

# Make Room



Advent 2021  
St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish

# Advent Schedule

## **SACRAMENT OF PENANCE**

Tuesdays – after 6:30 AM Mass

Thursdays – after 8:30 AM Mass & at 6:00 PM

Saturdays – after 8:30 AM Mass & at 3:00 PM

DAY OF MERCY – Thursday, December 9 from 7:15 AM – 8:00 PM  
(priests in the confessional all day)

Tuesday, December 21 – 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM

NO Confessions Saturday, December 25th

## **EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION**

*Our Blessed Sacrament Chapel is open continuously for private prayer in the Presence of Our Lord.*

### **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**

Mondays after 8:30 AM Mass until 5:00 PM (with Benediction\*)

Thursdays - after 8:30 AM Mass until 7:00 PM (with Benediction\*)

Thursday, December 23rd – Exposition ends at 10:30 AM

First Fridays – after 8:30 AM Mass until 7:00 PM (with Benediction\*)

\*Benediction typically begins 15 minutes prior to the close of the hour.

## **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27 – ADVENT OPEN HOUSE**

**12:00 PM -2:00 PM**

## **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2021 – IMMACULATE CONCEPTION of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (Holy Day of Obligation)**

6:30 AM, 8:30 AM, 7:30 PM\*. On this solemnity, those who wish to make or renew their consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary will be able to do so after the 8:30 AM and 7:30 PM Masses.

*\*Incense is used at the 7:30 PM Mass.*

## **DECEMBER 18 & 19 - BLESSING OF BABY JESUS**

At the weekend Masses on December 18 & 19, the Fourth Sunday of Advent, all are invited to bring the figure of the Infant Jesus from your home crèche to be blessed.

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Advent is upon us. In order to help you make this a fruitful season, we offer you this simple book, a collection of reflections, prayers, and activities to help you and your loved ones prepare to “make room” in your hearts and in your lives for our Lord Jesus Christ.

The title for this book comes from a song by the group Casting Crowns. In the song we are asked, “Is there room in your heart for God to write His story?” That story is the story of salvation. Whatever we are doing, wherever we are in life, the Lord longs to share His life with us because, as the song says, “You are precious in His sight.” So we do not need to be intimidated that we aren’t “holy” enough or held in high esteem by the world. “You can come as you are,” the song says, for our Lord did not come just for the exalted, but for all. So, make room for Him.

The reality is, however, that when we do indeed make room for God we are changed. Yet we should never fear, for the “Mother holds the Promise tight,” the Promise that is our Lord who “has come to heal our sorrows.” So make room in your heart for God.

This humble book is shared with you in the hope that you might find some time to make room for God each day in this Advent season. Put out into the deep this year and open your heart to God. My prayer for you this Advent is that you will be filled with the peace and goodness of our Lord each day as you make room for Him in your busy life.

God bless,  
Fr. Jim Riehle



# *Advent Wreath Blessing*

An Advent wreath can be a great focal point for family prayers and holiday celebrations.

The wreath of pine or spruce, with its four candles lit each week of Advent, symbolizes our waiting for the light that is the birth of Christ and the hope of His return. Three of the candles are purple, marking the penitential aspect of the season. A rose-colored candle is lit during the third week of Advent reflecting our joy at the closeness of Christmas and the coming of Christ.

Each day your family can gather around the Advent wreath, perhaps before dinner. The proper candles are then lit and a prayer is said.

## *Blessing of an Advent Wreath at Home\**

On the evening of the Saturday before the first Sunday in Advent, gather around the Advent wreath for the following prayer:

Together make the Sign of the Cross.

**Leader:** Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

**All:** Who made heaven and earth.

**Leader:** O God, by whose Word all things are sanctified, pour forth Your blessing upon this wreath and grant that we who use it may prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ and may receive from You abundant graces. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.



The wreath may then be sprinkled with holy water, if available.

---

## *First Week of Advent*

The following prayer may be repeated each day during the first week. After the prayer, light the first purple candle.

**Leader:** O Lord, stir up Your might, we beg You, and come, that by Your protection we may deserve to be rescued from the threatening dangers of our sins and saved by Your deliverance. Through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

The candle is allowed to burn during evening meals for the first week.

*(Further prayers for the lighting of the Advent candles are found on each Sunday of Advent.)*

\***Source:** <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/prayers/view.cfm?id=952>



# The First Sunday of Advent

November 28

The book, *The Word Made Flesh: The Meaning of the Christmas Season*, is a series of homilies and reflections on Advent and Christmas by Pope St. John Paul II. Writing for the First Sunday of Advent, the Holy Father talks about the uniqueness of Christianity. He speaks of how Islam and the religions of the Far East emphasize God's transcendence. Christianity is different. It is "the religion of the coming of God, of His breaking through into history and life." (p. 5)

God took on Flesh and "broke" into human history. While the event of the Incarnation happened two millennia ago, our Lord continues to come into our lives. He came long ago to be with us and to save us, and He comes again and again in the Eucharist and by His grace to be with us and to save us.

Advent is the time during which we prepare and respond to this "breaking through" of God into our lives. In the Collect from the Mass, we ask God to grant us "the resolve to run forth to meet Your Christ with righteous deeds." We prepare for His coming through the "righteous deeds" of prayer, service and repentance. We do what we can so our hearts are made ready for Him. While there are many worthy practices we can undertake to do such preparation, above all we need to simply pray every day. As our Lord teaches us in St. Luke's Gospel today, "Be vigilant at all times and pray." (Lk 21:36)

Allow the Lord to "break through" your day today by giving Him time in prayer.

## Reflection

1. How will you "make room" for God during this Advent season as we prepare for the coming of our Lord? Make a plan for how you might spend more time in prayer this Advent season.
2. Check the parish schedule for a good time for you and your family to go to confession and mark it on your calendar.

### **Here is our parish confession schedule for Advent:**

Tuesdays after the 6:30 AM Mass

Thursdays after the 8:30 AM Mass and 6:00 PM

Saturdays after the 8:30 AM Mass and 3:00 PM

Thursday, December 9: Day of Mercy - Confession available  
all day from 7:15 AM - 8:00 PM

Tuesday, December 21: 5:00-9:00 PM



# Monday of the First Week of Advent

November 29

Every family has their own traditions and customs related to Advent and Christmas decorations. This year, try setting up the Nativity scene or a manger in your home this week if you have not already, but leave it empty at first. Figures may be added at different times throughout Advent, maybe each Sunday (Baby Jesus is not to be added until Christmas day, of course. That's a non-negotiable. We live by rules, after all). The empty manger filling up as Advent progresses is not just about marking time, but it may also provide a way to inspire family members to do good works this season.

Keep a bundle of blessed straw near the empty manger or Nativity scene. Each day, every member of the household can add one piece of straw for each good deed accomplished that day. This is not only a wonderful way to remind children, and others, about our daily call to love and serve, but it also teaches two great lessons.

The first is that just as the straw kept the Infant Jesus warm on that chilly night in Bethlehem so long ago, so too do the good deeds we do warm the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Our love for others consoles the wounded Heart of our Savior.

Secondly, the straw is a reminder that our God took on human flesh in the midst of great poverty. There was no fancy crib or soft bed, only a manger padded with straw. Yet we know there is no greater treasure that has ever existed than our Lord in the Flesh. The straw teaches us that "richness" lies not in wealth or worldly things, but in the love of God and in the love we share with others in response.

## Activity

Blessed straw was passed out at our Advent Open House. If you weren't able to attend, you can pick some up in the gathering space. Use it throughout Advent. After you place the straw, you can pray the prayer below in front of the manger.

## Prayer Before the Manger

Bless us as we look upon this manger. May it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus that draws ever closer and prepare our hearts for the awesome mystery of God-made-Flesh. Let this holy time of preparation fill us with hope that we might join Him in the eternal Kingdom of peace in Heaven.

# Tuesday of the First Week of Advent

November 30  
Feast of St. Andrew

---

The St. Andrew Christmas novena prayer is a wonderful way to add some time in prayer this Advent.

From the feast of St. Andrew (November 30) until Christmas, recite this prayer fifteen times a day so as to help your heart be well-prepared to welcome the coming of Christ. The simple beauty and sweetness of this prayer will unfold through its daily recitation, allowing you to meditate more fully on the profound mystery of the Incarnation.

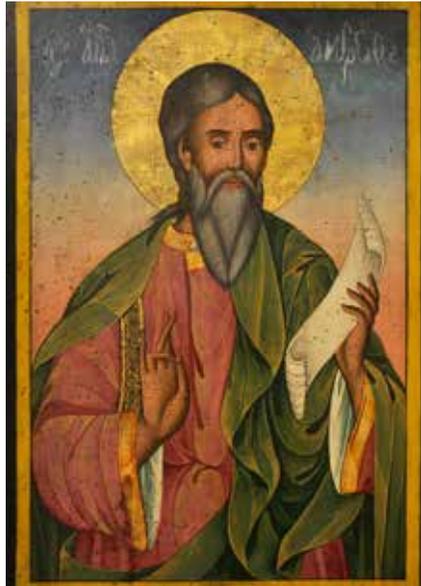
## *St. Andrew Christmas Novena*

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born Of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold.

In that hour graciously grant, I beseech You, O my God,  
To hear my prayer and grant my desires,

*[Here mention your particular request]*

Through the merits of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His blessed Mother.  
Amen.



# Scotch Broth

*Scotch Broth, a traditional Scottish soup recipe often served for St. Andrew's Day festivities, is a wonderful and hearty winter soup that can keep you warm even on the coldest days.*

## **Ingredients**

- 1 lb ground lamb (or ground beef)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 4 carrots, sliced 3/4-inch thick
- 1 turnip, 1-inch dice
- 1 large bunch organic kale, finely chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 6 cups reduced-sodium beef broth
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups cooked pearl barley
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar

## **Preparation**

1. Brown the lamb (or beef) in a stockpot or Dutch oven until no pink remains. Remove the lamb with a slotted spoon and all but 1 teaspoon of fat.
2. To the Dutch oven, add 1 tablespoon of butter, the onions, carrots, turnip, and kale; season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook the vegetables until softened; 5-8 minutes.
3. Add the broth, water, cooked barley, bay leaf, and rosemary. Cover and simmer until the vegetables and barley are tender; about 10 minutes. Add reserved lamb and vinegar, gently simmer, uncovered, for about 5 minutes to allow flavors to blend.
4. Discard bay leaf and serve.

*Recipe from 31day.com - [www.31daily.com/celebrating-st-andrews-day-with-traditional-scotch-broth/](http://www.31daily.com/celebrating-st-andrews-day-with-traditional-scotch-broth/)*

# Wednesday of the First Week of Advent

December 1

Military man. Explorer. Author. Saint.

Charles de Foucauld lived an extraordinary life, although not always a holy one. Born into wealth and a name of great repute, his parents died when Charles was about six years old. His maternal grandfather raised him in luxury and left him a fortune when he died. Comforts and pleasure became the driving forces of his life. He longed for adventure and to travel to exotic places. Charles enlisted in the army and became an officer. Army life, however, did not always mesh well with his pleasure seeking, and so he was dismissed.

In 1883, Charles undertook a year long expedition of Morocco. Although baptized in the Church, Charles had no sense of faith. Among the Jews and Muslims he encountered on his journey, Charles began to see faith in a new light.

Eventually, like so many who wander through life looking for goodness but never God, Charles realized the emptiness of his life. He returned to the Church and applied the same zeal he had for life in general to his life of faith. He searched for extraordinary ways to give himself to Christ. He spent time with some religious communities, but none lasted too long.

After being ordained a priest in 1901, Charles made his way back to Africa. Eventually, he built a solitary hermitage amongst the Tuareg people of Algeria. He wanted to be among those who had never heard the Name of Jesus, those the world had “most abandoned,” and so draw them to faith by his loving imitation of Christ.

With the Eucharist and the Gospel at the heart of his life, Charles spent the rest of his days there, with hardly another Christian around, serving and loving the Tuaregs.

With the outbreak of World War I, tensions in Algeria arose between the tribes in line with the French and those opposed. On December 1, 1916, Charles was shot and killed during a raid by a warring tribe.

Charles de Foucauld was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on November 14, 2005.



# Thursday of the First Week of Advent

December 2

All those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, priests, religious, deacons, etc., are called to end each day with Night Prayer, also known as Compline (from the Latin, meaning to “fill up” or “complete,” as in completing the day). After praying Compline, one of several traditional Marian antiphons is to be sung or recited. How wonderful it is that the Church holds devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary so highly that She requires all Her priests and religious to sing a hymn honoring our Blessed Mother as the last thing they do every single day.



The particular Marian antiphon used depends upon the season. Throughout Ordinary Time, the antiphon is the “Salve Regina.” Beginning on the First Sunday of Advent and lasting through February 1, the proper Marian antiphon for Advent and Christmas is “Alma Redemptoris Mater.”

The hymn focuses on the profound honor that belongs to Mary for being chosen to be the Mother of God. The first line, and title, refers to Our Lady as the “Loving Mother of our Redeemer.” Because she was granted this great privilege, Mary is the “gate of heaven” and “star of the sea.” Through her the path to salvation was first set forth and the Light of Christ dawned upon the world. The hymn proclaims that all of creation is rightly in awe of such a marvel that she, ever-Virgin, brought forth our Creator Himself into the world. Through her our hope has come, and so we ask her to continue to aid us, fallen people that we are, yet striving to rise once more.

*Mother of the Redeemer, who art ever of heaven  
The open gate, and the star of the sea, aid a fallen people,  
Which is trying to rise again; thou who didst give birth,  
While nature marveled how, to thy Holy Creator;  
Virgin both before and after, from Gabriel's mouth  
Accepting the All hail, be merciful towards sinners.  
(Translation by St. John Henry Newman)*

## Activity

There are many beautiful musical settings for the "Alma Redemptoris Mater" that have been composed over the centuries. Find one that you like. Take some time to listen and allow the peace and beauty of this hymn to enter your heart.

# Friday of the First Week of Advent

December 3  
Feast of St. Francis Xavier

Today is the feast of St. Francis Xavier. An educated man, Francis could have led a life of comfort and academic pursuits while still serving the Lord. Yet he knew he was called to more. Because he said yes to God's call, St. Francis arguably became the greatest missionary evangelist since St. Paul. Said to have baptized tens of thousands of people throughout his years as a missionary, St. Francis brought the faith to India, Southeast Asia, and Japan.



Not everyone is called to be a Francis Xavier, but we are all called by God. As we hear in the archdiocesan vocations prayer, we have been made for “some definite purpose.” God has prepared a path for each one of us so that we may follow Him with love, build up His Kingdom in this life, and be with Him forever in the next.

Along that journey, no matter what our vocation is, we are called to serve. Francis, like so many saints, served in a very dramatic way. You do not have to go around the world to bring Christ to others. There are people in your neighborhood, school, workplace, etc., that need to know the love of God. There are people in your home who need the same. We are blessed to know the love of God and the joy of the Incarnation. Strive to “make room” for your faith in your life in such a way that it is not hidden from the world. This does not mean we have to go around lecturing people about their immoral ways or on how they need to be more like us. Rather, just as our Lord came into the world - in silence and with great love - we too can shed light in the lives of others through our kindness, our generosity, and our prayers.

## Activity

Keep an eye out for opportunities to serve the community. Even something as simple as making Christmas cards for nursing home residents.

# *Saturday of the First Week of Advent*

December 4

Feast of St. John Damascene

---

Throughout the year the Church regularly allows for daily Masses on Saturday to be celebrated in honor of our Blessed Mother. One longstanding tradition that developed within the Advent season is what is known as a “Rorate” Mass in honor of the Virgin Mary. This votive Mass, traditionally celebrated on the Saturdays of Advent, receives its name from the first word of the entrance antiphon in Latin, “Rorate.” Taken from Isaiah 45:8, the English translation of the antiphon reads, “Drop down dew, you heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down justice: let the earth be opened and bud forth a Savior.” It is a prayer of hope for the Savior to come.

The traditions and customs surrounding Rorate Masses acknowledge the truth of the Savior to come, but also that we are not there yet. In Advent, winter approaches and the days grow darker. Rorate Masses reflect this contrast of increasing darkness and the unwavering hope for the Light to come.

The symbolism of the Mass is quite rich and is a clear expression of the Advent season. Traditionally held right before dawn, no artificial lights are to be used at the Mass, only candles - and lots of candles! The idea is that as Mass progresses the rising sun will fill the Church with light, reflecting the beautiful reality that the darkness is only temporary, for the Son is rising.

Quite fittingly, these Masses are devoted to Our Lady as the Mother of God, she through whom the Light entered the world. Consequently, the priest's vestments are white instead of the violet typically worn in Advent. In days gone by, when people lived much closer to their churches, the custom was that families would even process to church through the cold and darkness bearing lit candles or torches.

While these days Rorate Masses are most often celebrated in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, the custom is not excluded from being practiced universally in the Church today.

## *Activity*

Tonight, when it is dark, find some time for prayer. Turn out all the lights and light some candles. You can pray Night Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours or read today's Gospel. Spend some time reflecting on the dim candlelight cutting through the dark night.



# The Second Sunday of Advent

---

On this Second Sunday of Advent, we look once again to the wisdom of Pope St. John Paul II. In a homily from December 6, 1970, then Cardinal Wojtyla reflected that within himself “man has a sort of advent structure, inasmuch as waiting is deeply rooted in his nature.”\*

In other words, human beings live with a sense of anticipation and expectation in our hearts. We’re made that way. We look to the horizon, to what is to come. Man is an “animal” who hopes. Monkeys do not ponder the heavens and meditate upon the purpose of their existence. Human beings do. We feel an innate desire to be fulfilled. We are waiting for that fulfillment, that goodness, to come. It is an “advent” feeling built into our very hearts.

The struggle since the beginning of humanity has been, of course, that we are impatient. We want fulfillment now. We want that longing in our hearts to be met, so we often settle for things that fall short of fulfillment but still provide contentment, false and temporary as it may be. Isn’t that the root cause of many sins?

Thus, John Paul II points out, we need to understand this unrequited longing that haunts our hearts. Because while we are meant for God and the ultimate fulfillment that comes only in Him, we are not there yet. We are waiting. “The person must understand how incomplete he is in order to desire fulfillment and feel the need to go beyond himself,” John Paul writes. We need to understand that longing in our hearts so that we may seek what is good and proper.

God does not leave us alone and wanting. The “advent” structure of our God’s Heart is that He comes to us, even when we do not call upon Him or even acknowledge that we need Him. The Incarnation is the ultimate Divine response to the silent call within humanity’s heart.

\*Quotes taken from *The Word Made Flesh: The Meaning of the Christmas Season*, pp. 9 & 11.



## Reflection

Consider this a check in: How have you made room for God in your life so far this Advent? There is still time to identify ways you can open up your life to God through prayer or service. Take some time today to look at the calendar of the week that lies ahead. Make a plan. Don't let the week get away from you.

## Reminder

Tomorrow is the Feast of St. Nicholas. Set out those stockings tonight!



## Advent Wreath Prayer for the Second Week of Advent

The prayer that follows is to be repeated each day of the second week. After the prayer, light the first and second purple candles.

**Leader:** O Lord, stir up our hearts that we may prepare for Your only begotten Son, that through His coming we may be made worthy to serve You with pure minds. Through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

The two candles are allowed to burn during the evening meals of the second week.



# Monday of the Second Week of Advent

December 6  
Feast of St. Nicholas

Let's get something clear right off the bat. Santa Claus is real.

The culture wants you to believe that it's all just a myth, just make-believe. Don't listen to those lies.

He is real. He is St. Nicholas, and he is in heaven praising God and praying for us.

St. Nicholas died in the fourth century. He was bishop of Myra, a city in what is now modern day Turkey. He is sometimes known as the "Wonder-worker" because of the miracles that were attributed to him even in his own lifetime. He was known in particular for his generosity to the poor and his protective love of children.

St. Nicholas could be a fiery man at times. At the Council of Nicea in 325, some theologians were arguing that Christ was not fully divine. The story goes that in one fierce debate, St. Nicholas, defending the divinity and humanity of Christ, actually slapped one of the heretics. Not exactly the jolly old elf we have been presented with all these years!

For you see, the culture has emptied the image of St. Nicholas of any real depth of faith, and instead he has become some old smiling fat guy slapped on the side of Coca-Cola bottles.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not one of those people who say we should not have Christmas decorations or listen to Christmas music before Christmas. Quite honestly, I have to make myself not listen to Christmas music as soon as cold weather comes. I love all the Christmas craziness, even St. Nicholas - Santa Claus. We all just need to remember the source and driving force behind all that goodness.

## Activity

St. Nicholas is remembered for his love of children, of course, but also for his humble generosity. Today, and perhaps throughout the rest of Advent, find some hidden, quiet ways to be kind and generous. Here are some ideas:

- Leave a treat in the locker or desk of someone at school who could use a "pick-me-up".
- At home, clean up the house or do some other chore without being asked.
- Send an anonymous letter (an actual handwritten letter that is sent in the mail) to someone who may need a little joy.



# Tuesday of the Second Week of Advent

December 7  
Feast of St. Ambrose

Tomorrow, the universal Church's celebration of the Year of St. Joseph will come to an end. Around the world and our own archdiocese, churches have been set aside as temporary shrines honoring Joseph. As a parish, we have had Holy Hours each month prayed in honor of St. Joseph. Many parishioners have walked through a consecration to this saintly man. Even though we never hear a word from St. Joseph in Sacred Scripture, there is much we have learned and much to be learned from the foster-father of our Lord.



When we look at St. Joseph from this side of history, we know the full picture of who he is in relation to Jesus. However, the people of his time did not know that Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus. Several times in the Gospels we hear our Lord referred to as the “son of Joseph.” In the hiddenness of the life in Nazareth, Jesus learned what it means to be a man through the example of St. Joseph. While their life was simple and far removed from the spotlight of the world, Joseph was not a man who hid his faith, but embraced it fully, giving his whole life to serve the will of God.

Too often our culture gives men, especially fathers, permission to “hide” their faith. Expressions of faith and external signs of love for God are erroneously presented as feminine traits. Women are the ones on the front lines of faith, so to speak. They are the ones who teach children their prayers. Men are expected to be stoic and reserved. While these may be generalizations, what is clear is that men in our day and age do not always respond openly to the call of faith. St. Joseph did. Authentically and humbly, he said yes and his life reflected that. Let us pray for all Catholic men, but especially fathers and husbands, that they may courageously respond to God's call and model the faith for their families. Like St. Joseph, may they provide a home where Christ's Presence is nurtured in the hearts of their family.

## Activity

Call to mind a man in your life who could use some extra prayers today. Pray the prayer for the Year of St. Joseph for him. The prayer can be found at [saint-max.org/Joseph](http://saint-max.org/Joseph).

# Wednesday of the Second Week of Advent

December 8  
Solemnity of the  
Immaculate Conception

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was formally defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854. While many misunderstand the history and teachings that surround this dogma, the idea that Mary came into existence without the stain of original sin was not invented by the Catholic Church in 1854. For centuries, theologians and Scripture scholars wrestled and debated about the truth that Our Lady was conceived without sin. They sought to understand what this meant in terms of the merits of redemption and Mary's need for salvation if she had no sin.

It is worth simply reflecting on these words from Pope St. John Paul II:

"Through the laws of nature, a son feels a special duty towards his own mother. Mary's Son, who was our Savior, fulfilled this duty perfectly; He redeemed her in a special way and in a special way gave her the grace which redemption unleashes for all of us."

*(The Word Made Flesh: The Meaning of the Christmas Season, p. 14)*

A son loves his mother. That is the way of things. As our Lord loved His Mother, He gave her a unique gift, a particular privilege, of never being stained by original sin. Let the theologians and apologists debate all they want. Of course, Jesus did this for His Mother. As in all things, He is perfect. So He loved His Mother perfectly, blessing her in a way unique amongst all creation.



## Activity

Perhaps this is a good day for you to love your mother more perfectly. Give her a call. Do something nice for her. Pay her a visit. Thank her. If your mother has passed away, say some prayers for her. Tell someone a story about her or share your favorite memory of her.

# White Chocolate Cream Cake

Here's an "immaculate" confection to make to celebrate Our Lady:

## Ingredients

Cake:

- 3 oz. squares white chocolate, chopped
- 2 1/4 C. all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 C. white sugar
- 2 1/4 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 2/3 C. heavy cream
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp. almond extract

Frosting:

- 3 oz. white chocolate, chopped
- 3 1/2 C. confectioner's sugar
- 1/4 C. butter, softened
- 4 Tbsp. water
- 1/2 tsp. almond extract

## Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour two 8 or 9 inch round pans. For the cake, melt white chocolate. Set aside to cool to lukewarm. In a small bowl, mix flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Set aside. In a large chilled bowl, whip heavy cream until stiff peaks form. Set aside.

In a large bowl, beat eggs for about 5 minutes until light lemon colored. Beat in 1 tsp. almond flavoring and melted white chocolate. Fold in whipped cream. Fold in flour mixture, about 1/2 a cup at a time. Divide batter into prepared pans. Bake in oven for 35-40 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes, then turn out onto wire rack and cool completely.

For frosting: In a large bowl, beat 3 oz. of white chocolate over low heat or in microwave, stirring occasionally, until melted. Cool to lukewarm. On medium speed, combine white chocolate, confectioners sugar, butter, water and 1/2 tsp. almond extract. Beat until smooth and easily spreadable.

Stack the two cakes. Include frosting between the layers and frost generously around the whole cake.

*(<https://catholiccuisine.blogspot.com/search/label/Immaculate%20Conception>)*

# Thursday of the Second Week of Advent

December 9  
Feast of

St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatatzin

On several occasions from December 9 through the 12 of 1531, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego Cuauhtlatatzin. One of the remarkable aspects of the conversations between this humble Chichimecan Aztec and the Queen of Heaven and Earth was the familiarity with which they spoke to each other. Mary called Juan Diego “Juanito” (Little Juan) and referred to him as her dearest son. Juan Diego called her, “My Lady, my Child, smallest of all my daughters.”

Their dialogue reveals a tenderness and an affection for each other and a beautiful humility. At one point, our Mother says to Juan Diego, “Am I not here, who is your Mother? Are you not under my protection?”

Our Mother Mary is deservedly held in great honor as our Queen. Yet she does not want to be held aloft on some distant throne, quite the contrary. She is our loving Mother who holds us close, prays for us, and keeps a watchful eye on us.

Our Lady cares for you with the same tenderness she showed Juan Diego. Make room for her in your life, so that she may lead you to her Son.



## Activity

Have the Christmas cards started to arrive? Here is a great practice that one of our parish families shared with me. When the Christmas cards arrive, display them on your mantle, along doorways, etc. Then, when the Christmas season ends and the decorations come down, place all the cards in a basket in the center of your kitchen or dining room table, wherever you eat together. At each meal, take out one Christmas card, and as you pray before the meal, add a special prayer for the person or family who sent you that particular Christmas card.

# Friday of the Second Week of Advent

December 10  
Feast of St. Peter Duong

Since the late eighteenth century, according to the Vatican, somewhere between 130,000 and 300,000 Christians were martyred in Vietnam. In 1988, Pope John Paul II decided to canonize them all, known and unknown. They were given a single feast day, universally celebrated on November 24.

Some individuals had already been canonized and were given their own feast day. While not celebrated on the universal calendar, today is the feast day of St. Peter Duong, a catechist who was killed for his faith.

While earlier persecutions had occurred, the attacks on Christians intensified when a new emperor came into power around 1820. In the ensuing decades, missionaries and native Vietnamese Catholics were hunted down, arrested, exiled or killed. The suffering that many of these people endured was staggering. Tortured, maimed, dismembered and drugged, these Christians suffered the wrath of the powers that be. Individuals were branded on their faces with the words "Sinister religion." Entire families, even whole villages of Christians, were wiped out completely.

While that era of persecution came to an end with the death of the emperor, the Church in Vietnam struggled once again under the persecution by the Communist regime. Despite the long history of persecution, the church in Vietnam perseveres. Under the patronage of Our Lady of La Vang, Vietnamese Catholics remain steadfast and faithful to this day.

## Reflection

Most people would probably agree that our modern culture is often in conflict with our Christian faith. At the same time, we remain remarkably blessed in this country to be able to freely practice our faith. We certainly do not face the oppression and persecution felt by so many throughout history and around the world today. The witness of the martyrs is always inspiring. Yet, ask yourself, "Have I been a witness of the faith? Given our freedom and blessings, have I shared the faith, or do I allow fear or pride to hinder my witness? How can I 'make room' for God in the way I live my life as testimony to the truth of Jesus Christ?"



# *Saturday of the Second Week of Advent*

---

To those on the outside, some of our traditions as Catholics may strike them as a bit, well, odd. Relics, incense, ringing bells - even Holy Communion for that matter - these things make sense to most of us. They are normal, really, but to non-Catholics, not so much.

Even among Catholics there are some traditions that may strike us as just weird. The phenomenon of the spiritual movement known as “Stylites” is one such tradition.

In the fifth century, much of the persecution of the Church that had gone on for centuries subdued. Consequently, Catholics were no longer called to the powerful witness of martyrdom, but they still longed for ways to live in a dramatic fashion for their faith. Hermits removed themselves from the world. Monasteries began to spread, and some people decided to spend the rest of their lives living on top of a pillar.

You read that right.

There was a movement among Christians in which people would “leave the world behind” and live on top of a column or perhaps a series of columns. These people became known as “Stylites,” named after the Greek word for pillar, “stylos.” Atop the column, these individuals would spend their days in prayer or provide spiritual counsel to those who would come to seek their advice. Some Stylites installed a little roof to sleep under, but many just remained exposed to the elements. Part of the idea behind this movement was the notion of living “closer” to heaven, both literally and by the way they spent their days in fasting, meditation and prayer.

Today is the feast of St. Daniel the Stylite. Inspired by another Stylite, St. Simeon the Elder, Daniel decided that he wanted to turn away from the world and lead a life of solitude, asceticism and prayer. So in the year 451, he began to live on top of a pillar near the city of Constantinople.

Unfortunately for Daniel, he quickly began to attract crowds because of his reputed holiness. The Emperor Leo I had a series of pillars erected with a platform on top for Daniel. He was ordained a priest there. St. Daniel celebrated the Eucharist on his pillar, preached, shared spiritual advice, and cured the sick who were brought to him. He also counseled the political leaders of his day. In all the remaining years of his life, Daniel came down from his pillar only once, and that was to persuade the emperor at the time to give up the heresy he had embraced. Once accomplished, back to the pillar Daniel went. St. Daniel died in 493.

December 11  
Feast of St. Daniel the Stylite

---



## *Reflection*

The life of St. Daniel the Stylite is an odd, but wonderful reminder that there are many ways to live the spiritual life. All of us have our own way to be close to God every day. Our task is to find that way and follow it to the very end. What is your way?

# The Third Sunday of Advent

In the Gospel from this Third Sunday of Advent, John the Baptist is teaching the people about how they are to live. Because of his wisdom and the power of his words, St. Luke tells us that “the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ.” (Lk 3:15)

When reflecting about the question of who is the Christ and when He is to come, Pope St. John Paul II wrote that it “is the most important question in the history of the human race.” (*The Word Made Flesh: The Meaning of the Christmas Season*, p. 19) The answer to that question is a life changer, and not just life in this world, but for eternal life.

As Catholics, especially those of us raised in the Church, we can often drift through life without really answering the question of who Jesus is in our hearts. We can even attend Mass week in and week out without ever really allowing the Lord, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, to authentically dwell within us and change our lives.

## Reflection

Who is the Christ in your life? How does your life reveal His Presence?

## Advent Wreath Prayer for the Third Week of Advent

The Third Sunday in Advent is “Gaudete Sunday.” Gaudete means “Rejoice!” That joy is represented by the rose candle instead of the penitential purple color. Each night during the third week, the following prayer may be said. After the prayer, light the first two purple candles and the rose candle.

**Leader:** O Lord, we beg You, incline Your ear to our prayers and enlighten the darkness of our minds by the grace of Your visitation. Through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

The three candles are allowed to burn during the evening meals of the third week.

## *Our Lady of Guadalupe*

While not celebrated liturgically this year, December 12 is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Today, pray the Memorare as a family:

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,  
that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection,  
implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee,  
O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come,  
before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful.  
O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions,  
but in thy mercy hear and answer me.  
Amen.



# Monday of the Third Week of Advent

December 13  
Feast of St. Lucy

The devotions and traditions surrounding St. Lucy are remarkable considering that so very little is known about her life. We do know that she was born in Syracuse, Sicily, and was martyred there around the year 304 A.D. At one point in her life, she made a vow of virginity and dedicated her life to Christ and to helping the poor. When she denied the advances of a wealthy pagan suitor, he denounced her as a Christian to the authorities. She was consequently arrested and put to death.



By the Middle Ages, devotion to St. Lucy had spread throughout Christendom. Consequently, cultures around the world celebrate her feast day in unique ways. In northern parts of Europe, the custom is for the oldest daughter in each family to wake up early on the feast of St. Lucy. Dressed in a white gown, she wakes up the rest of the family with treats such as sweet rolls or pastries.

St. Lucy is the patron saint of the blind and those with eye disorders.

## Activity

While the most famous St. Lucy traditions come from the Scandinavian countries, try this one practiced traditionally in Croatia.

On the feast of St. Lucy, plant some wheat in a small container of soil and then place it in a warm room, keeping it watered. By Christmas Eve, the shoots of wheat should have grown several inches high. At that time, place the plant next to the manger scene as a gift to Jesus and a reminder of the Eucharist which feeds our souls and is a gift of life to all who receive It. Some families use the plant as a center piece for Christmas dinner.

*(If you didn't get wheat seeds at the Advent Open House, feel free to check with the parish office for some.)*

# Tuesday of the Third Week of Advent

December 14  
Feast of St. John of the Cross

---

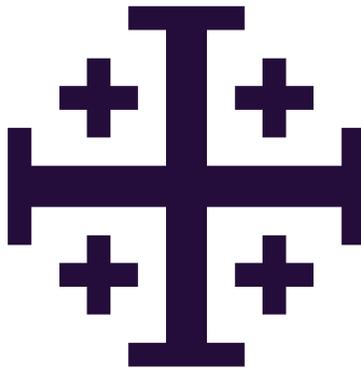
Advent is over the halfway mark. Eleven days until Christmas. The pace of life and the busyness of the season is sure to increase. School parties. Work events. Decorating the home. Mailing Christmas cards. The “room” available for God and prayer can get smaller and smaller.

It is a strange thing, if you think about it, that such a sacred time of the year actually proves to be one of the most challenging times to find some silence and make room for God every day in prayer.

The solution is actually quite simple. Because of His love for us, God is present to us, ready and waiting. We don't have to quit our jobs or ignore our families to be with Him. We don't have to move into a monastery to be close to Him. We simply have to choose to open our hearts and our lives to Him. St. John of the Cross, whose feast we celebrate today, wrote these words:

*What more do you want, O soul! And what else do you search for outside, when within yourself you possess your riches, delights, satisfactions, fullness, and kingdom - your Beloved whom you desire and seek? Be joyful and gladdened in your interior recollection with Him, for you have Him so close to you. Desire Him there, adore Him there. Do not go in pursuit of Him outside yourself. You will only become distracted and wearied thereby, and you shall not find Him, nor enjoy Him more securely, nor sooner, nor more intimately than by seeking Him within you.*

God awaits. The choice is yours.



# Wednesday of the Third Week of Advent

December 15  
Feast of St. Mary Di Rosa

St. Mary Di Rosa was born in Brescia, Italy, in 1813. From an early age, she wanted to serve, and the fire in her heart was such that she would not allow any obstacles to hinder her desire to serve God and others.

At the age of seventeen she began planning retreats and parish missions, as well as founding sodalities for women. When she was twenty-four she was asked to supervise a workhouse for poor girls. When she was concerned about where the often homeless girls would go at night, she sought to give them refuge. Her superiors denied her such a place, so she quit and set up a boarding house for these poor women.

Just a few years later, at only twenty-seven years old, she was asked to be the superior of the Handmaids of Charity, a religious society dedicated to caring for those suffering in hospitals.

In 1848, when war came to her homeland, she did not cower in the face of the challenges before her, but dedicated herself to caring for the wounded and the displaced created by the war. She and her sisters went to work at a military hospital and would even go out to the battlefields to provide consolation and comfort to the wounded and dying.

Mary Di Rosa died in 1855. She was canonized by Pope Pius XII in 1954.



## Reflection

So many obstacles could have stifled St. Mary Di Rosa's zeal to love and serve others. Yet she persevered, always ready to help the poor and anyone in need.

So often we feel a similar call to help and to serve, but we let those opportunities slip away. The next time someone you encounter needs help, remember that in the poor we meet Christ Himself. We would never refuse Him, right? Let's work to leave behind the excuses and respond to those in need.

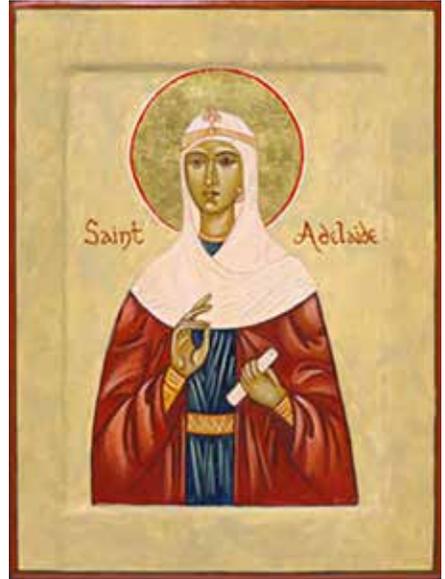
# Thursday of the Third Week of Advent

December 16  
Feast of St. Adelaide

Yesterday, we reflected on the life of St. Mary Di Rosa, a woman who dedicated herself to helping those in need, even strangers. Sometimes it's easier to be kinder to the people we don't know than it is to be loving to the people in our own family.

St. Adelaide faced such a struggle. She is the patron saint of parents of large families, step-parents, and those who have "in-law problems."

In 931, Adelaide was born into royalty, the daughter of the King of Burgundy, but her life was certainly not some fairy tale. Married at the age of sixteen, her husband died just three years later. Given the maneuverings of politics and power, Adelaide faced times of imprisonment and the threat of exile. Eventually she married again, to Otto of Germany, and had a family. When Otto died, and her son became emperor, a split arose between them and they were estranged for years. They reconciled before his death, and Adelaide spent the remaining years of her life assisting her grandson in his rule and fostering the presence of the Church throughout northern Europe, building monasteries and churches, and helping the poor. Adelaide died on December 16, 999.



## Reflection

Many families suffer from estrangement, feuds, and a lack of forgiveness for past wrongs. Is there someone close to you who needs to encounter the love of Christ in you? Ask for the humility, strength and wisdom to seek forgiveness when needed, to forgive unconditionally, and to make room for Christ even into what might be your fractured family.

# Friday of the Third Week of Advent

December 17

As Advent nears its end, the Church marks these last days with an ancient set of verses that cry out for the coming of the Lord. They are known as the “O Antiphons.”

In use in the Church since the eighth century, the “O Antiphons” are sung or recited at evening prayer to introduce the Cantic of Mary, the Magnificat, during the octave before Christmas, December 17 to December 23. Based on the passages from the prophet Isaiah, the antiphons contain various titles for the coming Messiah. These verses are also the basis for the well known hymn, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.”

As we approach the solemn celebration of the Nativity, we join with the universal Church and all those who over the centuries have prayed these same prayers.

## *O Come, O Wisdom*

O Wisdom, O holy Word of God,  
You govern all creation with Your strong yet  
tender care.  
Come and show Your people the way to  
salvation.

“The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him:  
a spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
a spirit of counsel and of strength,  
a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord,  
and His delight shall be the fear of the Lord.”

(Isaiah 11:2-3)



Authentic wisdom feels hard to come by these days. Sound bites and “tweets” just can’t cut it. While people can toss out ideas, opinions, or even facts, wisdom is more than that. Ultimately, wisdom eludes so many because they do not understand that true Wisdom is a person, our Lord Jesus Christ. Only when we encounter Him on a personal and intimate level will we access the wisdom we need to navigate this foolish, wonderful world.

## *Reflection*

Take a few moments of silence today and think about an area of your life that needs to be touched by wisdom. Ask Jesus to be the One to shed light in that darkness and guide you to the truth.

# Saturday of the Third Week of Advent

December 18

## O Come, O Sacred Lord

O sacred Lord of ancient Israel,  
Who showed Yourself to Moses in the burning bush,  
Who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain:  
Come, stretch out Your mighty hand to set us free.

“But He shall judge the poor with justice,  
and decide aright for the lands afflicted.  
He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of His mouth,  
and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.  
Justice shall be the band around His waist,  
and faithfulness a belt upon His hips.” (Isaiah 11:4-5)

The antiphon today presents two things that many people would consider to be in opposition, law and freedom. Our Sacred Lord is the source of law and authentic freedom. As the Catechism teaches, freedom is rooted in reason and will, not simply doing whatever we feel like doing. Freedom reaches “its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude.” (CCC, 1731)

In other words, we are most free when we are living as we are meant to live. You are “free” to pour orange juice into an engine, but that car is not going to run. On the contrary, that sort of “freedom” is destructive because it is incompatible with the design of the car. Sin is destructive and contrary to our design. We cannot truly and freely “run” in this life unless we live as we are made to live - for God and for heaven. The “freest” people in existence are those in heaven.



## Reflection

If you haven't had the chance to get to confession this Advent, discover the freedom from sin our Lord longs to share through this beautiful sacrament.

# The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 19

## O Come, O Flower of Jesse's Stem

O Flower of Jesse's stem,  
You have been raised up as a sign for all peoples;  
kings stand silent in Your Presence;  
the nations bow down in worship before You.  
Come, let nothing keep You from coming to our aid.

“But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse,  
and from his roots a bud shall blossom.”  
(Isaiah 11:1)

“On that day, the root of Jesse,  
set up as a signal for the nations,  
the Gentiles shall seek out,  
for His dwelling shall be glorious.”  
(Isaiah 11:10)



Isaiah spoke of the glorious dwelling of God. We are so privileged that our humble Lord makes His dwelling right here in our parish. He does not share Himself only with kings, prophets and saints. He is accessible to all.

## Activity

Find some time in the next few days, hectic as they may be, to come to church and sit in the Presence of our Lord who waits within the silence of the Tabernacle. Draw near.

## Advent Wreath Prayer for the Fourth Week of Advent

The prayer that follows is to be repeated each day of the fourth week. After the prayer, light all four candles.

**Leader:** O Lord, stir up Your power, we pray, and come. Assist us, that by Your Grace Your merciful forgiveness may hasten what our sins impede.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

The four candles are allowed to burn during the evening meals of the fourth week.

# Monday of the Fourth Week of Advent

December 20

## O Come, O Key of David

O Key of David, O royal Power of Israel  
controlling at Your will the gate of Heaven:  
Come, break down the prison walls of death  
for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death;  
and lead Your captive people into freedom.

“I will place the Key of the House of David on His shoulder;  
when He opens, no one will shut,  
when He shuts, no one will open.” (Isaiah 22:22)

“His dominion is vast and forever peaceful,  
from David’s throne, and over His kingdom,  
which He confirms and sustains by judgment and justice,  
both now and forever.” (Isaiah 9:6)

Today’s antiphon calls to mind royalty and great power. We hear of a mighty king whose very will controls the gate of Heaven and breaks down the prison walls of death. His kingdom is vast and eternal. Even with all this grand language, the beautiful reality of our faith is that our mighty King came into this world as helpless and gentle as any baby. He came to love and to be loved. Yes, His power is mighty and His Kingdom vast. Yet in His coming to us, His mighty arm did not grasp for power or worldly strength, but like any child, reached out tenderly for the

loving arms of His Mother. By His touch, He healed the broken. He reached out to Peter, swamped by doubt and flailing in the sea. With those same arms, our Lord willingly reached out to be nailed to the Cross. He reaches out to you now.



# Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Advent

December 21

## O Come, O Radiant Dawn

O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light,  
Sun of justice: come, shine on those who dwell in darkness  
and the shadow of death.

“The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom  
a light has shown.” (Isaiah 9:1)

Life can certainly feel like the “land of gloom” at times. This is as true today as it has been for all of human history. Despite the struggles of this world, Christians are not called to be gloomy people. For millennia, the Chosen People longed for the coming Messiah to bring light to the darkness of the world and to “shine on those who dwell in darkness.” With His coming to us in the Flesh, that Radiant Dawn has arisen.

The birth of Christ is therefore not just a celebration of a single event, but a demarcation of the turning of history. Our joy, then, rests not in the pleasures of life or the trappings of a holiday, but in the promise fulfilled and the hope that remains that our Lord will lead us into the freedom of His eternal Kingdom.

### Reflection

Make room for someone in your life who may be going through a particularly difficult time. Give them a call. Send them a letter. Spend time together.

Be the Light of Christ for another.



# Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Advent

December 22

## O Come, O King of Nations

O King of all the nations,  
the only joy of every human heart;  
O Keystone of the mighty arch of man,  
come and save the creature You fashioned from  
the dust.

“He shall judge between the nations,  
and impose terms on many peoples.  
They shall beat their swords into plowshares  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
one nation shall not raise the sword against  
another,  
nor shall they train for war again.” (Isaiah 2:4)

“For a Child is born to us, a Son is given us;  
upon His shoulder dominion rests.  
They name Him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,  
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:5)

Our Lord is the “Keystone of the mighty arch of man.” A keystone is the central piece of the crown of an arch that secures all the other pieces in place. It provides strength and stability. Without the keystone, the structure will collapse.

Our faith cannot stand if we do not have Christ providing the strength that only He provides. We are called to make room for Him in our lives, not just because of the commandments or the obligatory duties of faith, but because when He is our Keystone we can remain standing even when life tries to tear us down.

We often hear certain sayings this time of year, such as, “Jesus is the reason for the season” or “Keep Christ in Christmas.” Those are certainly true and good, but those truths do not expire when the season comes to an end. We must keep Christ the “Keystone” throughout our lives.

## Reflection

Examine your life. Have any false “keystones” taken the place of Jesus in your heart?



# Thursday of the Fourth Week of Advent

December 23

## O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O Emmanuel, King and lawgiver,  
Desire of the nations, Savior of all people,  
Come and set us free, Lord our God.”

“The Lord Himself will give you this sign:  
the Virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son,  
and shall name Him Emmanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

Emmanuel. It means “God with us.” Such a simple and short phrase, “God with us.” Within those three words lies the answer to every prayer, the healing for every ill, the consolation for every sorrow, and, we pray, the destination of every human life.

## Advent Wreath

As Christmas Eve is tomorrow, the penitential season of Advent is just about over, and the time to rejoice is at hand. Transform your Advent wreath into a Christmas wreath by adding red and white ribbons and candles or other festive decorations. Light the candles on Christmas morning.



Reflecting upon this most solemn of nights, the image of shepherds dotting a Judean hillside comes to mind. St. Luke tells us that when the time came for the Christ to be born, “there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock.” (Lk 2:8) Scripture and Tradition share no more information than that about the identity of those shepherds. The magi we know by name and number, but we do not know the names nor how many shepherds were even in those fields.

Reflecting upon this, several questions come to mind. Why them? Who were these men? Why were they chosen to be the first to see the glory of the Lord shine around them and to hear the angel’s words, “For today in the city of David a Savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord”. (Lk 2:11) What made them so special that they received the privileged invitation to see the Word made Flesh, the Messiah, in person?

Above all the prophets and kings of the Old Testament, they were blessed to witness firsthand the Child born to save us. We can imagine, as well, that perhaps some of them even got to take God Incarnate into their arms. Yet, they are, in the eyes of the world, nobodies.

Another question arises, “Why you? Why me?” Above all the prophets and kings of the Old Testament, above the shepherds and magi, we are given the privileged opportunity to receive that same Savior into our hearts through the Holy Eucharist.

The shepherds went in haste unto Bethlehem because of the Good News they had heard. May we respond with the same “hasty joy” to always be with our Eucharistic Lord, so tender and mild.



# The Nativity of the Lord

December 25

A Christmas reflection taken from *The Graces of Christmas* by Fr. Bernard Wuellner, S.J., pp. 91-92.

## Mary, the Monstrance

Not long after her first holy hour with Him, the hush of the silent midnight is broken as the angelic chorus rings in clear praise. Staffs beat on the trail and rocks clatter as the shepherds come. Now she has a new role to play. She, who has been for nine months His tabernacle and ciborium as He hid within her, must now be His monstrance, holding Him up for all who are interested in Him to see.

After Joseph welcomes the shepherds and they see Him lying in the manger and have been introduced to His young Mother, she lifts Him up to bless them. It is His first benediction.

Her fingers and knees support the God of her heart; she is the Seat of Wisdom. Her smile wreaths Him in rays; she is the sun around whom most of His human joys will center. She watches the men of these hills stoop to their knees to adore Him and receive His blessings. She whispers glad thanks for their congratulations and hears them offer Joseph any help by which they may relieve the poverty of the Holy Family.

It is she who gives Him to the world. It is she who will give Christ to us. As she mothered Him, the Lord of grace, she mothers or mediates every grace that any man receives from Him. She, too, will be the monstrance who after this exile shows unto us the blessed fruit of her womb, Jesus.

One of the permanent fruits of our Christmas celebrations should be our greater nearness to Christ. Herein we cannot do better than imitate Mary.



# Merry Christmas

May the Good News  
of the birth of Christ  
fill your hearts with  
**Joy**





Saint Maximilian Kolbe  
Catholic Church