thirdly, to do it because it is His will. I know what is His will by those who direct me; whatever they bid me do, if it is ever so small in itself, is the will of God for me. Then, do it in the manner He wills it.”

Daily Readings for: January 04, 2020
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: O God, who crowned with the gift of true faith Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton’s burning zeal to find you, grant by her intercession and example that we may always seek you with diligent love and find you in daily service with sincere faith. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPES

• Wassail (Colonial)

ACTIVITIES

• Christmas and the Eucharist
• Christmas Play
• Day Eleven ~ Activities for the Eleventh Day in the Octave of Christmas
• Origin of the Twelve Days of Christmas
• Religion in the Home for Elementary School: January
• Religion in the Home for Preschool: January

PRAYERS

• Christmas Morning Prayers
• Christmas Evening Prayers
• Christmas Table Blessing 1
• Christmas Table Blessing 2
• Christmas Table Blessing 3
• Christmas Table Blessing 4
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

• Right From the Start: John Carroll, Our First Bishop | Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan
• Spirituality for Widows | Ronda Chervin Ph.D.

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2020-01-04
Christmas: January 5th

The Epiphany of the Lord

*Old Calendar: The Most Holy Name of Jesus*

Today the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Epiphany. “The Lord and ruler is coming; kingship is his, and government and power.” With these words the Church proclaims that today’s feast brings to a perfect fulfillment all the purposes of Advent. Epiphany, therefore, marks the liturgical zenith of the Advent-Christmas season. — *Pius Parsch*

The Solemnity of the Epiphany is celebrated either on January 6 or, according to the decision of the episcopal conference, on the Sunday between January 2 and January 8. The young Messiah is revealed as the light of the nations. Yet, as the antiphon for the *Magnificat* at Second Vespers reminds us, three mysteries are encompassed in this solemnity: the adoration of the Christ Child by the Magi, the Baptism of Christ and the wedding feast at Cana. Extra candles and/or lamps may be placed around the sanctuary and in other parts of the church to honor Christ revealed as the Light of the Gentiles (*Ceremonial of Bishops*). It is customary to replace the images of the shepherds at the crib with the three Magi and their gifts. — *Ceremonies of the Liturgical Year*, Msgr. Peter J. Elliott, Ignatius Press.

The feast of *St. John Neumann*, which is ordinarily celebrated today, is superseded
by the Sunday liturgy.

The feast of the Epiphany, which was kept in the East and in certain Western Churches before being observed in Rome, seems to have been originally a feast of the nativity; January 6, for those churches where it was kept, was the equivalent of Christmas (December 25) in the Roman Church. The feast was introduced at Rome in the second half of the sixth century and became the complement and, so to say, the crown of the Christmas festival.

Epiphany means manifestation. What the Church celebrates today is the manifestation of our Lord to the whole world; after being made known to the shepherds of Bethlehem He is revealed to the Magi who have come from the East to adore Him. Christian tradition has ever seen in the Magi the first fruits of the Gentiles; they lead in their wake all the peoples of the earth, and thus the Epiphany is an affirmation of universal salvation. St. Leo brings out this point admirably in a sermon, read at Matins, in which he shows in the adoration of the Magi the beginnings of Christian faith, the time when the great mass of the heathen sets off to follow the star which summons it to seek its Saviour.

That is the meaning, too, of the wonderful prophecy from Isaias which the liturgy appoints to be read in the first nocturn at Matins and at the Epistle of the Mass. This same thought of universal redemption the Church returns to as she sings, in the antiphon to the Magnificat at 2nd Vespers, applying the words to herself, of the union with Christ typified by the wedding feast at Cana, by the baptism of her children foreshadowed by that of Christ in the waters of the Jordan. Formerly the Epiphany was an additional day for solemn baptisms.

Solemnity of the Epiphany - Day Twelve

Epiphany is a large celebration, especially in Spanish speaking

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countries. Things look different around the household: the infant Jesus in the manger now has a small gold crown and is wearing regal robes. The figures of the wise men have reached Bethlehem, completing the nativity scene.

The Church extends itself on Epiphany to the homes of the faithful. The custom of blessing the home on this day probably originated from these words in the Gospel, “And entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary, His Mother, and falling down they adored Him.” The priest blesses the house if he can be present, but if not, the father of the family may do so.

- **Day Twelve activity** *(Epiphany Party)*
- **Day Twelve recipe** *(Twelfth Day Cake)*

According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite today is the feast of the **Holy Name of Jesus**. In a *Motu Proprio* dated October 23, 1913, Pope St. Pius X moved this Feast to the Sunday between January 2-5, or January 2 if none of these days is a Sunday.

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**Daily Readings for: January 05, 2020** *(Readings on USCCB website)*

**Collect:** May the splendor of your majesty, O Lord, we pray, shed its light upon our hearts, that we may pass through the shadows of this world and reach the brightness of our eternal home. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPEs**

- *Cappelletti all’uso di Romagna* *(Soup with Little Hats)*
- Mostarda di Cremona (Fruited Mustard)
- Paté de Noel (Christmas Pie)
- Brazilian King’s Bread
- Candied Fruit Peel—Epiphany Gift
- Dutch King’s Bread
- Epiphany Bread
- Fave dei Morti II
- Fireside Punch
- Fresh Tomato Sauce
- Galette des Rois
- Gateau des Rois (1)
- Gateau des Rois (2)
- Insalata di Rinforzo
- King Cake (New Orleans’ Style)
- King’s Ring
- Kings’ Bread Ring
- Lamb Pie with Poppy Seed Crust
- Lamb’s Wool I
- Lamb’s Wool II
- Lamb’s Wool III
- Lamb’s Wool IV
- Little Hats Cappelletti
- Little Mince Pies
- Rosca de Reyes
- Spanish King’s Bread
- Spanish King’s Cake
- Twelfth Night Bread I
- Twelfth Night Bread II
• Twelfth Night Bread of Lady Carcas
• Twelfth Night Cake I
• Twelfth Night Cake II
• Twelfth Night Cake III
• Twelfth Night Cake IV
• King’s Cake

ACTIVITIES

• A Children’s Party for Twelfth Night
• A Christmas Play
• An Epiphany Drama
• Carnival or Mardi Gras
• Celebrating the Feast of the Epiphany
• Christmas and the Eucharist
• Christmas at Home and in the Liturgy
• Day Twelve ~ Activities for the Feast of Epiphany
• Day Twelve ~ Activities for the Twelfth Day of Christmas
• Enthroning the Crib for Epiphany
• Epiphany Cake Tradition
• Epiphany Crib Scene Figures
• Epiphany Feast Suggestions
• Epiphany Home Blessing Ceremony
• Epiphany Mass
• Epiphany Mass in an Eastern Rite
• Epiphany of Our Lord
• Epiphany Plays for the Family and Community
• Explanation of Epiphany, or the Manifestation of the Lord
Family and Friends of Jesus Scrapbook Album

Giving of Presents

Kings’ Party or Twelfth Night Party

Living the Liturgy in the Home for Advent and Christmas

Meaning of Epiphany

Posters for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany

Singing and Acting

The Feasts of Light: Christmas, Epiphany and Candlemas

The Wise Men, An Epiphany Legend

Tradition of the Epiphany Mystery Play

Twelfth Night Cake And Kings Tradition

PRAYERS

Roman Ritual: Blessing of Chalk on Epiphany

Blessing of the Home on Epiphany

Procession to the Royal Crib on Epiphany

Christmas Morning Prayers

Christmas Evening Prayers

Epiphany Prayers for the Home (without Home Blessing)

Summary of Epiphany Blessings from the Roman Ritual

Christmas Table Blessing 1

Christmas Table Blessing 2

Christmas Table Blessing 3

Christmas Table Blessing 4

Book of Blessings: Blessing of a Christmas Tree

Book of Blessings: Blessing of Homes During the Christmas and Easter Seasons

Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season
(2nd Plan)

- Epiphany Home Blessing
- Book of Blessings: Blessing of the Christmas Tree for the Home (Shorter Rite)
- Epiphany Prayer from Mozarabic Breviary
- Epiphany Prayer - 2 from Mozarabic Breviary
- Roman Ritual: Blessing of Gold, Incense, and Myrrh on Epiphany
- Roman Ritual: Blessing of Homes on Epiphany
- Roman Ritual: Blessing of Water on Eve of Epiphany
- Roman Ritual: Litany of the Saints
- Epiphany Home Blessing Ceremony
- Epiphany Meal Blessing
- Solemn Announcing of Movable Feastdays on Epiphany
- Roman Ritual: Blessing of Eggs

LIBRARY

- Be An Epiphany Of Christ, Of His Merciful Love | Pope John Paul II
- Benedict XVI Homily for Feast of the Epiphany 2011 | Pope Benedict XVI
- Epiphany Celebrates Church’s Catholicity | Pope John Paul II
- The Epiphany of the Lord | Kilian J. Hennrich O.F.M., Cap., A.M.

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2020-01-05
Christmas: January 6th

Optional Memorial of St. Andre Bessette, religious; Epiphany (traditional)

Old Calendar: Epiphany of Our Lord

St. André was born near Quebec, and entered the Congregation of the Holy Cross as a Brother. He performed humble tasks for over forty years and entrusted all of the poor and sick who flocked to his cell to the care of St. Joseph. During his life he was able to have a chapel built to the spouse of the Virgin Mary. After his death, the shrine grew into the great basilica known as St. Joseph’s Oratory in Montreal.

According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, today is the feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord.

According to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) calendar, the Optional Memorial of St Andre Bessette is celebrated in Canada not on January 6 but on January 7.

Bl. Andre Bessette - Day Thirteen

Brother André spent most of his days in a narrow lodge, with only a table, some chairs and a bench as furnishings. He was attentive to the needs of all, smiling, obliging. In the evening he would engage in the difficult work of maintaining the parlor and hallway floors. He was on his knees until late at night, washing, polishing, and waxing by the dim light of a candle. — Abbey of Saint-Joseph de Clairval

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The use of candles is one of the loveliest Christmas customs that we can keep on using throughout the year. Now, more than ever, Christmas is a festival of light in a dark world, a time to hold our candles high, and to teach our children all the little ceremonies which make life gracious and full of meaning. No matter how long we live, nor how learned we become, we may travel the world over, and find nothing more beautiful than candlelight on the face of a child. “Now the Lord be thanked because we have light.” — Dorothy Albaugh Stickell

- **Day Thirteen Activity** *(Candles for the Domestic Church)*
- **Day Fourteen Recipe** *(Yule Spice Cake)*

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**St. André Bessette**

Brother André expressed a saint’s faith by a lifelong devotion to Saint Joseph.

Sickness and weakness dogged André from birth. He was the eighth of twelve children born to a French Canadian couple near Montreal. Adopted at twelve, when both parents had died, he became a farmhand. Various trades followed: shoemaker, baker, blacksmith—all failures. He was a factory worker in the United States during the boom times of the Civil War.

At twenty-five, he applied for entrance into the Congregation of the Holy Cross. After a year’s novitiate, he was not admitted because of his weak health. But with an extension and the urging of Bishop Bourget (see Marie-Rose Durocher, October 6), he was finally received. He was given the humble job of doorkeeper at Notre Dame College in Montreal, with additional duties as sacristan, laundry worker and messenger. “When I joined this community, the superiors showed me the door, and I remained forty years.”

In his little room near the door, he spent much of the night on his knees. On his windowsill, facing Mount Royal, was a small statue of Saint Joseph, to whom he had been devoted since childhood. When asked about it he said, “Some day, Saint Joseph is going to be honored in a very special way on Mount Royal!”

When he heard someone was ill, he visited to bring cheer and to pray with the sick person. He would rub the sick person

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lightly with oil taken from a lamp burning in the college chapel. Word of healing powers began to spread.

When an epidemic broke out at a nearby college, André volunteered to nurse. Not one person died. The trickle of sick people to his door became a flood. His superiors were uneasy; diocesan authorities were suspicious; doctors called him a quack. “I do not cure,” he said again and again. “Saint Joseph cures.” In the end he needed four secretaries to handle the eighty thousand letters he received each year.

For many years the Holy Cross authorities had tried to buy land on Mount Royal. Brother André and others climbed the steep hill and planted medals of Saint Joseph. Suddenly, the owners yielded. André collected two hundred dollars to build a small chapel and began receiving visitors there-smiling through long hours of listening, applying Saint Joseph’s oil. Some were cured, some not. The pile of crutches, canes and braces grew.

The chapel also grew. By 1931 there were gleaming walls, but money ran out. “Put a statue of Saint Joseph in the middle. If he wants a roof over his head, he’ll get it.” The magnificent Oratory on Mount Royal took fifty years to build. The sickly boy who could not hold a job died at ninety.

He is buried at the Oratory and was beatified in 1982. On December 19, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI promulgated a decree recognizing a second miracle at Blessed André’s intercession and on October 17, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI formally declared sainthood for Blessed André. — *Saint of the Day*, Leonard Foley, O.F.M.

**Things to Do:**

- Read more about the life of St. André.
- Learn more about the Holy Cross Brothers, the order of which Bl. André was a member. Pray for an increase in vocations and for those who are already living the religious life.
- If you live close to St. Joseph’s Oratory of Mount Royal, make a pilgrimage. If that’s not possible make a virtual pilgrimage.
- Say a prayer for the sick who were so dear to the heart of Brother André.
- Try the recipes offered to sample authentic French Canadian food.
Commentary for the Readings in the Extraordinary Form: Epiphany

“There came Magi from the East to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is the newly born King of the Jews?…We have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him’” (Gospel).

Epiphany means “an apparition, or manifestation” of God becoming visible to the Gentile world. Today Jesus manifests a new “kingdom” (Introit), to which the star-light of “faith” guides all wise men (Prayer).

The Epistle is a revealing picture of the “darkness” of the Jewish Old Testament; a prophecy also of the “brightness” of Christ shining in a world where men may now “see.”

The Gospel tells of the faith of the “Magik” divinely guided by the “star”; how this faith manifested itself in action by their seeking instruction from God’s priests, by prostrating their very beings and offering their best treasures before the frail Babe in Mary’s arms: God in homage to His new Kingship, symbol of their hearts offering love; Incense in homage to His Divinity, symbol of their minds offering adoration; Myrrh in homage to His Humanity, symbol of their bodies offering to do penance.

A truly great Feast! “Arise, be enlightened” (Epistle).

— Excerpted from My Sunday Missal, Confraternity of the Precious Blood

Daily Readings for: January 06, 2020
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: Lord our God, friend of the lowly, who gave your servant, Saint André Bessette, a great devotion to Saint Joseph and a special commitment to the poor and afflicted, help us through his intercession to follow his example of prayer and love and so come to share with him in your glory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
RECIPES

- *Cappelletti all’uso di Romagna* (Soup with Little Hats)
- Candied Fruit Peel—Epiphany Gift
- Galette des Rois
- King Cake (New Orleans’ Style)
- Maple Tourlouche (Upside Down Cake)
- Tourtière (Meat Pie)
- Twelfth Night Cake III
- Twelfth Night Cake IV

ACTIVITIES

- Carnival or Mardi Gras
- Christmas and the Eucharist
- Day Thirteen ~ Activities for the Thirteenth Day of Christmas
- Enthroning the Crib for Epiphany
- Epiphany Crib Scene Figures
- Epiphany Home Blessing Ceremony
- Explanation of Epiphany, or the Manifestation of the Lord
- Posters for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany
- Pre-Lent and Carnival
- Pre-Lent, or Carnival in the Home
- Singing and Acting
- St. Joseph’s Oil
- The Echo Yodel
- The Feasts of Light: Christmas, Epiphany and Candlemas
- Tradition of the Epiphany Mystery Play

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• Turkey in the Straw
• Twelfth Night Cake And Kings Tradition
• What is a Nameday?

PRAYERS

• Roman Ritual: Blessing of Chalk on Epiphany
• Blessing of the Home on Epiphany
• Procession to the Royal Crib on Epiphany
• Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life
• Prayer for a Sick Person
• Epiphany Prayers for the Home (without Home Blessing)
• Summary of Epiphany Blessings from the Roman Ritual
• Christmas Table Blessing 1
• Christmas Table Blessing 2
• Christmas Table Blessing 3
• Christmas Table Blessing 4
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
• Epiphany Home Blessing
• St. Joseph Prayer for protection
• Epiphany Prayer from Mozarabic Breviary
• Epiphany Prayer - 2 from Mozarabic Breviary
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)
• Roman Ritual: Blessing of Gold, Incense, and Myrrh on Epiphany
• Epiphany Home Blessing Ceremony
• Epiphany Meal Blessing
• Solemn Announcing of Movable Feastdays on Epiphany
LIBRARY


View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2020-01-06
Christmas: January 7th

Optional Memorial of St. Raymond of Penafort, priest; St. Andre Bessette, religious (Can)

Old Calendar: Feria

Born in Barcelona, Spain, St. Raymond of Penafort was the third Superior-General of the Dominican Order. He is famous for his work in the freeing of slaves. He wrote five books of *Decretals* which are now a valuable part of the Canon Law of the Church. The *Summa Casuum*, which is about the correct and fruitful administration of the Sacrament of Penance, is the most notable of his works. In the 1962 Extraordinary Form Calendar, St. Raymond’s feast is January 23.

The Church in Canada celebrates the feast of St. Andre Bessette today rather than on January 6 as in the United States.

St. Raymond of Penafort - Day Fourteen

St. Raymond devoted much of his life to helping the poor. The famous incident which is recounted in the story of Raymond’s life took place when he went with King James to Majorca. The King dismissed Raymond’s request to return home. Relying on his faith and love of God, Raymond walked on the waves to his ship, spread his cloak to make a sail, made the sign of the cross then sailed to the distant harbor of Barcelona.

For St. Raymond’s feast we should remember that, “carolling and story telling belong to the whole Christmas season. Hospitality and
giving to others also must continue if true Christmas joy is to remain. An outing to which friends are invited or a party that includes a round of carolling become perhaps even more appropriate with the approach of Epiphany.” — Excerpted from *The Twelve Days of Christmas*

- **Day Fourteen activity** *(Legend of the Little Girl)*
- **Day Fourteen recipe** *(Christstollen)*

**St. Raymond of Penafort**

The blessed Raymond was born at Barcelona, of the noble family of Penafort. Having been imbued with the rudiments of the Christian faith, the admirable gifts he had received, both of mind and body, were such that even when quite a boy he seemed to promise great things in his later life.

Whilst still young, he taught humanities in Barcelona. Later on, he went to Bologna, where he applied himself with much diligence to the exercises of a virtuous life, and to the study of canon and civil law. He there received the Doctor’s cap, and interpreted the sacred canons so ably that he was the admiration of his hearers. The holiness of his life becoming known far and wide, Berengarius, the Bishop of Barcelona, when returning to his diocese from Rome, visited Bologna in order to see him; and after most earnest entreaties, induced Raymond to accompany him to Barcelona. He was shortly after made Canon and Provost of that Church, and became a model to the clergy and people by his uprightness, modesty, learning and meekness. His tender devotion to the Holy Mother of God was extraordinary, and he never neglected an opportunity of zealously promoting the devotion and honor which are due to her.

When he was about forty-five years of age, he made his solemn profession in the Order of the Friars Preachers. He then, as a soldier but just entered into service, devoted himself to the exercise of every virtue, but above all to charity to the poor, and this mainly to the captives who had been taken by the infidels. It was by his exhortation that St Peter Nolasco (who was his penitent) was induced to devote all his riches to this work of most meritorious charity. The Blessed Virgin appeared to Peter, as also to blessed Raymond and to James the First, King of Aragon, telling them that it would be
exceedingly pleasing to herself and her divine Child, if an Order of Religious men were instituted whose mission it should be to deliver captives from the tyranny of infidels. Whereupon, after deliberating together, they founded the Order of our Lady of Mercy for the Ransom of Captives; and blessed Raymond drew up certain rules of life, which were admirably adapted to the spirit and vocation of the said Order. Some years after, he obtained their approbation from Gregory the Ninth, and made St Peter Nolasco, to whom he gave the habit with his own hands, first General of the Order.

Raymond was called to Rome by the same Pope, who appointed him to be his Chaplain, Penitentiary, and Confessor. It was by Gregory’s order that he collected together, in the volume called the *Decretals*, the Decrees of the Roman Pontiffs, which were to be found separately in the various Councils and Letters. He was most resolute in refusing the Archbishopric of Tarragona, which the same Pontiff offered to him, and, of his own accord resigned the Generalship of the Dominican Order, which office he had discharged in a most holy manner for the space of two years. He persuaded James the King of Aragon to establish in his dominions the Holy Office of the Inquisition. He worked many miracles; among which is that most celebrated one of his having, when returning to Barcelona from the island of Majorca, spread his cloak upon the sea, and sailed upon it, in the space of six hours, the distance of a hundred and sixty miles, and having reached his convent, entered it through the closed doors. At length, when he had almost reached the hundredth year of his age, and was full of virtue and merit, he slept in the Lord, in the year of the Incarnation 1275. He was canonized by Pope Clement the Eighth.

**Patron:** Attorneys; barristers; canonists; lawyers; medical record librarians.

**Things to Do:**

- St. Raymond diligently studied Canon Law. Spend some time learning what are the **obligations and rights** of the laity under Church law.
- Learn more about the **Spanish Inquisition**.
- St. Raymond contributed much to the understanding of the Sacrament of Penance. Make sure your family knows the Act of Contrition and says it every day.
Daily Readings for: January 07, 2020
(Readings on USCCB website)

Collect: O God, who adorned the Priest Saint Raymond with the virtue of outstanding mercy and compassion for sinners and for captives, grant us, through his intercession, that, released from slavery to sin, we may carry out in freedom of spirit what is pleasing to you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

RECIPES

- Flan
- Paella I
- Paella II

ACTIVITIES

- Christmas and the Eucharist
- Day Fourteen ~ Activities for the Fourteenth Day of Christmas
- Namedays
- What is a Nameday?

PRAYERS

- Christmas Table Blessing 1
- Christmas Table Blessing 2
- Christmas Table Blessing 3
- Christmas Table Blessing 4
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
• Prelates, Kings and Peoples of the Earth!
• Act of Contrition
• Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

• Doctrines of Dominican Theology | J. A. McHugh O.P., S.T.M., Litt.,D.

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Christmas: January 8th

Wednesday Christmas Weekday

The Magi are called “saints” for the first time in the writings of Archbishop Hildebert of Tours (1133). In the twelfth century their veneration spread over all of Europe. The authorities of the Church did not prohibit this cult, and Epiphany acquired the popular name of “Feast of the Three Holy Kings” in most countries of Europe.

The name Magi is not a Hebrew word, but of Indo-European origin, and means “great, illustrious.” Saint Matthew mentioned the term without explanation because it was well known to the people of Palestine. The Magi originated in Media (Persia), and their caste later spread to other Oriental countries. They were a highly esteemed class of priestly scholars, devoting themselves not only to religion but also to the study of natural sciences, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and astrology. In several countries they were members of the king’s council.

Where did the Magi come from? Saint Matthew gives a general answer: “Wise men from the East.” In modern terms, it could have been from any one of the countries of Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, or India. It has never been exactly determined from which of these countries they came.

Quite early in the Christian era a popular tradition conferred on them the title of “kings.” This tradition became universal at the end of the sixth century. It was based on Biblical prophecies which described the conversion of the pagans and, although not referring to the Magi, were applied to their visit:
The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents: the kings of the Arabians and of Sheba shall bring gifts. (Psalms 71, 10) The kings shall walk in the brightness of thy rising…. They all shall come from Sheba, bringing gold and frankincense. (Isaiah 60, 3-6)

The Gospel does not tell us how many they were. The Christians in the Orient had an old tradition of twelve Magi. In early paintings and mosaics they are represented as two, three, four, and even more. In the occidental Church a slowly spreading tradition put their number at three. It does not seem to have any historical foundation, but was probably based on the fact of the threefold presents. Another reason for the number three was the early legend that they represented all humanity in its three great races. Thus one of them was pictured as a member of the black race, and this choice seemed to be confirmed by the Bible:

Let the great ones come forth from Egypt, let Ethiopia stretch out her arms to God. (Psalms 67, 32)

The book Collectanea et Flores, ascribed to Saint Bede the Venerable (735), records an earlier legend of their names and appearance:

The first was called Melchior; he was an old man, with white hair and long beard; he offered gold to the Lord as to his king. The second, Gaspar by name, young, beardless, of ruddy hue, offered to Jesus his gift of incense, the homage due to Divinity. The third, of black complexion, with heavy beard, was called Baltasar; the myrrh he held in his hands prefigured the death of the Son of man.

There is an old legend that when many years had passed the Magi were visited by Saint Thomas the Apostle, who, after instructing them in Christianity, baptized them. They were then ordained to the priesthood and made bishops. It is said that once more the star of Bethlehem appeared to them and reunited them toward the end of their lives. “The city of Sewa in the Orient” is given as the place of their burial.

The legendary relics of the Magi were brought from Constantinople to Milan in the sixth century. In 1164 Emperor Frederick Barbarossa obtained them from the archbishop of Milan and transferred them to Cologne. Their shrine in Cologne was, and still is, the center of many pilgrimages.
Christmas Weekday - Day Fifteen

Dawn is the time of day in which the first rays of light begin to glimmer, to illumine and dispel the darkness… Christ’s actual birth in Bethlehem shows forth the beautiful reality that God works with things according to their nature. Simply put, it makes perfect sense that a darkened world is tangibly illumined by divine, supernatural intervention upon the natural. — *Father Wade L. J. Menezes, CPM*

Candles are a symbol of Christ, the Light of the World. The wax is regarded as typifying in a most appropriate way the flesh of Jesus Christ born of a virgin mother. From this has sprung the further conception that the wick symbolizes more particularly the soul of Jesus Christ and the flame the Divinity which absorbs and dominates both. — *Catholic Encyclopedia*

- Day Fifteen activity *(Mexican Christmas)*
- Day Fifteen recipe *(Little Mince Pies)*

Daily Readings for: January 08, 2020
(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** Cast your kindly light upon your faithful, Lord, we pray, and with the splendor of your glory set their hearts ever aflame, that they may never cease to acknowledge their Savior and may truly hold fast to him. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- Little Mince Pies

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ACTIVITIES

- Christmas and the Eucharist
- Day Fifteen ~ Activities for the Fifteenth Day of Christmas

PRAYERS

- Meal Prayers for the Christmas Season
- Christmas Table Blessing 1
- Christmas Table Blessing 2
- Christmas Table Blessing 3
- Christmas Table Blessing 4
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)

LIBRARY

- None

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2020-01-08
Christmas: January 9th

Thursday Christmas Weekday; Venerable Pauline-Marie Jaricot

Old Calendar: Sts. Julian and Basilissa, martyrs (Hist)

In 1818 a young French lay woman, Pauline Marie Jaricot, founded the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, officially recognized on 3 May 1822. Pauline is “the foundress of the largest aid agency for the missions in the entire history of the Catholic Church,” which later became the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and was conferred the title “Pontifical” by Pius XI in 1922. — Vatican website

She also was the foundress of the Association of the Living Rosary. She died on January 9, 1862 and was declared venerable on February 25, 1963. It is also the feast of Sts. Julian and Basilissa, husband and wife martyrs in the 4th century.

Christmas Weekday - Day Sixteen

St. Francis initiated the beautiful practice of displaying a Christmas crib or creche. He built it in a cave on a bleak mountain near the village of Greccio. News of what he was doing spread all over the countryside and a steady stream of men, women and children came by night carrying torches and candles to light their way.

“It seemed like midday,” wrote someone who was there, “during that midnight filled with gladness for man and beast, and the crowds drawing near, so happy to be present for the

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renewal of the eternal mystery.” Francis himself sang the Gospel story in a voice which was “strong and sweet and clear,” says the observer. “Then he preached to the people, most movingly, about the birth of the poor King in little Bethlehem.” — Excerpted from *Christmas*

- **Day Sixteen activity** *(St. Francis and the Creche)*
- **Day Sixteen recipe** *(Double Chocolate Mocha Biscotti)*

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**Venerable Pauline-Marie Jaricot**

Pauline Marie Jaricot was born to a very pious Catholic family in Lyons, France, July 22, 1799, and grew up dreaming of becoming a great missionary. Through her brother she developed a real concern for the Asian missions, and at age 17, she began to lead a life of unusual abnegation and self-sacrifice, and on Christmas Day, 1816, took a vow of perpetual virginity. At age 18, she composed a treatise on the *Infinite Love of the Divine Eucharist*.

In order to repair the sins of neglect and ingratitude committed against the Sacred Heart of Jesus, she established a union of prayer among pious servant girls, the members of which were known as the “Réparatrices du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus-Christ.”

During an extended visit to her married sister at Saint-Valler (Drôme), she succeeded in effecting a complete transformation in the licentious lives of the numerous girls employed by her brother-in-law. It was among them and the “Réparatrices” that she first solicited offerings for the foreign missions. Her systematic organization of such collections dates back to 1819 when she asked each of her intimate friends to act as a promoter by finding ten associates willing to contribute one cent each week to the propagation of the Faith. One out of every ten promoters gathered the collections of their fellow-promoters; through a logical extension of this system, all the offerings were ultimately remitted to one central treasurer. The Society for the Propagation of Faith at its official foundation (3 May 1822) adopted this method, and easily triumphed over the opposition which had sought from the very start to thwart the realization of Pauline Jaricot’s plans.

In 1826 she founded the Association of the Living Rosary. The fifteen decades of the Rosary were divided among fifteen associates, each of whom had to recite daily only one
determined decade. A second object of the new foundation was the spread of good books and articles of piety. An undertaking of Pauline’s in the interest of social reform, though begun with prudence, involved her in considerable financial difficulties and ended in failure. She died on January 9, 1862 and was declared venerable on February 25, 1963.

**Patron:** Against poverty; impoverishment; poverty.

**Things to Do:**

- Read more about Pauline-Marie Jaricot [here](#) and [here](#).
- Read the Letter written by Pope John Paul II for the bicentenary of the birth of Ven. Pauline-Marie Jaricot.
- Learn more about [The Society for the Propagation of the Faith](#).
- Have your children offer extra prayers for the missions or make a small sacrifice for priests and nuns in mission countries.

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**Sts. Julian and Basilissa**

St. Julian and St. Basilissa, though married, lived, by mutual consent, in perpetual chastity; they sanctified themselves by the most perfect exercises of an ascetic life, and employed their revenues in relieving the poor and the sick. For this purpose they converted their house into a kind of hospital, in which they sometimes entertained a thousand poor people. Basilissa attended those of her sex, in separate lodgings from the men; these were taken care of by Julian, who from his charity is named the Hospitalarian. Egypt, where they lived, had then begun to abound with examples of persons who, either in the cities or in the deserts, devoted themselves to the most perfect exercises of charity, penance, and mortification.

Basilissa, after having stood seven persecutions, died in peace; Julian survived her many years and received the crown of a glorious martyrdom, together with Celsus, a
youth, Antony, a priest, Anastasius, and Marcianilla, the mother of Celsus.

Many churches and hospitals in the East, and especially in the West, bear the name of one or other of these martyrs. Four churches at Rome, and three out of five at Paris, which bear the name of St. Julian, were originally dedicated under the name of St. Julian, the Hospitalian and martyr.

In the time of St. Gregory the Great, the skull of St. Julian was brought out of the East into France, and given to Queen Brunehault; she gave it to the nunnery which she founded at étampes; part of it is at present in the monastery of Morigny, near étampes, and part in the church of the regular canonesses of St. Basilissa at Paris.

Excerpted from *Lives of the Saints*, by Alban Butler, Benziger Bros. ed. [1894]
- Christmas Table Blessing 4
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)
- Novena to Ask for the Intercession of the Venerable Pauline Jaricot

LIBRARY

- None

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2020-01-09
Christmas: January 10th

Friday Christmas Weekday

*Old Calendar: St. William of Bourges (Hist)*

Historically today is the feast of St. William of Bourges, Cistercian bishop who distinguished himself by his austerities, concern for the poor, the defense of the rights of the Church against the French crown, and his success in converting many members of the Albigensian heresy.

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**Christmas Weekday - Day Seventeen**

Every country in the world has its own Christmas customs. Christmas in Australia is often very hot. Whereas the northern hemisphere is in the middle of winter, Australians are baking in summer heat. It is not unusual to have Christmas Day well into the mid 30 degrees Celsius, or near 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

A traditional meal includes a turkey dinner, with ham, and pork. A flaming Christmas plum pudding is added for dessert. In the Australian gold rushes, Christmas puddings often contained a gold nugget. Today a small favor is baked inside. Whoever finds this knows that they will enjoy good luck. Another treat is Mince Pies.

It is Father Christmas who brings the presents to the Australian children on Christmas Eve. Homes and gardens are decorated with greenery, Christmas tree and fairy lights. Seasonal plants are the Christmas bush and the Christmas bell.

- **Day Seventeen activity** *(Candles by Candlelight)*
- **Day Seventeen recipe** *(Australian Christmas Pudding)*

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St. William of Bourges

William Berruyer, of the illustrious family of the ancient Counts of Nevers, was educated by Peter the Hermit, Archdeacon of Soissons, his uncle by the mother’s side.

From his infancy William learned to despise the folly and emptiness of the world, to abhor its pleasures, and to tremble at its dangers. His only delight was in exercises of piety and in his studies, in which he employed his whole time with indefatigable application. He was made canon, first of Soissons, and afterwards of Paris; but he soon resolved to abandon the world, and retired into the solitude of Grandmont, where he lived with great regularity in that austere Order until finally he joined the Cistercians, then in wonderful odor of sanctity. After some time he was chosen prior of the Abbey of Pontigny, and afterwards became Abbot of Chaalis.

On the death of Henri de Sully, Archbishop of Bourges, William was chosen to succeed him. The announcement of this new dignity which had fallen on him overwhelmed him with grief, and he would not have accepted the office had not the Pope and his general, the Abbot of Citeaux, commanded him to do so. His first care in his new position was to conform his life to the most perfect rules of sanctity. He redoubled all his austerities, saying it was incumbent on him now to do penance for others as well as for himself. He always wore a hair-shirt under his religious habit, and never added to his clothing in winter or diminished it in summer; he never ate any flesh-meat, though he had it at his table for strangers.

When he drew near his end, he was, at his request, laid on ashes in his hair-cloth, and in this posture expired on the 10th of January, 1209. His body was interred in his cathedral, and being honored by many miracles, was taken up in 1217, and in the year following, William was canonized by Pope Honorius III.

Things to Do:

- Learn more about St. William of Bourges [here](http://www.catholicculture.org) and learn more about St. William
of Bourges here.

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**Daily Readings for: January 10, 2020**  
(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** O God, who through your Son raised up your eternal light for all nations, grant that your people may come to acknowledge the full splendor of their Redeemer, that, bathed ever more in his radiance, they may reach everlasting glory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- Australian Traditional Christmas Pudding Recipe
- Coq au Vin

**ACTIVITIES**

- Day Seventeen ~ Activities for the Seventeenth Day of Christmas

**PRAYERS**

- Christmas Table Blessing 2
- Collect Prayer for Feast of St. William of Bourges

**LIBRARY**

- None
View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2020-01-10
Christmas: January 11th

Saturday Christmas Weekday

Old Calendar: St. Hyginus, pope and martyr; St. Theodosius, abbot (Hist)

According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, today is the feast of St. Hyginus. During the four years of his pontificate (138-142), he had to oppose the heresy of Valentinus who at this period came to propagate his errors in the heart of the Christian community in Rome.

It is also historically the feast of St. Theodosius, abbot, born in Cappadocia in the village of Magarisso, who after having endured great sufferings for the Catholic faith, took his rest in peace at the monastery which he had erected on a lonely hill in the diocese of Jerusalem.

Christmas Weekday - Day Eighteen

In Mexico *El DÃ-a de Los Tres Reyes* (Day of the Three Kings) celebrates the arrival of Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar at the place of Jesus’ birth.

The day is also known as *El DÃ-a de Los Reyes Magos* (Magi) in Spanish and Epiphany in English commemorates the divinity of Christ as manifested to the Magi, the kings who brought him gifts.

On the night before *El DÃ-a de Los Reyes*, the children fill their shoes with hay and leave them outside. It is believed that the Wise Men will stop at
each home to feed their horses, leaving gifts in exchange for hay.

Finally, *El Día de Los Reyes* arrives, and the whole family wakes up to open the gifts left by the Three Kings. However, this is only the beginning. On that day, family and friends gather, while the children keep busy playing with their new toys.

The adults continue with the day’s activities by preparing a big dinner and serving a very special dessert, a bread known as *La Rosca de Reyes* or Three Kings Bread.

— by Frances Chaparro, Estela Muñoz and Adrian Zamilpa

- Day Eighteen activity (*Los Posadas*)
- Day Eighteen recipe (*La Rosca de Reyes*)

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**St. Hyginus**

The crown of the empire belonged to Antonius Pius. Hyginus, as Telesphorus’ successor, not only had to endure his relentless persecutions but also had to cope with the heretics who made their way to Rome.

Hyginus was a Greek from Athens who, like his contemporary Justin Martyr, was a philosopher. He is said to have done some organizing of the clergy, and it is likely that he addressed the Roman clergy on the subjects of sin in general and of obedience to the Church.

The emergence of Gnosticism is probably the most significant development of Hyginus’ pontificate. Cerdo came from Syria and Valentinus from Egypt, and together they taught this system of mystical belief, which was a combination of Greek philosophy and Oriental superstitions regarding Christ. For years Cerdo vacillated between teaching error and repenting, returning to the Church, then falling from grace. Valentinus, however, staunchly defended his cause. Hyginus perceived this as heresy, for it deviated greatly from the true teachings of the Apostles.

Hyginus was said to have suffered gloriously and he was buried on Vatican Hill.

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**St. Theodosius**

St. Theodosius was so inspired by Abraham’s example of leaving his loved ones and homeland for God that he
left his homeland of Cappadocia to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. There St. Theodosius took as his guide the holy man Longinus, who placed him in charge of a church near Bethlehem. Theodosius did not stay there long, however, but he went to live in a cave on a nearby mountain. He was known for his holiness, and many desired to dedicate their lives to God as monks under Theodosius. He built a monastery at Cathismus, as well as three hospices: for the sick, the elderly and the mentally ill. When Emperor Anastasius was persecuting Christians who did not accept the Eutychian heresy, which states that Christ has only one nature, St. Theodosius preached orthodoxy throughout Palestine, even stating from the pulpit in Jerusalem: “If anyone receives not the four general councils as the four gospels, let him be anathema.” The Saint renewed the courage of those in whom the Emperor’s edicts had instilled fear. Anastasius banished Theodosius, though he was later recalled by Anastasius’ successor. Theodosius died at the age of 105; many miracles occurred at his funeral.

— Excerpted from *Saints Calendar and Daily Planner*, Tan Books

**Daily Readings for: January 11, 2020**

*(Readings on USCCB website)*

**Collect:** Grant, we ask, almighty God, that the Nativity of the Savior of the world, made known by the guidance of a star, may be revealed ever more fully to our minds. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- *Salata de Cartofi* (Greek Potato and Olive Salad)
- Greek Homestyle Chicken
- Greek Salad
ACTIVITIES

- Practical Suggestions for Christian Living (Baptism)

PRAYERS

- Christmas Table Blessing 1

LIBRARY

- None

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2020-01-11
Christmas: January 12th

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Old Calendar: Feast of the Holy Family

Today the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Baptism of Our Lord. This brings to an end the season of Christmas. The Church recalls Our Lord’s second manifestation or epiphany which occurred on the occasion of His baptism in the Jordan. Jesus descended into the River to sanctify its waters and to give them the power to beget sons of God. The event takes on the importance of a second creation in which the entire Trinity intervenes.

In the Eastern Church this feast is called Theophany because at the baptism of Christ in the River Jordan God appeared in three persons. The baptism of John was a sort of sacramental preparatory for the Baptism of Christ. It moved men to sentiments of repentance and induced them to confess their sins. Christ did not need the baptism of John. Although He appeared in the “substance of our flesh” and was recognized “outwardly like unto ourselves”, He was absolutely sinless and impeccable. He conferred upon the water the power of the true Baptism which would remove all the sins of the world: “Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who takes away the sin of the world”.

Many of the incidents which accompanied Christ’s baptism are symbolical of what happened at our Baptism. At Christ’s baptism the Holy Spirit descended upon Him; at our Baptism the Trinity took its abode in our soul. At His baptism Christ was proclaimed the “Beloved Son” of the Father; at our Baptism we become the adopted sons of God. At Christ’s baptism the heavens were opened; at our Baptism heaven was opened to us. At His baptism Jesus prayed; after our Baptism we must pray to avoid actual sin.

— Excerpted from Msgr. Rudolph G. Bandas
Customs on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

In the Ukraine the faithful gather in the front of the church where a cross of ice is placed. Since there are no rivers near churches, a tub is filled with water and is placed in front of the ice cross. During special and very unique services the water is blessed and brought home. This is taken in before breakfast is eaten. The remains are kept during the year to keep the home safe from fire, lightening and sickness.

The priest visits his parishioners to bless their homes with the holy water that the New Year may be one of cooperation with the gift of God; His Son and the participation in the Life He has come to lead us in toward Salvation. The evening meal is very much a repeat of the Holy Supper except that there are no restrictions on meat and dairy products. It starts with Kutia, which has been saved from Christmas Eve.

Feast of the Baptism of Christ - Day Nineteen

Today we celebrate the baptism of Christ in the Jordan. This is the second epiphany, or manifestation, of the Lord. The past, the present, and the future are made manifest in this epiphany.

The most holy one placed Himself among us, the unclean and sinners. The Son of God freely humbled Himself at the hand of the Baptist. By His baptism in the Jordan, Christ manifests His humility and dedicates Himself to the redemption of man. He takes upon Himself the sins of the whole world and buries them in the waters of the Jordan.

— The Light of the World by Benedict Baur, O.S.B.

- Day Nineteen activity (Renewal of Baptismal Vows)
- Day Nineteen recipe (Christ’s Diapers)

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

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The mystery of Christ’s baptism in the Jordan by St John, the Precursor, proposes the contemplation of an already adult Jesus. This mystery is infinitely linked to the Solemnities of the Lord’s birth and the Epiphany that we have just celebrated, as in some ways it takes up and represents their significance to us.

At Christmas we have contemplated the human birth of the Word incarnate by the Virgin Mary. In the 4th century, the Fathers of the Church deepened the understanding of the faith with regard to the Christmas mystery in the light of Jesus’ Humanity. They spoke of the Incarnation of the Word already working like the ‘Christification’ of that humanity that he had assumed from His mother. Or put in simpler terms: Jesus is the Christ from the first instant of conception in Mary’s spotless womb because He Himself, with His Divine Power, consecrated, anointed and ‘Christified’ that human nature with which He became incarnate.

In the mystery of the Epiphany, we then meditated on Christ’s manifestation to all nations that was represented by the Magi, the wise men from the East, who came to adore the Child.

Now, in the mystery of Christ’s Baptism in the Jordan River, we again encounter and represent the truth of the Lord’s incarnation and His manifestation as the Christ. Jesus’ Baptism is in fact His definitive manifestation as the Messiah or Christ to Israel, and as the Son of the Father to the entire world. Here we find the dimension of the Epiphany which was His manifestation to all nations. The Father’s voice from heaven shows that Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal Son and the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove shows the Trinitarian nature of the Christian God. The true and unique God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shows Himself in Christ, through Him, with Him and in Him.

The Baptism in the Jordan returns to the great Christmas theme of ‘Christification,’ Jesus of Nazareth’s spiritual anointing, His presentation as the Anointed One par excellence, the Messiah or the One sent by the Father for the salvation of mankind. The Spirit that descended on Jesus shows and seals in an incontrovertible way the ‘Christification’ of Jesus’ humanity that the Word had already fulfilled from the first moment of His miraculous conception by Mary. Jesus, from the very beginning, was always the Lord’s Christ, He was always God. Yet, His one, true humanity, that which is
perfect in every way, as the Gospel records, constantly grew in natural and supernatural perfection. ‘And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and with men’ (Lk2:52). In Israel at 30 years of age, one reached full maturity and therefore could become a master. Jesus came of age and the Spirit, descending and remaining on Him, definitively consecrated His whole being as the Christ.

The same Spirit, that descended on the water of the River Jordan wafted over the waters during the first creation (Gen 1:2). Therefore, the Baptism in the Jordan presents yet another truth: that Jesus has started a new creation. He is the second man (1 Cor 15:47) or the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45), that comes to repair the first Adam’s guilt. He does this as the Lamb of God that takes away our sins. ‘Looking at the events in light of the Cross and Resurrection, the Christian people realised what happened: Jesus loaded the burden of all mankind’s guilt upon His shoulders; he bore it down into the depths of the Jordan. He inaugurated his public activity by stepping into the place of sinners’ (Joseph Ratzinger, Jesus of Nazareth, Bloomsbury 2007, p 18).

Excerpted from the Congregation for the Clergy

Commentary for the Readings in the Extraordinary Form: Second Sunday after Epiphany: Feast of the Holy Family

“(Jesus) came to Nazareth, and was subject to them” (Gospel).

Subject to them is the awe-inspiring phrase which sums up His Life. Humbly did He abide by the decrees of human law! Obedience to My Father’s business must come first, as a guide to all other business, if heaven is to find our family unbroken (Prayer)

If Jesus withdraws from us as a test of our love, or if we lose Him by the commission of sin, we will not regain the joy of His Presence amid the distractions of relatives and acquaintances; but we will find Him in the temple at Confession and Communion.

So-called “modern” ideas and practices are evicting Christ from the home. As an antidote, at the family meal let us read aloud from the New Testament. Let the word of Christ dwell in your home (Epistle). Then will your family, even though living in
“obscurity” as did the Holy Family, advance _in wisdom and ... grace before God and men_ (Gospel).

— Excerpted from _My Sunday Missal_, Confraternity of the Precious Blood

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**Daily Readings for: January 12, 2020**
(Readings on USCCB website)

**Collect:** Almighty ever-living God, who, when Christ had been baptized in the River Jordan and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him, solemnly declared him your beloved Son, grant that your children by adoption, reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, may always be well pleasing to you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

**RECIPES**

- Initial Cookies
- Kutia
- Letter banket
- Christ’s Diapers

**ACTIVITIES**

- Activities for the Feast of the Baptism of Christ
- Baptismal Day
- Christmas and the Eucharist
- Family and Friends of Jesus Scrapbook Album
- Making a Baptismal Garment and Candle
- On Celebrating Baptism
- Receive the White Garment
**Renewal of Baptismal Promises**

**Sacramental Life in the Home: Baptism**

**PRAYERS**

- Christmas Table Blessing 1
- Christmas Table Blessing 2
- Christmas Table Blessing 3
- Christmas Table Blessing 4
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas Season (2nd Plan)
- To Jordan’s Water
- Book of Blessings: Blessing Before and After Meals: Christmas (1st Plan)
- Renewal of Baptismal Promises

**LIBRARY**

- Baptism Is Not a Formality | Pope Francis
- Baptism Is the Starting Point of a Lifelong Path to Conversion | Pope Francis
- Feast of the Baptism of the Lord | Pope Benedict XVI

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