



# Family: A Community of Life and Love

Welcome to our second issue of our Family Newsletter. We have created the Newsletter in this format so that it is more easily forwarded to our parishes and families.

## Saints of December.

This month is chock full of great Saints to remember and great feasts to celebrate.

December 3. **Saint Francis Xavier** was won over to Christ by the gentle persuasion of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

December 4—**St. John Damascene**—Born in Damascus, John spent most of his life in the Monastery of Saint Sabas near Jerusalem, and all of his life under Muslim rule, John defended the Church's understanding of the veneration of images .

December 7—**St. Ambrose**— a man steeped in the learning, law, and culture of the ancients and of his contemporaries. Patron Saint of Bee keepers, Beggars, Learning, Milan

December 8—**The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary** - see page 2

December 9—**St Juan Diego**—see page 2

December 12—**Our Lady of Guadalupe**—see page 2

December 14—**St. John of the Cross**- John is a saint because his life was a heroic effort to live up to his name: "of the Cross." "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:34) John was a reformer, mystic-poet, and theologian-priest. 1537 A.D.

December 25—**Celebration of the Incarnation** (the birthday of Jesus) - see page 3

December 26—**St. Stephen**-One of the first deacons and the first Christian martyr. Stephen was filled with grace and power and worked great wonders among the people.

December 27—**Feast of the Holy Family**-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. Catholicculture.org

December 28—**Feast of the Holy Innocents**-Christian feast in remembrance of the massacre of young children in Bethlehem by King Herod the Great in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus (Matthew 2:16-18).

Family Catechesis Advisory  
Committee

Catechetical Office  
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## Special points of interest:

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## The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary—December 8

If you were given a saint's name at Baptism, that saint is your patron saint. Countries also have patron saints. Who is the patron saint of the United States? If you answered, "Mary, the mother of Jesus," you are correct. The title of the Immaculate Conception recognizes Mary's privilege of coming into the world free from sin. Through the power of Jesus' Death and Resurrection, every human being can be freed from sin at Baptism. Through that same power, Mary was always free from sin, even from that very first moment of life.

On December 8, the Church celebrates this special privilege given to Mary. We thank Mary for watching over and protecting our people.

**We pray:** 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 of sin 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 one God for ever and ever.



<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/saints/saints-stories-for-all-ages/feast-of-the-immaculate-conception/>

## St. Juan Diego—December 9

Thousands of people gathered in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe July 31, 2002, for the canonization of Juan Diego, to whom the Blessed Mother appeared in the 16th century. Pope John Paul II celebrated the ceremony at which the poor Indian peasant became the Church's first saint indigenous to the Americas.

First called *Cuauhtlatohuac* ("The eagle who speaks"), Juan Diego's name is forever linked with Our Lady of Guadalupe because it was to him that she first appeared at Tepeyac hill on December 9, 1531. The most famous part of his story is told in connection with the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12. The roses gathered in his tilma were transformed into the miraculous image of Our Lady.

God counted on Juan Diego to play a humble, yet huge role in bringing the Good News to the peoples of Mexico. Overcoming his own fear and the doubts of the local Bishop, Juan Diego cooperated with God's grace in showing his people that the Good News of Jesus is for everyone.

### Watch:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--IRbuAu2XQ&ab\\_channel=CatholicOnline](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--IRbuAu2XQ&ab_channel=CatholicOnline)

For kids: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-u7SFLvz8Q&ab\\_channel=ChristianKidsTV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-u7SFLvz8Q&ab_channel=ChristianKidsTV)

## The Miraculous Tilma of Our Lady of Guadalupe—Feast December 12

Our heavenly Mother and her precious Son, Jesus, are always communicating their love. The Mother of Mercy has consistently, through the history of the New Covenant, come to us with messages that are meant to remind us, caution us, encourage us, just as the prophets of the Old Testament who were God's messengers.

We can find countless testimonies of visits from Mary. Even some taking place in our own country!

Some of these visits are very famous. One such is the visit of Our Lady to Juan Diego which we have come to know as Our Lady of Guadalupe. Occasionally, Our Lady leaves a permanent, tangible sign in order to increase the faith of believers.

**Did you know** you can visit the tilma of Juan Diego in Mexico upon which Our Lady left her image? Learn about the tilma by pasting the link below in your browser

### Watch:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ds7nD\\_QNeKA&ab\\_channel=vaticancatholic.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ds7nD_QNeKA&ab_channel=vaticancatholic.com)

# Advent—begins Sunday, November 29th—Happy New Year!

During the season of Advent, Jesus calls us to keep watch. As we watch and wait for the celebration of Christmas, the first coming of Jesus into the world, He tells us to remember that He will come again at the end of the age. He wishes us to live our lives each day according to the Law of Love so we will be prepared to greet him when He comes again because we do not know the day or the hour when He will return.

During Advent we reflect upon how well we are living the Law of Love, we ask God to forgive us for any wrongdoing and for his help to do better. We reach out to our family, friends and neighbors with kindness and love and we are mindful of those who are in need and we help them in ways that we can.

## Watch:

For families with younger children:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19WvDZQBxB&ab\\_channel=blissfulife225](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19WvDZQBxB&ab_channel=blissfulife225)

For families with older children:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S02KOlw7dIA&ab\\_channel=BustedHalo%C2%AE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S02KOlw7dIA&ab_channel=BustedHalo%C2%AE)

## We Pray as we light our Advent Wreath:

Celebrating the endless circle of God's care, we join together to light our Advent wreath in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 63:7 . "No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God but you doing such deeds for those who wait for him. Would that you might meet us doing right, that we were mindful of you in all of our ways!" As this wreath remains ever green and our Advent candles mark the weeks until the birth of Christ, nurture in us joyful hope and expectation. We pray this prayer through the name of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

(from The Blessing Cup: Prayer rituals for families and groups. Rock Travnika, O.F.M.)



Advent Wreath Coloring Page: <https://www.thecatholickid.com/advent-wreath-coloring-page/>

## *The Incarnation— and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1: 1-5

**We pray:** Dear Father in Heaven, Thank You for giving us the gift of Jesus, the greatest Christmas gift of all. Please help me to remember why we celebrate, even as we eat Christmas cookies and open presents. I am very thankful for the real reason for the season and, without Jesus, we wouldn't have Christmas! I love You and thank You for giving us this day! Amen. <https://gatheredagain.com/short-christmas-prayers-children>



Birth of Jesus word search:

<http://www.4catholiceducators.com/coloringclipart/Birth%20of%20Jesus%20Wordsearch.pdf>

Wise Men word search: <http://www.4catholiceducators.com/coloringclipart/Wise%20Men%20Wordsearch.pdf>

Christmas coloring pages: <http://www.bible-printables.com/Coloring-Pages/New-Testament/05-jesus-birth-001.htm>; <http://www.bible-printables.com/Coloring-Pages/New-Testament/05-jesus-birth-002.htm>;

<http://www.bible-printables.com/Coloring-Pages/Christmas/classic-christmas/classic-christmas-012.htm>

Find more activities under [www.Bible-printables.com](http://www.Bible-printables.com)

## Family-A Community of Life and Love

Created by the Catechetical  
Office Family Catechesis  
Advisory Committee

### Members of the Committee:

Sr. Joan Curtin, C.N.D.  
Sr. Zelide Ceccagno, MSCS  
Sr. Mary Crucifix Pandullo, CSJB  
Mrs. Margaret Hoblin  
Mrs. Janan Lane  
Sr. Nancy Elizabeth Doran, SSC

### Contact and address:

Sr. Nancy Elizabeth Doran, S.S.C., Editor  
Director, Family Catechesis  
Catechetical Office  
1011 First Avenue  
New York, New York 10022  
Phone: 212-371-1000, X 2867

## Bits and Pieces—Resources to engage and inspire!



Be Inspired this Christmas and Encounter  
Christ in a New Way!

Join Advent of Hope, a free email program that will help prepare  
your heart to encounter Jesus on Christmas.

*Starting on November 29th, the first Sunday of Advent and ending on  
Christmas, December 25th, you will receive daily written reflections,  
inspirational videos and weekly Advent music performed by our  
Array of Hope Band - directly sent to your inbox!*

Let this Advent fill your heart with Hope!

Don't let another Christmas pass by without allowing  
Christ's love to change your heart.

Go to our website at [www.arrayofhope.net](http://www.arrayofhope.net) to

**SIGN UP TODAY!**

ARRAY OF HOPE  
AWAKENING HEARTS

**Advent Mission:** You are invited to a Virtual, Free "Fullfillment of All Desires" Advent Mission. Find out what it's all about.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Fe-7hcChVE&ab\\_channel=RenewalMinistries](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Fe-7hcChVE&ab_channel=RenewalMinistries)

### **Books for your spiritual reading pleasure:**

**For kids: Christmas with Bernadette** With Christmas approaching, Bernadette wants to give everyone gifts. But it's so hard with only the pocket change of a seven year old. And Mama's about to have a new baby, which is exciting, but seems to wear her out. Will everything at home at school smooth out to give Bernadette and her family a beautiful and blessed Christmas? **go to Formed.com. See instructions below**

**For Moms, Dads and Grandparents : Pope Francis on the Family—** Pope Francis has often expressed his concern for the urgent pastoral needs of families in today's society. Underscoring that deep love and concern for the family, the Pope has spent many months speaking on this subject in his weekly Wednesday audience talks. This book is a collection of all of those talks about the family from Dec. 17, 2014 to Sept. 16, 2015. **go to Formed.com. See instructions below.**

**Movies for the Family to watch together: Mary of Nazareth** - an epic motion picture telling the story of Mary, the Mother of Christ from her childhood to the Resurrection of Jesus. **go to Formed.com See instructions below**

**Formed Instructions:** go to Formed.com, click on "sign up." click on "sign up as parishioner" click on "find your parish" —by location or zip code. Click on top menu for your selection. "Movie Night" or "Books"

### **Article:**

Nine Great Ways for Children to Make Advent a Time for Waiting for Christmas—

[https://aleteia.org/cp1/2020/11/20/9-great-ways-for-children-to-make-advent-a-time-of-waiting-for-christmas/?utm\\_campaign=NL\\_en&utm\\_source=daily\\_newsletter&utm\\_medium=mail&utm\\_content=NL\\_en](https://aleteia.org/cp1/2020/11/20/9-great-ways-for-children-to-make-advent-a-time-of-waiting-for-christmas/?utm_campaign=NL_en&utm_source=daily_newsletter&utm_medium=mail&utm_content=NL_en)