

— ST. MARY —
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
STAR CITY

3346 University Ave. Morgantown, WV 26505 • 304-599-3747

December 12, 2021 • Third Sunday of Advent

Mass Times: Saturday, 6:00pm, Sunday, 8:30am, 11:00am, en español a la 1:00pm
Daily Mass*: Mon.-Fri. 9:00am, Mon. 6:30pm, Wed. 12:00pm *please see schedule inside for any changes
or cancellations. **Radio broadcast at 8:30am** on 1300AM WCLG & 92.1FM, and TuneIn channel Morgan 92.1

THIRD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

THE LORD, YOUR GOD, IS IN YOUR MIDST,
A MIGHTY SAVIOR;
HE WILL REJOICE OVER YOU WITH GLADNESS,
AND RENEW YOU IN HIS LOVE.

—ZEPHANIAH 3:17



www.stmarystarcity.com



Saint Mary Roman Catholic Church, Star City—JOIN us

St. Mary Parish

Pastor

Rev. John P. McDonough
papajohnwv@msn.com

Parochial Vicar

Rev. Jose Mauricio Henriquez
mhenriquez@dwc.org

Rectory Phone: 304-225-0506

Parish Office

Address:

3346 University Ave
Morgantown, WV 26505

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday 9:30am-4:30pm
Closed Holy Days
& some Public Holidays

Office Staff

Brenda DeVito
Theresa DeMasters

Phone

304-599-3747 / 304-599-1996

Email

stmaryschurch@comcast.net

Website

www.stmarystarcity.com

Mausoleum Accounts & Management

Angela Merinar 304-841-2101
angelamerinar@gmail.com

Maintenance & Facility Management

Jonny Petak

Faith Formation & Youth Ministry

Cynthia Friesen 304-225-1163
stmarystarcityfaithformation@gmail.com

Nancy Ferrari nickliz@aol.com

Music & Liturgical Ministries Coordinator

TamI Alexander 304-698-7625
tamialexander@gmail.com
stmarystarcitymusic@gmail.com

Hispanic Ministries

Maria Garcia 304-685-7595
stmaryhispanicministry@gmail.com

Tommy Mullenex 304-777-8876
tommymullenex@yahoo.com

St. Ursula Food Pantry & Outreach

Sr. Rachel Blais, S.C.
rachel.blais@gmail.com

Phone

304-599-3822

Email

stursulaoutreach@gmail.com

St. Francis de Sales Central School

304-291-5070

Prayer Requests

Barbara Fedikovich 304-599-3910
Rena Cyphert 304-599-6642



Are you registered in the Parish?

Registering in a parish is a declaration of your desire to be part of a Catholic community and to make a commitment to the life of the parish family.

Clearly stating your Catholic commitment in all its dimensions brings many advantages, recognition, and responsibility.

At St. Mary Roman Catholic Church, our policy, is that you must be registered and participating in Sunday Mass regularly before a baptism can take place, or for the initial meeting with the pastor in the case

of marriage.

Regular attendance is also required for adults who are asked to be a godparent or sponsor at another parish, in order that a letter can be sent stating that they are a practicing Catholic and a registered member of a parish faith community.

Even though you may have attended Mass here for months, or even years, we would like for you to be registered.

Please pick up a registration form at the church or parish office, or register online at stmarystarcity.com
For more information, call the parish office at 304-599-3747.

Sacraments

Baptism: (Birth – Age 7) Parents are required to participate in a preparation program before the celebration of Baptism. Parents must be registered and attending Sunday Mass regularly. Please contact the parish office for information.

Reconciliation: 30 minutes prior to each daily Mass

Order of Christian Initiation: Children 7-14 years of age, and Children 15 years of age and older & Adults— *The Order of Christian Initiation*, RCIA, please contact Cynthia Friesen at 304-225-1163 or stmarystarcityfaithformation@gmail.com

Marriage: Engaged couples planning to marry at St. Mary Church should be practicing Catholics, participating in Sunday Eucharist regularly. Also, they must participate in a Marriage Preparation Program. Call the Parish Office for information. At least **six months notice** is required. *No date for a wedding will be set over the phone.*

Holy Communion to the Sick and Homebound: When a parishioner is confined to home or hospital because of illness or advanced age, call the Parish Office. We will be happy to make arrangements to bring Holy Communion.

Anointing of the Sick: Upon request and communally as scheduled

Bulletin Deadline:

Tuesday@Noon, email or written copy please,
no bulletin announcements will be taken over the phone

Email: stmaryschurch@comcast.net

Subject line: attn: Bulletin, and include topic of announcement

Spirituality of the Readings – Let It Sing



"Brothers and sisters: rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again, rejoice."

St. Paul commands this in the Second Reading. The word for rejoice in Latin is gaudete, so quite naturally this Sunday is called Gaudete Sunday.

Why all this exultation? Are we finally getting a break from the somberness of Advent? Yes, but there is more to it than that.

Remember that Advent is like a retreat for the worldwide Church. In this upcoming third week we will pray about our lives in the context of the great beauty God has put in us and around us. Can you think this way?

One line in the First Reading puts it in dramatic terms. Zephaniah says that the Lord "will sing joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals."

Because of you! Have you ever in your life thought that God might be singing because of you? Have you ever let your image of God expand that far? Have you ever let God be one who sings you into existence, in the most profound sense of the word?

In one of the books of Narnia by CS Lewis, the children are taken back to the very moment of creation. They hear the voice of Aslan (the Christ figure) singing into the wilderness. When the voice goes high, birds, clouds, blue sky appear. At a certain lengthy turn of melody the mountains raise their heads laboriously. A low hum vibrates forth the depths of seas. Creation seems to be made out of melody.

Maybe it is.

Scientists still contend about it, however. What is the physical universe composed of, particles or waves? (I think that is the choice they give us.) Einstein and many others tried to reconcile these, but no luck.

If I could come even close to describing what is called "string theory," we might have a choice theory about the universe's makeup. Maybe you have seen TV shows about string theory on PBS or elsewhere, a model that some scholars actually do believe unites the two hypotheses. Such "strings" act a lot like sound does. Like the vibrations that come forth from a violin string.

Instead of saying that particles or waves or uncertainty or whatever else are the basis of matter and force-fields, and so on, these scientists instead postulate string-like particles: infinitesimal, ever changing, wriggling thingumabobs. By their dancing shapes these string circles generate (or constitute, or become, or whatever is the right way to say it) everything that is.

How about this for a possibility: God's gladness sings out joyfully at every instant, and his song is the earth, the galaxies, the people and plants and chemicals and soaring hawks and encircling planets, droplets of dew and heavy black holes, youthful beauties, ancient wisdoms, and everything else that exists.

In other words, we are God's song.

Apply this, please, to Sunday's Gospel.

There people in long rows gather to be baptized in expectation of the Savior who is to come. Each segment (the crowd, the tax collectors, the soldiers) ask John the Baptist the exact same question: "Teacher, what should we do?"

"Let your life sing," he answers.

Let it sing.

Let your life be what it is: God's joyous, interleaved and always consonant melody, sounding outwards in deepest joy. Share your cloak and your food, collect only what is owed, do not extort.

Do these things and you will be sounding the true melody of your life!

John Foley, SJ

Giving Summary

Last Sunday's Offering was not available at the time of publication due to holiday printing deadlines.

At this time of year, through Epiphany, our bulletin publisher requires that we submit our bulletin to them in advance of the normal weekly schedule to accommodate holiday closures and shipping delays. Giving Summaries will be printed in the first available publication after the collection, but may appear delayed when compared to the date of the bulletin. Thank you for your understanding.

Recent/Upcoming Special Collections

12/12 Retirement Fund for Religious

12/25 Catholic Charities West Virginia

For ease of accounting, **separate checks are preferred** for all donations to different collections and purposes, including special collections, Mass intentions, memorials, and donations to different funds e.g. Trust Fund for the Poor, Debt Reduction, etc. Thank you for your help!

 **DONATE TODAY**

GIVE ONLINE!

by clicking on the image on our website
www.stmarystarcity.com.

THIS WEEK'S CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

December 12, 3rd Sunday of Advent

Saturday, 6:00pm	Barbara Darnell
Sunday, 8:30am	Margie Montgomery
Sunday, 11:00am	For the People
Domingo, 1pm	Glynnna Higgins

<u>Monday 12/13</u>	<u>St. Lucy</u>
9:00am	Helen Ferrari
6:30pm	Special Intention by Celebrant
<u>Tuesday 12/14</u>	<u>St. John of the Cross</u>
9:00am	Martin Chittum
<u>Wednesday 12/15</u>	<u>Advent Weekday</u>
9:00am	Intention of Celebrant
12:00pm	Intention of Celebrant
<u>Thursday 12/16</u>	<u>Advent Weekday</u>
9:00am	Intention of Celebrant
<u>Friday 12/17</u>	<u>Late Advent Weekday</u>
9:00am	Renée Cyphert Morgan

In the event of Closing of school due to inclement weather, there will be no Daily Mass or Prayer Service.

In the event of a funeral, morning Mass will be cancelled

December 19, 4th Sunday of Advent

Saturday, 6:00pm	Pamela Justice Fuller
Sunday, 8:30am	For the People
Sunday, 11:00am	Helen & Joseph Hoclar
Domingo, 1pm	Eileen Klug

The Mass on Tuesday, December 7 at 6:30pm was in Honor of Dolly Vargo for her 94th birthday.

Mass Schedule

Solemnity of The Nativity of the Lord



Friday, December 24th
5:00pm—en español
7:00pm
10:00pm

Saturday, December 25th
10:00am
No 6:00pm Mass

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God



Friday, December 31st
5:30pm

Saturday, January 1st
10:00am



**St. Mary Church Ruby Read Box,
Take a Book, Leave a Book.**

THIS WEEK AT ST. MARY

Sunday, December 12—Third Sunday of Advent

9:30am	Religious Ed.
9:45-10:45am	Choir—P/H
	RCIA
1:00pm	NA Meeting
6-8:00pm	MS Youth—Youth Room

Monday, December 13

5:00-6:15pm	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
7:00pm	RCIA: The Holy Spirit and the Trinity/ Four Marks of the Church—L/L
7-9:00pm	Boy Scouts

Tuesday, December 14

6:30pm	Communal Reconciliation @ St. John University Parish
6:30pm	Alive in the Word: Advent—L/L
6:30pm	NA Meeting

Wednesday, December 15

6:30pm	Advent Reconciliation Opportunity
7:00pm	Catholic Homeschoolers Bible Study

Thursday, December 16

12:00pm	Al-Anon—L/L
5:00pm	Spanish Mass Music Rehearsal—L/L

Saturday, December 18

9:00am	Decorating Narthex/exterior space
2:30pm	Koval/Bliss Wedding
5:00-5:40pm	Reconciliation

Sunday, December 19—Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:30am	Religious Ed.
9:45-10:45am	Choir—P/H
	RCIA
1:00pm	NA Meeting
5:00pm	Lessons & Carols service in church— Reception to follow in Peace Hall
	HS Youth—Please attend Lessons & Carols
6:00pm	Las Posadas



Eternal rest for Patricia Wolfe, and condolences to her family and friends, especially her husband Rex.



Daily Reflection Books for Advent & Christmas

Reflection books in English & Spanish can be found in the narthex, and on the table in the Christian Formation Center entry. The suggested donation is \$1. A limited number of Large Print copies are available, please contact the office if you would like one.



**Text the word
"starcity" to 84576
or connect with us**

online at: **StMaryStarCity.flocknote.com**



Choir—Choir practice will be held on Sundays from 9:45-10:45am in Peace Hall. All new and returning members are welcome.

Choir will run through Christmas, and perhaps beyond. Please join us!

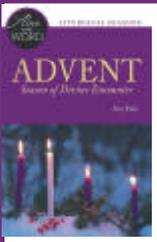


Christmas Flowers

If you are making a donation for **Christmas Flowers** this year, please turn in your envelope to the collection basket or Parish Office by **Monday, December 20** for your intentions to be printed in the Epiphany Bulletin. Intentions received late will not be printed. A donation of \$10 is suggested for each honoree/memorial line.

For those who do not receive offertory envelopes, a Christmas Flowers form is available on pg. 6 of the bulletin, hard copies are available at the office and on the CFC entry table.

Please Print Neatly so that we can avoid misspelling any names! If the space is difficult to write in, please feel free to enclose a piece of paper, or email us your intentions. Thank you!



Adult Faith Formation

Perhaps you have thought about the upcoming Liturgical Year starting on November 28th, 1st Sunday of Advent, and want to prepare in a special way. We have a suggestion. This is a quick three session opportunity to prepare for "**Advent:**

Season of Divine Encounter." We will meet in the Library Lounge on:

Monday, December 6th 7:00-8:00pm.

---Discuss "Encountering God in the Incarnate Word"

Tuesday, December 14 6:30 - 7:30pm

---Discuss "Recognizing Our Daily Divine Encounters"

Tuesday, December 21 6:30 - 7:30pm

---Discuss "Anticipating the Fullness of Encounter with Christ"

Participants will read the lesson and reflect on the questions before we gather to discuss. Cost of the book is \$4.00.



Daily Mass intentions are still being accepted for 2021. We have a few daily Masses left for the year.

The suggested donation is \$10 for a daily Mass.

Mass intentions are now being accepted for 2022. The suggested donation is \$20 for a weekend, \$10 for a weekday. Please call the Parish Office if interested, 304-599-3747.

Lessons & Carols



Please join us at St. Mary Church on **Sunday, December 19th at 5:00pm for our Lessons & Carols** service in the church. Following the service, there will be a reception in Peace Hall hosted by the St. Mary Church Social Activities Committee.

If you plan on attending the reception, please rsvp by using the survey linked in the Friday Notes, or by calling the Parish Office if you don't receive our emails. This will help us get an idea of how much food to prepare.



Holy Family Icon Raffle

St. Mary Church will be raffling off a beautiful icon of the Holy Family. Proceeds of this raffle will go toward our outdoor lights for the narthex plaza decoration.

Chances are \$5 per ticket, and tickets can be purchased after

Masses on weekends, or at the Parish Office.

The drawing for the winner will take place at our Lessons and Carols event, on Sunday, December 19th, 2021.



Help aging religious.

Elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests have offered their lives in service to others—educating the young, comforting the sick, and ministering to the less

fortunate. Today, many are frail and need assistance. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious helps furnish medications, nursing care, and more. Please give generously to today's second collection.



We have Hearing Assistance Devices available for use during Mass. If you would like one, please ask an Usher.

NA Meetings St. Mary Church, Star City Tuesdays-6:30pm, Sundays-1pm

To find other meetings near you, visit <https://www.na.org/meetingsearch/>

Al-Anon (for those affected by someone else's drinking) meets every Thursday at noon at St. Mary Church. Information: call 1-888-425-2666 or WSO@al-anon.org



St. Ursula Food Pantry needs:

- *Toilet Paper
- *Liquid Laundry Detergent (please no pods or powder)

Baby & Toddler Program needs:

- *Baby Wash & Shampoo



Donations for St. Ursula Food Pantry and Outreach may be placed in the labeled bins in the church and narthex, or dropped off in the baskets in the CFC entry.



Until further notice, Bishop Brennan asks that all those in attendance at Mass **and any other meetings, social events, or other parish gatherings (including events with food)** wear a mask, other than young children under the age of 2.

Thank you for your cooperation in this act of Christian Charity.



2022 Calendars 'The Way of the Cross'

from Hastings Funeral Home are available in the church, narthex, and the CFC entry.

Thank you to Hastings for their kind donation of the calendars!

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

30 minutes prior to each Daily Mass
Saturdays from 5-5:40pm as scheduled
(Mon-Fri: 8:30am, Mon: 5:45pm, Wed: 11:30am)
*times may change based on any changes to the weekly Mass schedule

If you, or any parishioner you know, are sick or homebound and would like a visit from Fr. John, please contact the Parish Office:
304-599-3747

Memorial Donations for Bread and the Tabernacle candle are now being accepted for the year 2022. (We have a few dates left for 2021 also.) The requested donation is \$40. Please call the Parish Office if you are interested.
304-599-3747.



Aim your camera at the flowcode

Support our parish by
making a gift to the
Catholic Sharing Appeal

dwc.org/CSA

Did you know...?

Everything above 50% of our goal comes back to St. Mary Parish! With 56% of our goal already achieved, every penny given from now on will be given back to us.

The money that we receive from the CSA will go toward improving the HVAC system in the Christian Formation Center, so that all of our classrooms and offices can have functioning heat and air.

Retirement Fund for Religious

Why We Ask

- In 1988, Catholic bishops of the United States launched the Retirement Fund for Religious to address the significant lack of retirement funding for Catholic sisters, brothers, and priests in religious orders.
- For most of their lives, elder religious worked for little to no pay. There were no 401(k) plans or pensions.
- Religious communities are financially responsible for the support and care of all members. Income, earnings, and expenses are managed separately from the parish and diocesan structures of the Catholic Church.
- Only 5 percent of the religious communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Office are adequately funded for retirement; 40 percent have 25 or fewer members. Many small communities struggle to care for elder members due to a lack of financial resources and personnel.
- Today, religious past age 70 outnumber religious under age 70 by nearly three to one.
- There are 26,330 religious past age 70 living in the United States. In 2020, the average annual cost for their care was more than \$49,000 per person; skilled care averaged \$78,000 per person.
- Since 2009, the annual cost to support senior women and men religious has exceeded \$1 billion.
- In 2020, 71 percent of the religious communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Office had a median age of 70 or higher.
- The average annual Social Security benefit for a religious is \$7,160, whereas the average US beneficiary receives \$18,530.

Statistics on women and men religious were obtained from the NRRO database of participating religious institutes as of December 31, 2020. Visit usccb.org/nrro to access a full statistical report.

How Donations Help

- Each year, hundreds of US religious communities receive financial assistance made possible by the Retirement Fund for Religious. Communities can use this funding for immediate retirement expenses or invest it for future needs. Since the first collection, US Catholics have donated \$919 million.
- Since the collection began, more than \$786 million has been distributed to support the day-to-day care of elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. An additional \$102 million has been allocated toward self-help projects initiated by religious communities, including collaborative health-care facilities.
- In addition to direct financial assistance, proceeds from the annual appeal underwrite educational programming, services, and resources that enable religious communities to evaluate and prepare for long-term retirement needs.
- Support from the Retirement Fund for Religious helps religious communities care for senior members while continuing important ministries to the People of God.



Please give to those who have given a lifetime.



retiredreligious.org

Visit retiredreligious.org/2021photos to meet the religious pictured.



National Religious Retirement Office

Sponsor of the Retirement Fund for Religious

Conference of Major Superiors of Men • Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious
Leadership Conference of Women Religious • United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

3211 Fourth Street NE
Washington DC 20017-1194
Phone (202) 541-3215
Fax (202) 541-3053



Christmas Flowers



Please Print all names to avoid misspellings!

Envelope # _____

Name/ Family : _____ Phone : _____

In Memory/Honor of: _____

In Memory/Honor of: _____

In Memory/Honor of: _____

In Memory/Honor of: _____

Suggested: \$10 donation per honoree/memorial

Please *print* all names to avoid misspellings in the bulletin.

For intentions to appear in the **Epiphany bulletin**, this form must be returned in the collection or to the Parish Office by **Monday, 20 December**. Intentions received after will not be printed.
3346 University Ave, Morgantown, WV 26505

Total Enclosed: _____

Or: I donated online to the Christmas Flowers fund.

Please make checks payable to St. Mary Church, memo: Christmas Flowers
For security, please do not mail cash!

Safe Environment Reporting

To report an incidence of suspected child sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency, or you may confidentially contact WV Child Protective Services at 800.352.6513. In addition to civil authorities, to report suspected cases of sexual abuse by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, please contact the Diocese at 888-434-6237 or 304-233-0880. Please visit www.dwc.org under "Accountability" for additional information and reporting methods.

Will or Estate Planning

Are you thinking of remembering St. Mary Church in your will or estate plans? A bequest through a Last Will and Testament is the simplest way of creating a lasting legacy of support for St. Mary Church. Bequests should be made out to:

"The Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, or his successors in office," with a specification of the purpose for which the bequest is to be used, e.g. "for the use of St. Mary Parish"

READINGS FOR THE WEEK **December 12,**

Sunday: Zep 3:14-18a/Is12:2-3, 4, 5-6 [6]/Phil 4:4-7/Lk 3:10-18
Monday: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a/Ps 25:4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9 [4]/Mt 21:23-27
Tuesday: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13/Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19 and 23 [7a]/Mt 21:28-32
Wednesday: Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21c-25/Ps 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14 [Is 45:8]/Lk 7:18b-23
Thursday: Is 54:1-10/Ps 30:2 and 4, 5-6, 11-12a, and 13b [2a]/Lk 7:24-30
Friday: Gn 49:2, 8-10/Ps 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8, 17 [cf. 7]/Mt 1:1-17
Saturday: Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 [cf. 7]/Mt 1:18-25
Next Sunday: Mi 5:1-4a/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 [4]/Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-4
©LPi

Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service **ReportBishopAbuse.org (800) 276-1562**

The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service has been established to receive reports of sexual abuse and related misconduct by bishops, and to relay those reports to proper Church authorities for investigation. Where a report includes a crime, such as the sexual abuse of a minor, it will also be reported to civil authorities. Otherwise, reports will be kept confidential. If you have any other kind of complaint about a bishop—such as parish assignments, church closings, or homily contents—please address those directly to your diocesan or eparchial bishop instead. Sexual abuse by a priest, deacon or a staff member or volunteer of the Church should be reported to the Office of Safe Environment for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. So, to be sure you get the help you need, phone numbers and addresses may be found at www.dwc.org under the accountability tab. If you are the victim of sexual abuse (or any other crime), please contact local law enforcement.

Third Sunday of Advent

Lectionary: 92

Reading I

Zep 3:14-18a

Shout for joy, O daughter Zion!
Sing joyfully, O Israel!
Be glad and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!
The LORD has removed the judgment against you
he has turned away your enemies;
the King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst,
you have no further misfortune to fear.
On that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Fear not, O Zion, be not discouraged!
The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
a mighty savior;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
and renew you in his love,
he will sing joyfully because of you,
as one sings at festivals.

Reading II

Phil 4:4-7

Brothers and sisters:
Rejoice in the Lord always.
I shall say it again: rejoice!
Your kindness should be known to all.
The Lord is near.
Have no anxiety at all, but in everything,
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,
make your requests known to God.
Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Gospel

Lk 3:10-18

The crowds asked John the Baptist,
"What should we do?"
He said to them in reply,
"Whoever has two cloaks
should share with the person who has none.
And whoever has food should do likewise."
Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him,
"Teacher, what should we do?"
He answered them,
"Stop collecting more than what is prescribed."
Soldiers also asked him,
"And what is it that we should do?"
He told them,
"Do not practice extortion,
do not falsely accuse anyone,
and be satisfied with your wages."

Now the people were filled with expectation,
and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ.
John answered them all, saying,
"I am baptizing you with water,
but one mightier than I is coming.
I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals.
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
His winnowing fan is in his hand to clear his threshing floor
and to gather the wheat into his barn,
but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."
Exhorting them in many other ways,
he preached good news to the people.

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Sunday, Dec 12, 2021

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Queen of Mercy, watch over us

Often, we seek guidance, wondering like those around John the Baptist: *What should we do?* The answer's a simple one: show mercy. Our adversaries, family members, and we ourselves may be in need of such compassion. When La Virgen Morena (the Brown Virgin) appeared to Juan Diego in Mexico and left her image on his cactus-fiber cloak, her promise of mercy to all who appealed to her was sealed on the Americas. Our Lady of Guadalupe, now patroness of Mexico and empress of the Americas, extends her reign across two continents and around the globe. Respond with mercy today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:10-18 (92). *"The crowds asked John the Baptist, 'What should we do?'"*

Monday, Dec 13, 2021

MEMORIAL OF LUCY, MARTYR

I can see clearly now

In these darkening days of December, the Scandinavian festival of light held on Saint Lucy's feast day is a cheerful sight to brighten spirits. In these countries—and wherever Scandinavians are found—girls dress as Lucy in long white gowns with wreaths of candles on their heads, carrying sweets in procession as songs are sung. Similar practices can be found in Italy and Croatia. Whether you belong to those ethnicities or not, why not incorporate the festival into your family holiday traditions? Saint Lucy is the patron and protector of eyesight—ask her to help you focus yours, to see more clearly the coming of the radiant king.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a; Matthew 21:23-27 (187). *"By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?"*

Tuesday, Dec 14, 2021

MEMORIAL OF JOHN OF THE CROSS, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Carried by love

Saint John of the Cross was named a doctor of the church for his profound, poetic writings on Christian mysticism. As a spiritual phenomenon, mysticism is difficult to explain. Central ideas, though, connect love and suffering. Today, pause to remember the tragic school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary and contemplate this meditation by John and remember to love: "I saw the river over which every soul must pass to reach the kingdom of heaven, and the name of that river was suffering. And I saw a boat which carries souls across the river, and the name of that boat was love."

TODAY'S READINGS: Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13; Matthew 21:28-32 (188). *"Then will I remove from your midst the proud braggarts, and you shall no longer exalt yourself."*

Wednesday, Dec 15, 2021

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Jesus, our justice and our peace

The coming of Jesus into the world was ultimately the coming of true justice and peace. In today's psalm, these two virtues are said to have "kissed" when the Messiah arrived on Earth. What an incredible image! Every promise of God finds its yes in the One who frees us from sin and death. In the gospel reading, Jesus proves by his miraculous love that he is the long-hoped-for Messiah. Today, remember that as we anticipate Christmas, the

fulfillment of all our hopes and dreams is the justice and peace of Jesus. Perhaps not what we expected, but what we need!

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 45:6c-8, 18, 21c-25; Luke 7:18b-23 (189). *"Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall look down from heaven."*

Thursday, Dec 16, 2021

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Differently blessed

Today's first reading refers to an idea repeated many times in the Bible: that children are a blessing from God. Catholic teaching on situations where bearing children is not possible is not the inverse, however. The church has never taught that infertility or any other limitation is a punishment or "curse" from God. To the contrary, Catholic tradition emphasizes that persons in every situation or condition deserve our full attention, respect, and caring concern. How can you practice empathy toward those whose family life has taken a less common direction?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 54:1-10; Luke 7:24-30 (190). *"Among those born of women, no one is greater than John; yet the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he."*

Friday, Dec 17, 2021

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O WISDOM)

Make the wise choice

Today the church begins to sing the O Antiphons to accompany the Advent evening prayer of Mary's Magnificat. These short, sung phrases remind us of our need for salvation and our desire to embody the divine characteristics of our Savior. Today we pray for knowledge. This is not the knowledge that wins arguments around the dinner table, but the knowledge that shines a light on who we are, where we came from, and what we are called to do. It is the knowledge that comes with discernment and brings us peace. May wisdom be our teacher.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Matthew 1:1-17 (193). *"O Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love: come to teach us the path of knowledge!"*

Saturday, Dec 18, 2021

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O SACRED LORD)

Walk each other home

The theme for this year's International Migrants Day is "Reimagining Human Mobility." U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres calls upon citizens of the world to "seize the opportunity of the recovery from the pandemic to implement safe, orderly, and regular migration and enable migrants to build more inclusive and resilient societies." Today's O Antiphon recalls the migration of Israel from Egypt to Palestine and asks God to guide the movement of peoples. Because we all can trace our ancestry back to migrating people at one time or another, it is appropriate today to pray for people on the move seeking new homes and new lives in new lands.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25 (194). *"And they shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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