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a community of life and love

# family

A New Year Liturgical Year Begins—Sunday, November 27

## First Sunday of Advent

DECEMBER 2022

We tell the young people in our religious education programs that, just like the seasons of the earth—summer, fall, winter, spring—so too the Church celebrates seasons of our year—the Liturgical Year. The word Liturgy is linked to the prayer of the Church. And so we begin a new year of prayer.

At Mass this morning, during the homily, I heard the priest talking about the busyness of this season. We are caught up in planning, shopping, lists, cooking, cleaning, writing our greetings, wrapping, decorating, hanging Christmas lights! Whew! All of these activities are fun, exciting and beautiful but they can leave us exhausted.

I heard him say, “Don’t forget to decorate your souls!”

Indeed, sometimes it takes a conscious effort to turn off the schedule and take a step back into time to the fields and caves of Bethlehem..the place where it all began for us on earth as we welcome Jesus Messiah, Son of God, the Incarnation. We invite Him into our hearts, into our homes, into our lives. We welcome Him into our world as we remember “Jesus is the Light!”

When we take the young ones to church before their religious education class begins, we light a candle and we all say together “Jesus is the Light.” Jesus is the Light that dispels the darkness of sin. Jesus is the Light that brings hope and comfort and the assurance that He is an “ever present help in time of trouble.”

Words from a familiar song come to mind, “the weary world rejoices!” We are reminded that in our darkest times the Light of Christ who has come into the world is a beacon to assure us that when we are in Christ “All is well. All is well. All manner of things are well.” (Julian of Norwich)

Blessings of the season!

Sr. Nancy Elizabeth

Did you know?

### The Meaning of the Advent Wreath

We celebrate the four weeks of Advent by lighting the candles on the Advent wreath.

Four candles: 4 weeks of Advent

3 Purple candles: Purple is for Penance (Advent is a Penitential season) and preparation. We light the purple candles on the first, second and fourth Sundays of Advent. Purple is also for kings.

The rose candle: this stands for joy! Gaudete (Latin for rejoice!) Sunday is the name used for this day. We are joyful because our celebration is almost here. This candle is lit on the third Sunday.

The evergreen—God’s love for us is always fresh and never changes.

The wreath—the unending circle symbolizes that God always has been and always will be.

[The Advent Wreath Crafts for Kids](#)

December 8

## Feast of the Immaculate Conception



Many times people think that when we speak of the Immaculate Conception we are referring to Jesus. It is, after all, an easy assumption when we think of the Annunciation to Mary by the angel Gabriel when he told her, “The Holy Spirit will overshadow you and God’s power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35)

But who was worthy to be the Mother of Our Lord? Surely not one who had any stain of sin within her. Not one who carried the wounded human nature of Original Sin! God prepared a pure and spotless maiden, one who was free from the effects of the sin of Adam and Eve, to bear the Son of the Most High. One who would be free to accept the invitation to bless humanity with the one who is both God and man. Therefore Mary was conceived without sin.

Read about the apparitions of the Blessed Mother to the young Bernadette. Hear the name Our Lady gave to Bernadette when she asked her, “Who are you?”

[The Message of Our Lady of Lourdes](#) (Aleteia)

December 8th, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception is a Holy Day of Privilege (sounds better than obligation doesn't it?)

[Listen! Immaculate Mary](#)

Read: [Catholic.com explains the meaning of the Immaculate Conception](#)

[Mary Statue craft for kids - Catholic Icing](#)

December 12

## Our Lady of Guadalupe

Our Lady of Guadalupe is the patron of the Americas and Mexico.

A poor Mexican peasant walked a hillside one day in December of the year 1531. Juan Diego was a very devout Catholic man but many of the people of Mexico did not believe in the one true God. On this day Juan was worried about his uncle who was quite ill and he was praying to the Blessed Mother as he walked.

### The Story of Our Lady of Guadalupe

The feast in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe goes back to the 16th century.

A poor Indian named Cuauhtlatohuac was baptized and given the name Juan Diego. He was a 57-year-old widower, and lived in a small village near Mexico City. On Saturday morning December 9, 1531, he was on his way to a nearby barrio to attend Mass in honor of Our Lady.

Juan was walking by a hill called Tepeyac when he heard beautiful music like the warbling of birds. A radiant cloud appeared, and within it stood an Indian maiden dressed like an Aztec princess. The lady spoke to him in his own language and sent him to the bishop of Mexico, a Franciscan named Juan de Zumarraga. Our Lady requested the bishop to build a chapel in the place where the lady appeared.

Eventually the bishop told Juan to have the lady give him a sign. Our Lady assured Juan that his uncle would recover, and provided roses for Juan to carry to the bishop in his cape or tilma.

On December 12, when Juan Diego opened his tilma in the bishop’s presence, the roses fell to the ground, and the bishop sank to his knees. On the tilma, where the roses had been, appeared an image of Mary exactly as she had appeared at the hill of Tepeyac. (Franciscan Media)

Read more:

[Our Lady of Guadalupe - St. Anthony Messenger](#)

Watch for kids! [Juan Diego - the Messenger of Guadalupe](#)

**December 18**

## **The First Day of Hanukkah**

### **The Feast of Lights**

Our Jewish brothers and sisters in the faith of Abraham experienced the presence and help of God in the form of light many times.

When the Hebrew people escaped from Pharaoh and slavery in Egypt, a pillar of light guided them across the desert at night.

At another time in the history of the Hebrew people, there was a revolt against a tyrant king. Read about how God provided enough oil for the Menorah to be lighted for 8 days—even though there was not enough oil to last even a day! Our God provides!

Read: [The Meaning of Hanukkah](#)  
Life in Messiah

Watch for kids! [Hanukkah for Kids](#)



**December 26**

### **The Feast of St. Stephen**

**St. Stephen was one of the first Deacons of the Church and the very first martyr. An account of his faithful witness, even to the death, for the sake of Jesus is given to us in Scripture—Acts 7:54-60**

[Watch and Read! St. Stephen, the First Martyr](#)



**December 25**

## **The Nativity of the Lord**



A moment so momentous in the history of the world time was split in half!

BC=before Christ—although in today's secular era, you will hear BC=before the common era!

AD = doesn't mean After Christ's Death but the Year of Our Lord. Anno Domini—2022 AD.

We know the story so well but do we ever tire of hearing it again? And does the winter night sky, sparkling with silver stars, ever fail to excite us as we imagine what occurred that most Holy Night?

Read: [Luke 2:1-20](#)

Watch: [The Nativity Story for Kids](#)

**December 28**

### **The Feast of the Holy Innocents**

This is a difficult event to explain to children because it is so disturbing. When we share this feast day we often tell the younger ones that Mary and Joseph had to escape to Egypt with Jesus because King Herod was searching for the newborn King. He was jealous and wanted no other king to compete with him! The Escape into Egypt is one of Our Lady's Sorrows.

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.

[Catholic Culture](#)

## CATHOLIC PRAYERS AND PRACTICES



### Prayer on Christmas morning

**Father/Mother:** Christ is born to us!

**All:** Come, let us adore Him.

**Father/Mother :** To the King of the Ages, who is immortal, invisible, the one only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Father/Mother:** Arise, O Christ, and help us.

**All:** And deliver us for Your Name's sake. Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.

**Father/Mother:** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation.

**All:** But deliver us from evil.

**Father/Mother:** O Lord, hear my prayer.

**All:** And let my cry come to You.

**Father/Mother:** Let us pray. O Lord God Almighty, who hast brought us to the beginning of this day, preserve us in the same by Thy power that during this day we may not fall into any sin, but that all our words, thoughts and work may be directed to doing Thy holy will. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**All:** Alleluia.

**Father/Mother:** This day Christ is born, this day the Savior has appeared. This day Angels are singing on earth, Archangels are rejoicing. This day the just are glad and say:

**All:** Glory to God in the highest, alleluia.

*Christmas to Candlemas in a Catholic Home* by Helen McLoughlin, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota

### Blessing of our children on the Feast of the Holy Innocents

Click on:

[Blessing of our children on the Feast of Holy Innocents - December 28](#)



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**Next issue:**

**December 30  
Feast of the Holy Family**

**Movies:**

[The Nativity - Full Movie](#)

**Music:**

[Traditional Choir Peaceful Christmas  
Music and Ambience](#)     
[Church at Christmas - YouTube](#)