

Church of St. Theresa

A Caring Community Reaching Out To One Another in Christ

2855 St. Theresa Avenue, Bronx, New York

SUNDAY MASSES

Saturday at 5:00pm,
Sunday at 7:30am, 9:00am(Italian),
10:30am(Family Mass) 12:15pm ,
1:30PM(Spanish) & 5:00pm

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday thru Saturday 8:00am & 9:00am

DEVOTIONS

Miraculous Medal & St. Theresa
Novenas after Monday morning Masses
St. Anthony Novena after Tuesday
morning Masses.

Thursday 12 Noon Mass
& Eucharistic Adoration

Exposition & Benediction of the
Blessed Sacrament First Friday 6:00PM

CONFESSION

Saturdays from 4:00pm to 5:00pm
and by appointment

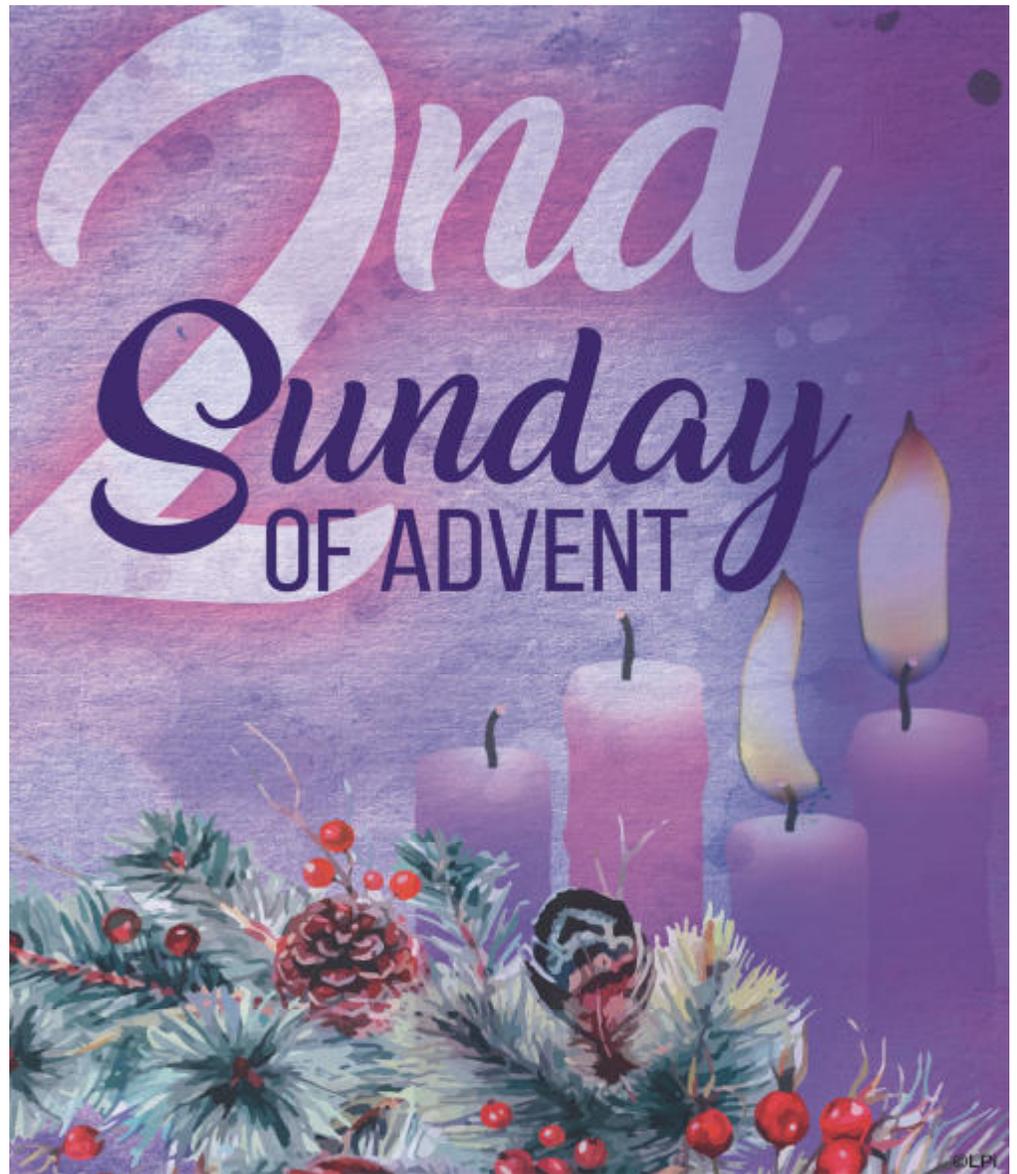
BAPTISMS

Baptisms take place most Sundays
after the 1:30pm Mass.
We ask parents to attend the Baptism
preparation meeting. Register at the
Rectory for the meeting.
The date of the Baptism will be discussed
at the Baptism meeting.

MARRIAGES

Call the Rectory at least six months in
advance of the wedding date to make an
appointment with parish clergy.

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"ST. THERESA STRONG"



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CHURCH OF ST. THERESA, BRONX

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER DERIVAN

We hear a voice in the gospel today, a voice of a man of long ago, but a voice which still rings true for us here and now as we observe this Holy Season of Advent. The voice is the voice of a prophet, the most important prophet, the one whom God sent to prepare the way for His Son, the one of whom Jesus said that there was no greater man born of woman, the one who strongly corrected the powerful of his day, but who still had the humility of saying that he was not even worthy to loosen the strap of Jesus' sandal. It is the voice of St. John the Baptist, the voice of one, as the gospel says, crying out in the desert, proclaiming then and now, "Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight his path."

The message of St. John the Baptist is simple: "Prepare." That is what Advent is all about—preparing. But we must take care. What kind of preparing must we do? If we were to ask many people, their preparing is only for things—things like buying presents, putting decorations, or other material things. Needless to say, that is not the kind of preparing that St. John the Baptist is talking about. He is talking about spiritually preparing, preparing not for things but for a person, preparing our hearts and our lives for the One who is to come, namely Jesus the Lord.

Advent is about preparing. That is the way it was in the first Advent as Mary and Joseph prepared to travel to Bethlehem. And so it was on another Advent almost five hundred years ago in 1531 in Mexico at Guadalupe. A humble Indian man, Juan Diego, was on his way to Saturday morning Mass. As he crossed the hill of Tepeyac, he heard beautiful music and then he saw a lady, dressed in the pink robe of an Indian princess with a blue mantle over her head. She called to Juan, calling him, "My little son," and without fear, without hesitation he obeyed. The Lady identified herself, "I am the perpetual ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus, the true God, through whom everything lives, the Master of heaven and earth." And she told him not to be afraid, saying, "Let nothing disturb you. Am I not here, I who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Are you not in the folds of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else you need?" Our Blessed Mother told this simple peasant man and, through him, told us, "I am your merciful Mother, the Mother of all of all mankind, of all those who love me and seek me and have confidence in me. I hear their sorrow and I will alleviate their pain." There is a mother speaking to a son she loves, to all of us whom she loves. Our Lady directed Juan to go to the bishop of Mexico City and ask him to build a shrine on that spot so that many people in that pagan land would come to worship Jesus her Son. Juan obeyed, but the bishop hesitated. He asked for a sign. At first Juan was worried that he had disappointed Our Lady but she understood. She told him to pick roses on the top of the hill, blooming in December. He brought them to her and she arranged them in his tilma or cloak. She told him to hold the cloak up until he was in the presence of the bishop. Juan went to the bishop and told him that Our Lady had given the sign. He unfurled his cloak to let the roses fall down. But then he saw the bishop and the others with him kneel down, gazing not at the roses but at the tilma of Juan Diego. For there on that tilma Our Lady had placed the image of herself, just as she appeared to Juan. A copy of that picture or Image as it is called is normally enshrined in our church to the right wall as you enter. But as we prepare for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Saturday, it is placed next to the altar, symbolizing Our Blessed Mother leading us to the altar, always bringing us to Jesus her Son. Our Lady stands in front of the sun, to show that she is not the sunlight; Jesus her Son is. She wears around her waist a black belt, worn by a pregnant woman, to show that she carried the unborn Jesus in her womb, as she did in the first Advent. And she stands on the moon, a symbol of the pagan gods of Mexico, to show that she had come to crush the power of evil and to bring all people to the love of Jesus her Son.

Remember Our Blessed Mother appeared at Guadalupe during the Advent time. It was as if she were saying to Juan Diego and to us the same words that St. John the Baptist proclaimed, "Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his path." Both St. John the Baptist and Our Blessed Mother Mary invite us to use Advent well, not to let Advent go by without letting it spiritually help us. Advent should change us, change us for the better, and help us to be better prayers, better helpers, better family members, on our way to Christmas and to Christ.

We can truly say that Mary and John the Baptist were Advent people. For that matter, all the saints were Advent people. And so must we be, all of us Advent people, preparing the way of the Lord, making straight His path.

Father Thomas B. Derivan

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE



This Saturday, December 12th, is the Feast of Our Blessed Mother Mary's appearance at Guadalupe in Mexico.

We are blessed to have in our church a copy of the beautiful picture (or Image as it is called) of Our Blessed Mother Mary as she appeared to St. Juan Diego. Usually that Image is on the side wall. You will see that it is placed next to the altar beginning today and until the Feast itself on Saturday. Having it next to the altar is a visible reminder that Our Blessed Mother Mary always brings us to the altar, to Jesus her Son.

This year, because of the Covid restrictions, we will not be able to celebrate the Feast as we have in past years. We will have the following Masses:

6:00AM - Mass in Spanish
8:00AM and 9:00AM Regular English Masses

We will also honor Our Lady at this Saturday's evening Mass at 5:00PM.

Our Lady of Guadalupe was declared by Pope St. John Paul II as **the Mother of the Americas**. May we always put our trust in her to lead us closer to Jesus her Son.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II's PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE



O Immaculate Virgin, Mother of the true God and Mother of the Church!, who from this place reveal your clemency and your pity to all those who ask for your protection, hear the prayer that we address to you with filial trust, and present it to your Son Jesus, our sole Redeemer.

Mother of Mercy, Teacher of hidden and silent sacrifice, to you, who come to meet us sinners, we dedicate on this day all our being and all our love. We also dedicate to you our life, our work, our joys, our infirmities and our sorrows. Grant peace, justice and prosperity to our peoples; for we entrust to your care all that we have and all that we are, our Lady and Mother. We wish to be entirely yours and to walk with you along the way of complete faithfulness to Jesus Christ in His Church; hold us always with your loving hand.

Virgin of Guadalupe, Mother of the Americas, we pray to you for all the Bishops, that they may lead the faithful along paths of intense Christian life, of love and humble service of God and souls. Contemplate this immense harvest, and intercede with the Lord that He may instill a hunger for holiness in the whole people of God, and grant abundant vocations of priests and religious, strong in the faith and zealous dispensers of God's mysteries.

Grant to our homes the grace of loving and respecting life in its beginnings, with the same love with which you conceived in your womb the life of the Son of God. Blessed Virgin Mary, protect our families, so that they may always be united, and bless the upbringing of our children.

Our hope, look upon us with compassion, teach us to go continually to Jesus and, if we fall, help us to rise again, to return to Him, by means of the confession of our faults and sins in the Sacrament of Penance, which gives peace to the soul.

We beg you to grant us a great love for all the holy Sacraments, which are, as it were, the signs that your Son left us on earth.

Thus, Most Holy Mother, with the peace of God in our conscience, with our hearts free from evil and hatred, we will be able to bring to all true joy and true peace, which come to us from your son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE



The Blessed Virgin Mary revealed herself to St. Juan Diego in several appearances in 1531 at Guadalupe near Mexico City in Mexico, and since then she has been called "Our Lady of Guadalupe." A simple working man, a convert to the Catholic faith, Juan Diego saw an apparition of the Blessed Virgin on the Hill of Tepeyac on December 9, 1531, the feast day of the Immaculate Conception in the Spanish Empire during that time. After a request to prove her identity, Our Lady asked Juan Diego to gather roses (which were neither native to the area or in season) that were growing on the hill and take them to the archbishop. Juan Diego did so and placed the roses in his tilma (or cloak). Upon opening the tilma to reveal the miraculous roses to the archbishop, instead there was something even more miraculous present in the tilma—an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary as she appeared to Juan Diego.

In the image Our Lady wears traditional Aztec garments of royalty and a black sash around her waist, which indicated pregnancy in the Aztec culture to which she was revealed. A mass conversion of millions of Aztecs to the Christian faith soon followed, ending the human sacrifices, especially child sacrifices, that they practiced. A church was built on the Hill of Tepeyac to mark the apparition site and today it is one of the most famous Catholic pilgrimage sites in the world. In this cathedral on display is the original tilma of Juan Diego that still displays the miraculous Our Lady of Guadalupe image. The image has been subjected to scientific testing to prove its miraculous authenticity.

Our Lady of Guadalupe was proclaimed by Pope St. John Paul II as Mother of the Americas. She is also honored as the patroness of the unborn. The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is December 12th.

Juan Diego was canonized in 2002 by Pope St. John Paul II. The pope praised St. Juan Diego for his simple faith as a model of humility for all of us:

"Happy Juan Diego, true and faithful man! We entrust to you our lay brothers and sisters so that, feeling the call to holiness, they may imbue every area of social life with the spirit of the Gospel. Bless families, strengthen spouses in their marriage, sustain the efforts of parents to give their children a Christian upbringing. Look with favor upon the pain of those who are suffering in body or in spirit, on those afflicted by poverty, loneliness, marginalization, or ignorance." The feast day of St. John Diego is December 9th.

HANDICAP ENTRANCE TO THE CHURCH

The side entrance to the Church on Pilgrim Avenue will be open every Sunday for anyone who is handicapped or in a wheelchair. Also this same entrance will be opened every weekday until 9:30AM.

CONFESSIONS are heard every Saturday from 4:00PM to 5:00PM or by appointment in the Rectory.

DECEMBER 6, 2020

MESSAGE OF OUR HOLY FATHER POPE FRANCIS FOR THIS SUNDAY

Last Sunday we began Advent with the call to be vigilant; today, the Second Sunday of this season of preparation for Christmas, the liturgy indicates to us its proper content: it is a time to recognize the *shortcomings* in our life, to *smooth out the roughness* of pride and to make room for Jesus who comes.

The Prophet Isaiah addresses the people, proclaiming the end of the Exile in Babylon and the return to Jerusalem. He prophesies: “A voice cries: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord... Every valley shall be lifted up’” (40:3-4). The valleys to be lifted up represent all the shortcomings of our behavior before God, all our sins of omission. One shortcoming in our life could be the fact that we do not pray or that we pray little. Advent is thus a favorable time to pray with greater intensity, to reserve to the spiritual life the important place it deserves. Another shortcoming could be a lack of charity for our neighbor, above all toward people most in need of help, not only material, but also spiritual. We are called to be more attentive, closer, to the needs of others. Like John the Baptist, in this way we can open the ways of hope in the desert of the barren hearts of many people.

“Every mountain and hill shall be made low” (cf. v. 4), Isaiah again exhorts. The mountains and hills that must be made low are pride, arrogance, insolence. Where there is pride, where there is insolence, where there is arrogance, the Lord cannot enter because that heart is full of pride, of insolence, of arrogance. For this reason, we must allay this pride. We must take on attitudes of meekness and humility, without reproach, to listen, to speak with meekness and thus to prepare for the coming of our Savior, He who is meek and humble of heart (cf. Mt 11:29). Then we are asked to eliminate all obstacles that we put against our union with the Lord: “the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed” — says Isaiah — “and all flesh shall see it together” (40:4-5). These actions, however, must be performed with joy, because they are designed in preparation for the coming of Jesus. At home, when we await the visit of a dear person, we prepare everything with care and gladness. In the same way, we want to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord: to await him each day attentively, so as to be filled by his grace when he comes.

The Savior whom we await is able to transform our life with his grace, with the power of the Holy Spirit, with the power of love. The Holy Spirit, in fact, infuses our hearts with God’s love, the inexhaustible source of purification, of new life and freedom. The Virgin Mary fully lived this reality, allowing herself to be ‘baptized’ by the Holy Spirit who inundated her with his power. May she, who prepared for the coming of Christ with the totality of her existence, help us to follow her example and may she guide our steps to the coming Lord.

(Angelus Message, December 10, 2017)

THE ADVENT WREATH - A CHRISTIAN CUSTOM

Some 15 or 20 years ago, families who wanted to have an Advent Wreath at home often had a hard time finding one. Some towns offered religious goods stores. Or, you could try buying by mail (and closer to the present, online).

But now? Often you find Advent Wreath Candles in specific boxes or among the general rows of single candles sold open stock at the corner drug store, the supermarket candle aisle, and definitely in specialty stores. In the latter, more “high end” shops, other accessories are also available:

- Candles, three purple (or berry blue) and one pink candle - packaged.
- A wreath “frame” of some kind from glass candle holders to basic metals with boughs green enough to look like Coniferous branches. All the way up to brass and other significant metals.
- Bows - generally purple (and interchangeable with red or white, to move right into the Christmas season).
- Candle snuffers - with longer wooden matches, both definitely looking to ritual use on a regular basis.

In the religious goods stores, you could find prayer wreath booklets perhaps even small little books dealing with Advent Wreath customs in Christians homes. Not to mention, of course, the wreath itself and all the accessories.

Shopping for this now popular Advent prayer tool, Catholics are not alone in “last minute” shopping for Advent Wreaths. Often you will rub elbows with Lutheran, Methodist, or Episcopalian neighbors. Many churches use the Advent Wreath in services.

And, as in Roman Catholic parishes, the practice of using the Advent Wreath has expanded from the church into the home. There are many reasons.

- Trying to keep the Lord as the focus of Advent and Christmas, what better way than to bring home the Advent Wreath. It is an excellent way to help the whole family follow along and pray with the Church, marking the days and weeks of this holy season.
- When the family gathers for dinner, the Advent Wreath as table centerpiece invites prayer - a traditional time for prayer together.
- Finally, the Wreath’s presence in the house - whether as centerpiece in the dining room, or on the mantle - is a visual reminder that Christmas is not just another “holiday” season here.

Have you brought the Advent Wreath “home” to your house yet? Have you brought a small one to a loved one who may be a shut-in, something to tie them in with the parish and family celebration? If not, you may want to try it this year.

It can be said in most places that the Advent Wreath is “in” - as in very easy to find. And no longer expensive, either.

(From Franciscan Mission Associates)



FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



This Tuesday, December 8th, is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Mother Mary when we remember that she was conceived without original sin. It is a holy day of obligation. Our country is under the special patronage of the Immaculate Conception.

Our Masses on Tuesday will be at 8:00AM, 9:00AM & 12Noon.

There will also be a Vigil Mass for the Feast on Monday at 7:00PM.

ADVENT PRAYER

O God, Creator of the heavens and the earth, this holy season of Advent reminds us not only of our blessings, but of all the unfulfilled longings of our hearts. As we prepare to celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus, we turn to you in hope for the future, and we thank you for all of your goodness to us. During this season of anticipation, may we open our hearts to you and to one another, especially those most in need. This we ask in the name of Jesus, our Emmanuel. Amen



LOOKING AHEAD—OUR CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Soon, of course, we will be celebrating the beautiful Feast of the Birth of Our Savior. We want to review for you our schedule of Masses for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day so that you can properly prepare to celebrate this feast day. Remember that, above all, Christmas is a Feast Day, one which we celebrate at Mass with Our Lord Himself.

Of course our plans for this Christmas have to be changed because of the Covid 19 pandemic. We want to maintain safety for our parishioners and that is our paramount concern. As always, we follow the directives of New York State and our own Archdiocese.

Therefore, for this Christmas, our Christmas Eve schedule will be different. Cardinal Dolan has allowed parishes to begin the Christmas Eve Mass at 3:00PM. Therefore **our Christmas Eve Masses on Thursday, December 24th will be at:**

3:00PM

5:00PM

7:00PM

It will be necessary to give **tickets** to these Masses because we are not allowed to exceed the New York State permissible capacity for churches. We are distributing tickets to parishioners after our Masses on the next two Sundays and Saturday evenings. Please indicate to the young men in the vestibule which Mass you will attend and how many tickets you will need. Once we have reached capacity, we will not be able to distribute more tickets.

There will be **no Midnight Mass** this Christmas Eve.

It is unfortunate that we have to follow these procedures, but they are necessary for everyone's safety, as we are sure you agree.

Our schedule of Masses on Friday, Christmas Day follow our Sunday schedule: 7:30AM, 9:00AM(Italian), 10:30AM, 12:15PM, 1:30PM(Spanish) and 5:00PM



THE GIVING TREE CONTINUES



Our parish observes the beautiful custom of the Giving Tree. Throughout Advent the tree is placed near the statue of St. Joseph with tags on it. This year we are using Christmas Dove tags on the back of which there is a request for toys or other items. Gifts will be distributed in the name of St. Theresa Parish to the following charities:

***HOPE FOR US** a program started by Bronx college students to help children (particularly those affected by sickle cell anemia) who are in hospitals or other social service programs.

***HOPE CHILDREN** a program to help children in needy families and neighborhoods to enjoy Christmas presents.

***DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SPARKILL** to assist retired sisters in their infirmary. The Sparkill Sisters faithfully started our school and staffed it for many years.

Please take one of the "Christmas dove tags" and then bring your gift next week to Mass or the rectory during the week. This year, because of the pandemic, **all gifts must be enclosed in cellophane bags for safety.** You will find a bag attached to the Christmas dove tag which you pick up at the Giving Tree.

This can be a beautiful Advent project for the whole family.

We remind you that all gifts must be brought by next weekend.

Wedding Banns

II Michael Tufton & Priscilla Liriano



THIS WEEK'S ALTAR BREAD IS IN LOVING MEMORY
OF
JOSEPH SALERNO
LOVE, CARMELA & RALPH MARZELLA



PLEASE PRAY FOR THE RECENTLY DECEASED
MEMBER OF OUR PARISH AND HIS FAMILY
CHARLES BASILICATA



THE SANCTUARY LAMP BURNING NEAR THE
TABERNACLE THIS WEEK IS IN LOVING MEMORY
OF
JOSEPH SALERNO
LOVE, CARMELA & RALPH MARZELLA

ST. NICHOLAS—December 6th—(270-343)

The absence of the “hard facts” of history is not necessarily an obstacle to the popularity of saints, as the devotion to Saint Nicholas shows. Both the Eastern and Western churches honor him, and it is claimed that after the Blessed Virgin, he is the saint most pictured by Christian artists. And yet historically, we can pinpoint only the fact that Nicholas was the fourth-century bishop of Myra, a city in Lycia, a province of Asia Minor. As with many of the saints, however, we are able to capture the relationship which Nicholas had with God through the admiration which Christians have had for him—an admiration expressed in the colorful stories which have been told and retold through the centuries.

Perhaps the best-known story about Nicholas concerns his charity toward a poor man who was unable to provide dowries for his three daughters of marriageable age. Rather than see them forced into slavery, Nicholas secretly tossed a bag of gold through the poor man's window on three separate occasions, thus enabling the daughters to be married. Over the centuries, this particular legend evolved into the custom of gift-giving on the saint's feast. In the English-speaking countries, Saint Nicholas became, by a twist of the tongue, Santa Claus further expanding the example of generosity portrayed by this holy bishop. The critical eye of modern history makes us take a deeper look at the legends surrounding Saint Nicholas. But perhaps we can utilize the lesson taught by his legendary charity, look deeper at our approach to material goods in the Christmas season and seek ways to extend our sharing to those in real need.

St. Nicholas is the special saint of children and the patron saint of Albania and Greece

MASS INTENTIONS

SATURDAY DECEMBER 5, 2020

5:00PM Jose Manuel Pardo

SUNDAY DECEMBER 6, 2020

7:30AM John & Annie Sweeney

9:00AM Filippo LaFranca

10:30AM Michael Rocco

12:15PM Israel Lopez Ramos

1:30PM Juan Antonio Jimenez & Lorenzo Nepomaceno

5:00PM Parishioners of St. Theresa

MONDAY DECEMBER 7, 2020

8:00AM John Smith (Smitty)

9:00AM John Reilly

TUESDAY DECEMBER 8, 2020

8:00AM Anthony Olivieri

9:00AM Cirino Alegria

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 9, 2020

8:00AM Michael Leahy

9:00AM Nicola Stancati

THURSDAY DECEMBER 10, 2020

8:00AM Olga Salati

9:00AM Cerenio Valentin

12NOON Angela, Joyce, Luigi, Giovina & Nick Napolitano

FRIDAY DECEMBER 11, 2020

8:00AM John Reilly

9:00AM Alfio DiLeo & Benedetta LoCicero

SATURDAY DECEMBER 12, 2020

8:00AM John Reilly

9:00AM Benedetta & Filadelfio Marino

5:00PM William King

SUNDAY DECEMBER 13, 2020

7:30AM Mark Sanderson

9:00AM Luigi Gentile

10:30AM Gloria Galderisi

12:15PM Eileen Maskara

1:30PM Parishioners of St. Theresa

5:00PM Mary Cea



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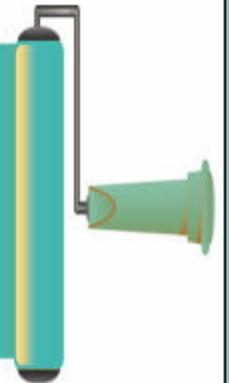
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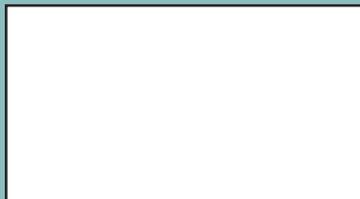
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