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12/6: Memorial of Saint Nicholas, Bishop. †4th c.; bishop of Myra in Asia Minor; model pastor noted for charity; popularized as *Santa Claus* (anglicized from Dutch “Sinter Claus”); patron of children, bankers, pawnbrokers, sailors, perfumers, brides, unmarried women, travelers, fishermen, dock workers, brewers, poets, and prisoners; also of Russia, Greece, Sicily, Lorraine, and Apulia in Italy where his relics are enshrined in Bari.

12/8: *The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, holy day of obligation, masses at 9AM & 7PM.* Originating in the 7th c. feast of the “Conception of Mary by St. Anne,” Pope Clement XI, in his Bull, *Commissi Nobis*, established this Solemnity for the entire Church in 1708; patroness of the United States of America, Spain, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

12/9: Memorial of Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin. In 1531, Our Lady appeared 4 times to a native convert, Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin (meaning “the talking eagle”), at Tepeyac, near Mexico City. His cloak was said to be imprinted with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Bible Study for 12/04/16

Here, I hope, are some helpful guides to assist in reflecting upon and praying with this Sunday’s scripture passages...

Is 11: 1-10; i.e., Book of the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 11, verses 1 to 10.

Rom 15: 4-9; i.e., Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans, chapter 15, verses 4 to 9.

Mt 3: 1-12; i.e., the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 3, verses 1 to 12.

~ Can you find these passages in a Bible? Studying and praying with the Bible begins by knowing how to find your way around the Bible.

Is 11: 1-10

Who is Isaiah? A real person who lived around the end of the 7th c. beginning of the 8th c. BCE.

What’s a prophet? In the Bible it has nothing to do with telling the future. A prophet is God’s ‘mouth-piece,’ calling all to be mindful and remember God’s ways at all times, especially in difficult times, when we’re tempted to ‘cut corners.’ What is Isaiah calling for today?

Rom 15: 4-9

As with all his letters, St. Paul wrote this one with an entire community in mind, not just 1 or 2 people. It’s addressed to the Church at Rome and was written about 30 yrs. after the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. What advice is Paul giving the community? How is he calling them to live? Why do you think he is giving this advice? Could it be there were problems between members of the community? How does Paul call them to resolve their differences? Is this good advice for Christians today? How do you resolve problems in your various communities; e.g., with your family, in your social circles, at church, at work, at school? Who or what is a Gentile? What is Paul teaching about the group’s exclusivity or, non-exclusivity? Are there equivalents today to the Gentiles of Paul’s time? Who are they? How are Christians called to deal with them?



The Peaceable Kingdom

The Peaceable Kingdom, above, is a painting by an American folk painter and minister of the Society of Friends, aka Quakers, Edward Hicks. It’s partly based on imagery taken from the passage we have this weekend from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, *Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid [young goat]; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them...*

For anyone who’s watched wildlife documentaries, especially during Shark Week, you know that Isaiah’s poetic imagery and Hicks’s famous painting are not based on reality as we know it. Wolves and leopards eat lambs and kids.





Mt 3: 1-12

Written about 50 years after Jesus' Death and Resurrection, the Gospel of Matthew was authored by someone whom scholars believe was a Jewish convert to the Christian faith, maybe even a rabbi. Because of the 'cycle' of readings we're in now, Year A, we will be hearing many Gospel passages from Matthew at mass. Try to read through it before the end of the year; it's not that long and you'll gain much from immersing yourself in it.

At some of the more significant times on the Church's calendar, we are given Gospel passages which feature John the Baptist; a sure sign to us that he is a very important person in the Bible. What do we know about John the Baptist? Who is he? Why is he such an important piece of the Jesus puzzle? From the Bible itself, we know a lot about John the Baptist. He was Jesus' cousin on their mothers' side of the family. John was older than Jesus by about 6 months. Can you locate the evidence for these facts in the Bible?

John began publicly ministering to others before Jesus and had a group of his own disciples, in fact, some scholars think that Jesus himself might've been one of John's disciples before going off on his own. Do you think that could be possible? Why?

John was given the title, *Baptist*, because he baptized many people in the River Jordan. John did not 'invent' the ritual called Baptism; the Jews, of whom John was one, already had a religious ritual similar to Baptism. From the Bible we also know that John baptized Jesus in the River Jordan. Can you locate that passage?

Who are the Pharisees and Sadducees? What does John mean when he says, *Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'?* Is John's teaching to the religious people of his time similar to the teaching that Saint Paul is trying to communicate to the Church in Rome? Do only Pharisees and Sadducees fall victim to a sense of entitlement on the basis of religion or devotion? Is that a temptation for religious people today?

Only in the movies do lions eat hay, and no parent in his or her right mind would allow their baby to play by a cobra's den, or lay their hand on an adder's lair. It's what my English teacher would say is *hyperbole*; language and imagery that is so over-the-top and unrealistic, used deliberately to communicate an extreme condition, radical idea, or profound reality. Everyone knows that cats and dogs don't fall from clouds, but sometimes rain can be so extreme that to merely say, *It's raining*, doesn't adequately describe how bad it is outside. Ultimately, what Isaiah envisions is a world so deeply reconciled that even in nature the instinctual line between predator and prey is erased, no more. Hunter and hunted living together in peace. Is that a realistic vision? Probably not. But what is realistic and well within our power to bring about, is reconciliation with one another and all others, and that is what matters the most, hence Isaiah's use of hyperbole; because God knows, wolves and leopards, lions and bears, cobras and lambs don't run the world. We do.

Where there is strife and discord, Christians, especially, are called to exercise the power all people possess to initiate, if not effect, reconciliation. To not do so is to be an enabler of evil, whether it is through our actions or lack of action; through our words or our silences.

Jesus is the reason for the season. In Christmas, God is reconciled with (hu)man. And man must take that power to reconcile and make it the foundation of our societies and cultures. Without reconciliation, there will be no peace on earth.

NRM

Welcome to the Body of Christ!

Brianna Moreno and Ivan Moreno, with their parents and godparents.



Novena of Masses For Month of December

For:	By:
Eugene Salati	Salati Family
Bernadette M. Berger	Georgene & Fr.Vic
Martin Parreno	Family
Rosemary Pelle	Mom
Benjamin Morales	Jackie O'Donnell
Roselyn Juchnewich	Jackie O'Donnell
John Norton	Jackie O'Donnell
Kenneth Krieger	Sadie & Joy Krieger
Alexander Aitken	Georgene DeBenedetto
McAlinden & Lang Families	Family
Anthony Guarini	Sheehan Family
Frank Sheehan	Family
John & Kitty Garvey	Sheehan Family

Schedule of Masses December 5th-11th, 2016			
Day	Time	For:	By:
Mon 12/5	9 AM	Novena	People of the Parish
Tues 12/6	9 AM	Novena	People of the Parish
Wed 12/7	9 AM	Novena	People of the Parish
	7 PM	Mary Bakerowski	Joy Jaworowski & Tom Noonan
Thurs 12/8	9 AM	Novena	People of the Parish
Fri 12/9	9 AM	Novena	People of the Parish
Sat 12/10	9 AM	Christina Burke	Fr. Nigel
	5:30 PM	Angel Ortiz	Wife & Children
	7 PM	Alicia Alzate	Family
Sun 12/11	8 AM	Christina Burke	Fr. Nigel
	10 AM	Vito & Giovanna Manzi	Mr. & Mrs. Gerardo Manzi
	12 PM	Dolores Becker	Husband, Louis Becker

 Sanctuary Gifts December 4th-10th, 2016 		
Gift	In Memory of	Requested By
Altar Wine	Alex Lotosky	Parish Intention
Altar Bread	Carol A. Romaine	Parish Intention
Sanctuary Lamp	Ambrogio Parisi	Parish Intention
Altar Candles	Edward Coari	Parish Intention

LET US PRAY FOR THE SICK 

AnnMarie Williams, Constance Czegular, Rosemary Perduto, Juliet Nawrocki, Doreen Busacca, Kathleen Link, Orlando Basile, Marie Carlson, Patricia Kucinski, Frank McNamara, Jennifer O'Connor, Donna Tuzzo, Matt Bolger, Lawrence Shin, Lupe Pena, Frances Kearns, Josephine Cermak Rowan, Steve & Rachel Mastin, Diane Shea, Joseph Callandrillo, Humberto Quintana, Javier Vega, Jennifer Moloughney, Antoinette Maddi, Carol Jordan, Anthony Biggio, Sammy DeLeon, Shane Quinn, Alice Daly, Sadie Krieger, Dianne O'Sullivan, Carl Carlson, Larry Bello, Miyuki Campbell, Diane Albert, Meghan Connaughton.



The Giving Tree will be placed in the Church vestibule on the First Sunday of Advent - November 27th.

(Beginning with the 5:30 pm anticipated Mass on Saturday, Nov. 26th)

Please take a tag from the tree, purchase the gift(s), wrap gift, attach tag to gift and drop off at the Church or Rectory by Dec. 12th.

All gifts are requested to be gift-wrapped with the original tag attached.

 Thank you! 

Growing in FAITH

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

Special Advent Issue 2016

Advent - Peace in a time of frenzy

Advent is a peaceful and reflective time. A time to prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of our Savior. So, how can a sensible Catholic spiritually prepare for the coming of Jesus amidst the frenzy and bright lights of the holiday season? According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: "Catholicism does not call us to abandon the world, but to help shape it. This does not mean leaving worldly tasks and responsibilities, but transforming them."

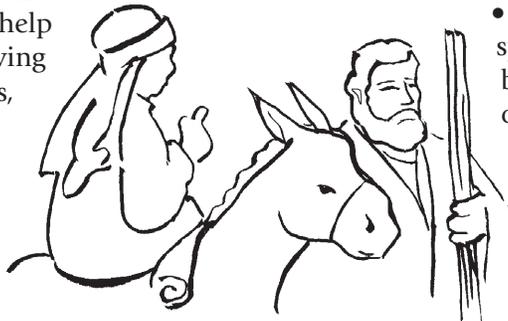
Try these tips for "transforming" worldly holiday tasks into acts of prayer, penance, and almsgiving:

Shopping & gift-giving

- Giving handmade gifts is a way to show our love and honor the artisans who make them at the same time. Good sources are craft fairs in your community that feature goods by local artists where you can find everything from wooden toys to hand-knitted scarves and socks.



- "Fair-Trade" import stores offer one-of-a-kind gifts from around the world. (See www.fairtradefederation.org.) Plus, when you do your shopping away from the mall and the large retailers, your gift-giving dollars support good causes and the artisans



who made the things you choose.

- If somebody on your list 'has everything', think about making a donation to a good cause in their name. For example, a good idea for a teacher's gift would be a contribution to a program that supports literacy. Follow with a card stating your intention.



- Give spiritual bouquets by offering a rosary (or more) for people on your gift list. Make cards that detail your thoughtful gift. If you prayed for a particular intention, be sure to include that in your card.

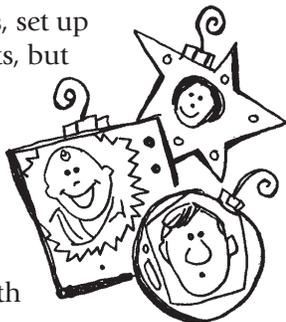
- Include in your Christmas cards a note about all the blessings you have received this year. Not only will your friends and family enjoy reading about your good news, your card will be a testament to God's loving care.



Tree trimming and decorating

- The ideal practice would be to hold off decorating for Christmas until Christmas Eve, but that isn't always practical. Instead, decorate your home and your tree when you have time, but don't light the tree till Christmas Eve. That's one way to signify the coming of the "light of the world."

- Or, to increase the excitement and anticipation of Christmas, set up your tree, put on the lights, but don't decorate it. Instead, add one ornament a day throughout Advent. On Christmas Eve, add the rest and light the tree on Christmas morning. Step back and be delighted with your handiwork.



- Set up your nativity scene but leave out the Holy Family. Put Joseph, Mary and Jesus in their places on Christmas Eve and add the Baby the next morning.

Housekeeping

- While you clean house in preparation for the holidays, make an examination of conscience. Advent is exactly the right time to reflect on the ways that we have failed to honor God or each other and to decide to start fresh. First make a heartfelt confession. Reconciliation will let you greet Christmas with a heart full of peace and joy.



- As you spruce things up around the house, look for ways to repair relationships. Remember, we are called to love and kindness — and not just to our favorite people. *“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”* (John 13:35).

- While you are cleaning out closets or sorting laundry, make a phone call to someone you haven't seen in a while.
- When running errands, take the time to visit someone who is alone. Such small acts of love take only a moment, but the warm memory lasts a long time.



- After going through your closets and cleaning out the clutter in your home, pick a bad habit you would like to kick and resolve to do it during Advent. Avoid overeating, quit smoking, stop gossiping, resolve to always tell

the truth, or promise to use gentle, non-violent language. Offer your sacrifice as a birthday gift to the Savior at Christmas.

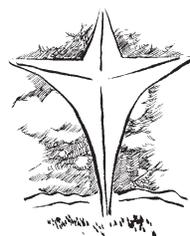
Parties

- Transform a holiday get-together into an occasion for charity and helping others. Suggest each guest bring a child's toy to the party, and take responsibility for getting them to "Toys for Tots" or another charity that helps needy families have a joyful Christmas. Bonus: for many grown-ups without children, the chance to choose something they know will light up a kid's life is fun.



- Put out a large punch bowl or salad bowl and ask for donations for your favorite charity. People in a festive mood will feel generous toward those without such opportunities.
- Instead of automatically buying a new outfit for a holiday party, spruce up something you already have and put the money you saved in the poor box at church.
- Pick one Sunday and host an Advent celebration. Light an Advent wreath with your guests and play music with lyrics about waiting, patience, hope, or other themes of Advent.

Don't forget to make time during Advent for quiet prayer and reflection. The graces you receive from the time you spend with God will be your gift for Christmas.



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