



Christmas Greetings from St. Thomas More



The light of the Christmas star to you,
The warmth of home and hearth to you,
The cheer and good will of friends to you,
The hope of a childlike heart to you,
The joy of a thousand angels to you,
The love of the Son of God and God's peace to you.

Fr. Gordon, Fr. Lawton and all the staff at St. Thomas More
would like to wish our visitors and parishioners
a peace-filled and joyous Christmas Season.

May the presence of the Christ Child
fill your hearts and home with peace, joy and love.



2506 Gulf Gate Drive, Sarasota FL 34231 941-923-1691 www.stthomasmoresrq.org

We are a welcoming Catholic community devoted to living out and celebrating God's Word and Sacraments by connecting people to Christ through faith, love and ministry.

Weekdays: 8:00 am Mass Saturday: 8:00 am, 4:00 pm, Masses; confessions at 3:00 pm Sunday: 8:00 am, 10:00 am, 12 noon Masses

Office hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm; closed for lunch: 12:00-1:00 pm

For those with hearing aids: the church is equipped with the HEARING LOOP technology.

Carols and Anthems *(The choir or cantor may sing in between congregation carols.)*

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876, alt.

1. It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold: "Peace on the earth, good will to all
From heaven's all gracious King"; the world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.
2. Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled, and still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world; above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.
3. Yet with the woes of sin and strife, the world has suffered long; beneath the heav'nly hymn have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong; and warring humankind hears not the tidings which they bring;
O hush the noise and cease your strife and hear the angels sing.
4. For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old, when with the ever-circling years
Shall come the time foretold, when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

Angels We Have Heard on High

Text: French, c. 18th C

1. ALL: Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains, and the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains. Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.
2. MEN: Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.
3. WOMEN: Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.
4. ALL: See him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise.
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Away in A Manger

John T. McFarland, 1851-1913

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.
2. The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky, and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with you there.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Phillips Brooks, b. 1835

1. Oh little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King and peace to all the earth.

3. How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
4. O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray,
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

Joy to the World

Psalm 98; Isaac Watts, b. 1674

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room, and heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Verses 2 and 3 Sung by the Choir

4. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

DECEMBER 24 and 25: CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY

Gathering Song

O Come, All Ye Faithful/Adeste Fideles

John f. Wade, b. 1711/Frederick Oakeley, b. 1802

(10 pm Mass: We will sing verse one in Latin, then verse 2-4 in English.)

1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
 2. † God of — God, — Light — of — Light, —
 3. † Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 4. † Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing,
 1. Ad - é - ste fī - dé - les, laé - ti, tri - um - phán - tes, Ve -

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
 Lo! He comes forth from the Vir - gin's womb.
 Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove!
 Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry giv'n;
 ní - te, ve - ní - te in Béth - le - hem.

Come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;
 Our ver - y God, be - got - ten not cre - a - ted,
 Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est;
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing;
 Na - tum vi - dé - te, Re - gem an - ge - ló - rum.

O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,
 Ve - ní - te a - do - ré - mus, ve - ní - te a - do - ré - mus,

O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord!
 ve - ní - te a - do - ré - mus Dó - mi - num.

10:00 pm and 10:00 am Gloria: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Responsorial Psalm: 3:00 pm & 5:00 pm Forever I will sing, the goodness of the Lord.
10:00 pm & 10:00 am Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.
Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.
12:00 pm All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Gospel Acclamation (*Stand*)

Gospel and Homily

Profession of Faith (*Nicene Creed*)

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate
of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,

and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

General Intercessions

Response: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of Gifts 10:00 pm and 10:00 am: **Traditional Choir Selection**
12:00 pm: **Contemporary Choir Selection**

Please kneel or be seated during the Eucharistic Prayer.

Communion Hymns

What Child is This

William C. Dix, b. 1827

1. What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, While shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

2. Why lies he in such mean estate Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. *Refrain*

3. So bring him incense, gold and myrrh, come peasant, king to own him;
The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him. *Refrain*

Silent Night, Holy Night!

Joseph Mohr, b. 1792; tr. John F. Young, b. 1820

1. Silent night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child, Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.
2. Silent night, holy night, Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar, Heav'nly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!
3. Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Recessional

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley, b. 1707

1. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all you nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"
2. Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ the everlasting Lord:
Late in time behold him come, Offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see: Hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"
3. Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

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DECEMBER 26: THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Gathering Song

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley, b. 1707

See hymn above

Gloria Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo." *(verses sung by cantor)*

10:00 am Mass Gloria: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

Responsorial Psalm Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord.

Gospel Acclamation *(stand)* **Gospel and Homily**

Profession of Faith Profession of Faith *(Nicene Creed)*

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light,

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,

continues, next page

true God from true God, begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate
of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

General Intercessions

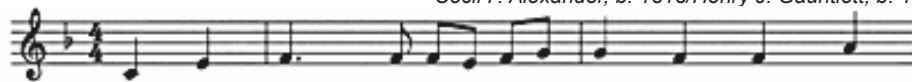
Response: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation Hymn

Once in Royal David's City

Cecil F. Alexander, b. 1818/Henry J. Gauntlett, b. 1805/Arthur H. Mann, b. 1850



1. Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y Stood a
2. He came down to earth from heav - en Who is
3. And through all his won - drous child - hood He would
4. For he is our child - hood's pat - tern, Day by
5. And our eyes at last shall see him, Through his



low - ly cat - tle shed, Where a moth - er laid her
God and Lord of all, And his shel - ter was a
hon - or and o - bey, Love and watch the low - ly
day like us he grew; He was lit - tle, weak, and
own re - deem - ing love; For that child so dear and



ba - by In a man - ger for his bed. Mar - y
sta - ble, And his cra - dle was a stall. With the
maid - en In whose gen - tle arms he lay. Chris - tian
help - less, Tears and smiles like us he knew: And he
gen - tle Is our Lord in heav'n a - bove: And he



was that moth - er mild, Je - sus
poor and mean and low - ly Lived on
chil - dren all should be Kind, o -
feels for all our sad - ness, And he
leads his chil - dren on To the



Christ her lit - tle Child.
earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
be - dient, good as he.
shares in all our glad - ness.
place where he has gone.

Please kneel or be seated during the Eucharistic Prayer

Memorial Acclamation *Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free*

Communion Hymns

What Child Is This

William C. Dix, b.1827

1. What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, While shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

2. Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. *Refrain*

3. So bring him incense, gold and myrrh, come peasant, king to own him;
The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him. *Refrain*

Behold the Lamb

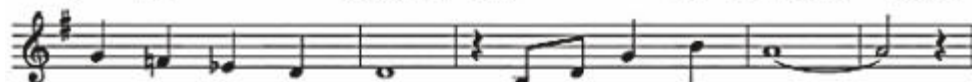
Martin Willett/Craig Kingsbury, b. 1952 © 1984 OCP Pub.



1. Those who were in the dark are thank - ful for the
2. Peace - ful now, those whose hearts are blessed with un - der -
3. Gen - tle one, Child of God, join with us at this
4. Lord of all, give us light. De - liv - er us from



sun - light; We who live, we who die are
stand - ing Of the wheat, of the wine u -
ta - ble. Bless our lives; nour - ish all who
e - vil. Make us one; be our shield. Make



grate - ful for this gift, thank - ful for God's love.
nit - ed with God's word and the love we share.
hun - ger for this feast; shel - ter them with peace.
still the winds that blow; cra - dle us with love.

Refrain



Be - hold, be - hold the Lamb of God. All who eat,



all who drink shall live; and all, all who dwell in



God, shall come to know God's glo - ry!

12:00 pm Meditation:

All Is Well

8:00 am & 10:00 am Meditation: On This Gentle Night

1. On this gentle night, we greet you; following the Star above.

Words cannot explain the power of your name: Jesus is born!

continues, next page

M.W. Smith & W. Kirkpatrick

© 2008 Alex Dilan

2. On this holy ground we find you; what was lost is found around you.
Words cannot explain, the Power in your name, Jesus our Lord!

Refrain Wonderful Counselor, Savior of all the Earth, we adore you, Prince of Peace at your birth.

3. On our bended knees we praise you, thank you for the Gift of Grace.
Words cannot explain the power of Your Name. Jesus is born! *Refrain*

4. Proclaim the Good News to all! Sing the Angel's song of praise!
Gloria in excelsis Deo, on this Gentle Night. On This Gentle Night!

Prayer after Communion

Recessional Hymn

Go Tell It on the Mountain

African-American spiritual; adapt. by John W. Work, Jr., 1871-1925, © Mrs. John W. Work, III

Refrain Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

1. While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *Refrain*
2. The shepherds feared and trembled When lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*
3. Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

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Friday, December 31, 2021

8:00 am Mass

Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God

Saturday, January 1, 2022

8:00 am Mass

**On Saturday, January 1,
there will not be a 4:00 pm Vigil Mass.**

Beginning Saturday, January 8, 2022

We will have 2 Vigil Masses: 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm



**The Parish Office will be closed
Friday, December 24 through
Monday, December 27 and Friday,
December 31 through Monday, January 3.**

CONSECRATION TO THE HOLY FAMILY



How to Prepare

In preparation for a Consecration to the Holy Family, your family should not only decide to dedicate itself to the Holy Family's intercession but also acknowledge that the family is sacred.

The decision to consecrate your family needs to be intentional and a process through which you completely surrender to God through the Holy Family. You are accepting the truth that salvation history was changed forever by a family, and that through your domestic church, you are called to live their example.

Four suggested steps *before* praying the Consecration to the Holy Family:

- 1** Discuss the importance of this consecration as a family and why you are doing it.
- 2** Each member of your family is strongly encouraged to go to the sacrament of reconciliation.
- 3** As a family, intentionally choose something to fast from. The fast can be for at least a week. As our physical bodies are drawn to things of the world, it is strongly encouraged that you fast from something that you would normally do or consume. Fasting helps to discipline our minds and hearts to refrain from secular activities and be more focused on God.
- 4** Prepare for the commitment you are making. Consecration to the Holy Family is not a single event. You have chosen a way of life for your family. You and your family are consciously choosing to be a beacon of light of God's love through his Church.



**Special Consecration
to the Holy Family Prayer cards
are available for everyone.
Please see the table in the Narthex.**

Mass Intentions December 25-January 2

Saturday	10:00am	Fr. Lawton	St. Thomas More Parishioners, living and deceased
	12:00pm	Fr. Gordon	St. Thomas More Parishioners, living and deceased
Sunday	8:00am	Fr. Lawton	STM Families
	10:00am	Fr. Gordon	STM Families
	12noon	Fr. Lawton	STM Families
Monday	8:00am	Fr. Lawton	+Gabriella Totti
Tuesday	8:00am	Fr. Lawton	+Martin & +Delia Goodrich
Wednesday	8:00am	Fr. Gordon	+Nate Galfo
Thursday	8:00am	Fr. Gordon	+Richard Robert Mazuca
Friday	8:00am	Fr. Roger	+Russell Grisanti
Saturday	8:00am	Fr. Lawton	St. Thomas More Parishioners, living and deceased
Sunday	8:00am	Fr. Lawton	+Josephine & +Thomas Cinquegrano
	10:00am	Fr. Gordon	+Danny Wait
	12noon	Fr. Adrian	+David Anderson



This week's needs:

- cereal
- jarred pasta sauce
- cooking oil
- boxed pasta

Drop off of your generous donations in the designated white bins at the Parish Office or Church Narthex.



The Tabernacle Candle is lit this week in loving memory of the Sambor family; given by Tom & Susan Culliton



No stunning brilliance nor infinite power.
Blinding glory
hidden.
But a star shines
over the shelter
and we bend our knee
to God in the homeless baby
who needs to be beheld, loved and fed.
The Word was made flesh and dwells among us.

We are no longer just dwellings,
but temples, homes for God,
filled with endless grace and brilliance within.
All is holy now.

Women's Club News

Please join us for our January 6 general meeting at 6:30 pm in the Spirit Center.

The Asolo Players Readers will be with us and will be reading a play entitled, "The Dixie Swim Club" after a very short business meeting.

Our meetings have been well attended and a lot of fun. So, don't miss out! Please join us for a great year of informative meetings and social events.

January 18, 2022 Selby Garden's Private Tour

We will meet at the entrance foyer of Selby Gardens at 10:30 am for our tour of the orchid display and a general tour of the gardens. The tour will last one hour and involve walking the entire gardens. The fee is \$28. per person regardless of Garden membership status as we will be provided with informational material. Afterwards those who wish will meet at P.F. Changs for lunch on your own.

Name _____ Lunch yes/no (circle one)

Phone # _____

Return your registration and check for \$28, made out St. Thomas More Women's Club, to the church office: 2506 Gulf Gate Drive, Sarasota FL 34231 by **January 11, 2022** Call Carol McKeone with questions: 708-363-1023

ST. THOMAS MORE WOMEN'S CLUB - BOOK CLUB

Women of St. Thomas More, please join us for future book club meetings. What a wonderful opportunity to meet and discuss books that will help us share the faith-based wisdom that we have collected thus far. In the past, the discussions have been lively, new friendships have been made, and our literary minds have been enriched. Meetings will be held the second Tuesday monthly. A notice will be published in the bulletin and an email sent to those who have signed up.

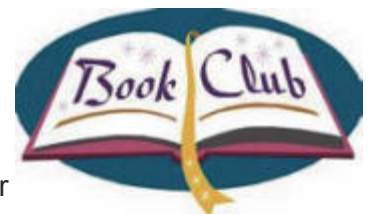
Time: 2:00 pm

Place: Spirit Center, Charity Room

For questions and sign up please contact Kathy Kozlowski at faroak88@yahoo.com or 941-536-4578.

Listed below are the books for 2022:

January 11	The Five People Heaven You in Meet by Mitch Albom
February 8	Beneath a Scarlet Sky by Mark Sullivan
March 8	Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate
April 12	The Well Woman: Crossing the Boundaries by Ladine B. Housholder



STM Knights of Columbus Baby Bottle Drive

The combined donations from friends, parishioners and STM Knights of Columbus members were \$5923.60! All donations were contributed to My Choice Pregnancy Center, Sarasota.

My sincere thank you for your generosity. Jim Meyd, Grand Knight, St Thomas More Knights of Columbus Council 7826.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY



Help Us to Grow

Father,
through the holy family,
you have made all families holy.
You have given them as a model for us
as we walk through life together.
Help us to be ever more merciful.

Help us to forgive one another and
to do small things with great love.
Help us to grow together in holiness.
Give us the wisdom to imitate Mary,
holding all great mysteries in our hearts.
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 26, 2021 All Families Are Made Holy



Today's readings: Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14; Psalm 128: 1–2, 3, 4–5; Colossians 3:12–21 or 3:12–17; Luke 2:41–52 or 1 Samuel 1:20–22, 24–28; Psalm 84:2–3, 5–6, 9–10; 1 John 3:1–2, 21–24; Luke 2:41–52. Little is known about the life Jesus, Mary, and Joseph lived in Nazareth. From the time they returned from Egypt until the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, the only story that appears in Scripture about the family is the founding of Jesus in the temple. A close reading of this text shows that they were observant Jews and they went to Jerusalem each year for Passover. It also can be seen that they traveled with their extended family, so they had other significant relationships in their lives. They had regular family struggles. Mary asks, "Why have you done this to us?" She sounds like many mothers who are

raising adolescents. Their family life is a model for ours, but it must have been very ordinary indeed.

Imagine what that can mean for us.

Jesus knows our hearts and our struggles because he lived them too. God entered into a family and set the family apart as a place of sanctification. The holy family makes all families holy. The family is an ordinary place filled with ordinary love, peace, mercy, justice, and forgiveness. It is a place to grow in holiness. This week, as you go about your routine, imagine how you are connected to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, across time and space, to their home in Nazareth. If you are preparing a meal or folding the laundry, you are doing holy work, just as they did.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 27

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of St. John, apostle and evangelist. He and his brother were early disciples of Jesus and witnesses to the resurrection. He traveled to Ephesus, where he composed his Gospel and letters, and later wrote the Book of Revelation from the island of Patmos. It is traditional to bless wine and cider on the Feast of St. John. *Today's readings: 1 John 1:1–4; Psalm 97:1–2, 5–6, 11–12; John 20:1a, 2–8.*

Tuesday, December 28

The Holy Innocents

When Herod massacred all baby boys under two years of age, he sought to eliminate the threat the messiah posed to his power. His horrific, violent act epitomizes a truth we know even today: those who benefit most from the world's brokenness and injustice will always oppose the transformation God has promised. The infant Jesus needed protection, protection God provided in the person of St. Joseph. The deaths of the children were profound violations of the law of God. God is the God of life. God raised the infants to be saints, that the profound injustice of their deaths might be transformed: from death to life, that is the way of our God. *Today's readings: 1 John 1:5–2:2; Psalm 124:2–3, 4–5, 7b–8; Matthew 2:13–18.*

Wednesday, December 29

Simeon: Waiting in Hope

God had promised Simeon that he would not see death until he had seen the salvation of Israel. The child Jesus, not yet six weeks old, is brought to the temple to be dedicated to the Lord. What must it have been like for him to feel the fulfillment of the promise? What desires of your heart are you awaiting God to fulfill? *Today's readings: 1 John 2:3–11; Psalm 96:1–2a, 2b–3, 5b–6; Luke 2:22–35.*

Thursday, December 30

Anna the Prophetess

Anna the prophetess “spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Israel.” The hope that she has held onto has been realized before her eyes, and she cannot keep it to herself. She goes out into the world to be the bringer of the Good News, to bring hope. When we celebrate Christmas, we are making present the incarnation through which God continues to bring about a renewed world. Christians are to testify about our hope, just as Anna did. How can you share your hope today? *Today's readings: 1 John 2:12–17; Psalm 96:7–8a, 8b–9, 10; Luke 2:36–40.*

Friday, December 31

Word Made Flesh

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” The evangelist John tells us the cosmic significance of the birth of Jesus. Because John uses the language of philosophy and poetry, it can be hard to grasp what he means. But because he uses these elevated ways of speaking, it is possible to approach the inexplicable mystery that is contained in the incarnation. Read today's Gospel. What word or phrase sticks out to you most? Copy it and meditate on it as you pray this week. *Today's readings: 1 John 2:18–21; Psalm 96:1–2, 11–12, 13; John 1:1–18.*

Saturday, January 1

Mary, the Holy Mother of God

“Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.” Mary's central place in this great mystery of God dwelling among us led her to a place of contemplation. Though she was the one chosen to bring Jesus into the world, she did not have all the answers. Praying the Rosary, we have the opportunity to contemplate like Mary, deepening our reflection while our words proclaim the memorized prayers. Pray the Rosary today and ask Mary to help you to hold all these things in your heart. *Today's readings: Numbers 6:22–27; Psalm 67:2–3, 5, 6, 8; Galatians 4: 4–7; Luke 2:16–21.*



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