

December 5, 2021



2nd

SUNDAY OF ADVENT

A voice of one crying out in the desert:

*"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths."*

- Lk 3:4

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Tues.–Fri. 7:30 a.m. Mass • Sat. 3–4 p.m. Confessions & 4:30 p.m. Mass • Sunday 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. Mass & 11:45 a.m.–4 p.m. Adoration

MASS INTENTIONS

December 5, 2nd Sunday of Advent

8:30 a.m. Holy Spirit community

10:30 a.m. Deacon Lane

December 6, St. Nicholas

December 7, St. Ambrose

7:30 a.m. Single parents

December 8, Immaculate Conception of the Bl. Virgin Mary

7:30 a.m. Marian orders

8:30 a.m. Holy Spirit students

(students only)

7 p.m. Priests & deacons

December 9, St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin

7:30 a.m. Women religious

December 10, Our Lady of Loreto

7:30 a.m. Pope Francis

December 11, St. Damasus I

4:30 p.m. Rose Sikont†

Patricia Coleman†



NEXT SUNDAY: SECOND COLLECTION

Elderly religious need your help. Thousands of senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests served for years in Catholic schools, hospitals, and parishes—often for little to no pay. Now, many religious communities do not have enough retirement savings and struggle to provide for aging members.

Give in gratitude. A donor to the Retirement Fund for Religious writes, “I still remember the lessons the sisters gave us and how they instilled in us the love of our faith.” Show your thanks for the prayerful service of elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. Your gift to next week’s second collection helps provide care, medicine, and more.



This Week's Events

Join the quilters on **Thursday, Dec. 9 at 12:30 p.m.** in Howley Hall. Help us make lap quilts for those in need. No experience is necessary. Use the accessible entrance to Howley Hall. Hope to see you there!

Our Advent penance service is on **Thursday, Dec. 9 at 7 p.m.** in the church. Priests will be available to hear individual confessions.

We're glad to have you in our community!

Please return your Online Giving form by dropping it in the collection basket or at the parish office by Wednesday, Dec. 8.

Visit holy-spirit.org/stewardship for more information.



- TODAY'S READINGS -

First Reading

For God will show all the earth your splendor: you will be named by God forever the peace of justice, the glory of God's worship. (Bar 5:4)

Psalm

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy. (Ps 126)

Second Reading

And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ. (Phil 1:9-10)

Gospel

The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. (Mk 7:37)

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LIVE THE LITURGY

Sometimes, especially when life gets overwhelming and difficult, we can find ourselves feeling a bit downhearted and miserable. Wallowing in this uncomfortable darkness seems to be our norm and it's difficult to see a way out of, or through, this experience. If we listen carefully enough, we will hear God's voice calling out deep within, beckoning us to seek out its source and discover the inner calm and peace that can prevail over the darkness of despair. Faith tells us that God has already begun the creation of a good work in us and is with us, bringing it to completion, until Christ Jesus comes again. It is this light of God's glory for which we are asked to pave the way and straighten the paths of our lives so that it can shine. With all that life can ask of us and bring to us, it is our task to constantly discern what is of value. So that we do not get so weighed down by things that we no longer see, or feel, God's salvation.



Join our community in congratulating Deacon Lane on his ordination to the permanent diaconate!

Receptions in Howley Hall will follow all Masses this weekend.

Men's Club Tree Lot

Prices range from \$45-\$70 for trees up to 7 ft. and \$90 for trees up to 10 ft. Wreaths and garland range from \$30-\$90.

The lot is open Wednesday-Friday from 2-8 p.m. and Saturday-Sunday from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. in the church parking lot until items are sold out.

THE GIVING TREE

Holy Spirit parish youth are sponsoring a Christmas Giving Tree to benefit the children at Mary's Place and the Naomi Family Center in St. Paul.

Look for the Giving Tree at the Randolph Avenue entrance of the church and at the entrance to the school. Simply choose an ornament and return a **new, unwrapped** gift to the gift box by Sunday, Dec. 19.

Thank you for supporting our youth!



AROUND THE ARCHDIOCESE

Christmas at the Monastery December 6-11, Virtual Event

Our 14th annual Christmas at the Monastery is an online gala this year. Join us for a social hour with the Sisters, an online auction and marketplace, and a raffle! Please visit stpaulsmonastery.org/christmas2021 to participate.

Cuppa Joe: Terror of Demons Dec. 7, 4 p.m., Virtual Event

In this Year of Saint Joseph, join Fr. Jon Vander Ploeg as he explores this amazing saint in his title as Terror of Demons. This is part of the Cuppa Joe series: 10 talks by 10 theologians on the 10 wonders of Saint Joseph, taking place at 10 locations in our Archdiocese entrusted to the patronage of our spiritual father. The talks come just in time for your afternoon coffee. All talks are posted on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram – and at archspm.org/cuppajoe.

Catholic Charities Warming House Dec. 10-11

Mall of America North Parking Lot, Bloomington

The Catholic Charities Warming House is a free, outdoor, holiday event bringing together the entire Twin Cities community for a fun, festive holiday experience. Enjoy food trucks, hot drinks, winter crafts and activities, holiday displays, speed volunteering and more, all while learning about Catholic Charities and the men, women, children and families we serve. The event includes our annual Giving Tree tradition—bring your new, unused and unwrapped items for your neighbors! Visit cctwincities.org for more details.

Discussion on Assisted Suicide Dec. 13, 7 p.m.

Nativity of our Lord, St. Paul

Please attend this discussion on assisted suicide with Lynn Varco of the Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC). There will be a screening of the short film "Fatal Flaws" about the harms of euthanasia and assisted suicide followed by a brief discussion of efforts to support compassionate alternatives to assisted suicide and how people can take action on this issue via EthicalCareMN.org.

Cathedral Festival of Lights Dec. 15-19, Cathedral of Saint Paul

The Cathedral Heritage Foundation brings back the Cathedral Festival of Lights with a major expansion. The CHF presents both an indoor and outdoor Christmas light shows, *Starry Night*, and *The Beginning*, along with an outdoor market. The outdoor show is free. Purchase tickets for the indoor event, *Starry Night*, at eventbrite.com for \$15-\$40. Visit cathedralheritagefoundation.org for more information.

God's Personal Assistants

If you have ever planned a large-scale event, whether it's a musical performance or a religious conference, you may have dealt with someone's personal assistant. Possibly this person would be a representative of the keynote speaker or the master of ceremonies for the local bishop; perhaps it's even the staffer of a local politician or the lackey of a well-known musical act.

Personal assistants are masters of stewardship—overseeing things in their boss' absence. They prepare the way. This person's job is to get everything ready for the person in charge, so that when he or she shows up—whatever he or she is—it's smooth sailing for them to do whatever it is they need to do: sing, speak, pray, mingle, what-have-you. It's usually a big job full of little things, a gig where attention to detail is key.

God is the guest of honor in our life, the keynote speaker, the main event. And what He wants—what He needs—to do is to change our hearts. Constantly, over, and over, and over again.

We are all His personal assistants in this endeavor. We need to prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight His paths. We need to make everything ready so that when He shows up—however He shows up, whether it's in the form of a neighbor in need or a burning bush right in front of us—everything is ready for Him to do His job.

—Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

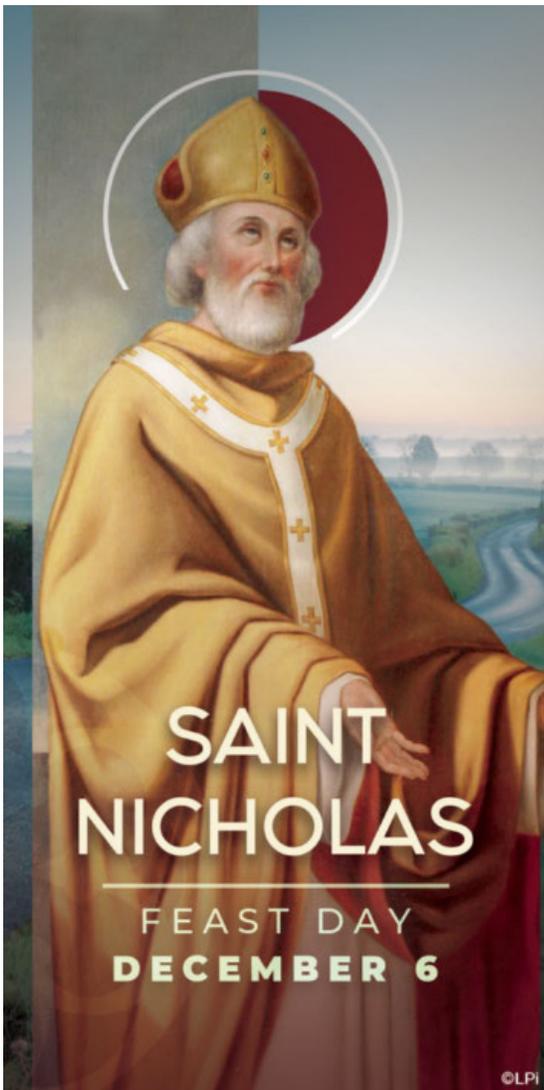


St. Nicholas | Feast Day December 6

St. Nicholas of Bari (March 15, 270 – December 6, 343), the bishop of Myra in the fourth century, is the saint that Santa Claus is modeled after. Known for his kindness and generosity to the poor, the story has it that St. Nicholas once tossed bags of gold through the open window of a poor man's house to help his daughters avoid a life of prostitution.

According to legend, the gold landed in stockings dangling on the corners of the beds, which is why many of us celebrate St. Nicholas Day by hanging stockings and filling them with candy, fruit, and small toys.

Not much else is known about this beloved saint, but regardless, his reputation as a generous man continues today.



- Gospel Meditation -

St. Ambrose shares some wisdom on our need to prepare the way and open the door for Christ. "You see that when the Word of God knocks hardest on your door,



it is when his hair is wet with the dew of the night. In fact, he chooses to visit those who are in tribulation and trial, lest one of them be overwhelmed by distress. So, his head is covered with dew, with drops, when his body is laboring hard. It is important to keep watch so that when the Bridegroom comes, he is not shut out. If you are asleep and your heart is not keeping watch, he will go away without knocking; but if your heart is alert for his coming, he knocks and asks for the door to be opened to him." When life gets overwhelming and difficult and we find ourselves feeling a bit downhearted and miserable, these words can bring great comfort.

We sometimes choose to remain stuck in our uncomfortable darkness and being stuck becomes our norm. In this time of self-focus our hearts are closed to the graces and life God desires to give us. Wrapped in the robe of mourning and misery, we fail to see the mercy, justice, and love the Bridegroom wants to bring. If we take seriously the need to prepare the way for Christ and open our hearts in preparation for his visit, we can hear God's gentle voice calling us deep within. It beckons us to seek out its source and discover the inner calm and peace that can prevail over the darkness of despair. Sometimes our darkness is so dark that it may seem unsurmountable. Trusting in the spiritual friends who journey with us, and God's promise may bring a glimmer of light even when it is most difficult to keep our hearts' doors open. Sometimes, the only light in the darkness is found in trusting the faith of others both past and present.

We have to trust that God has already begun the accomplishment of good work in us and that humanity is on an incredible journey to something wonderful and awesome. God is not done. When we open the doors of our hearts, straighten the paths of our lives, and prepare the way, Jesus can come with God's simple gifts of peace, grace, and joy. Life throws a great deal at us. It is easy to get tired and confused. We have to train our hearts to keep watch, discern what is of value, and forge ahead. Not allowing ourselves to become so weighed down by things and brought out of focus is a tremendous goal to achieve this Advent season. God is knocking. Answer the door. You will see and understand life in ways you never thought possible before.

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