

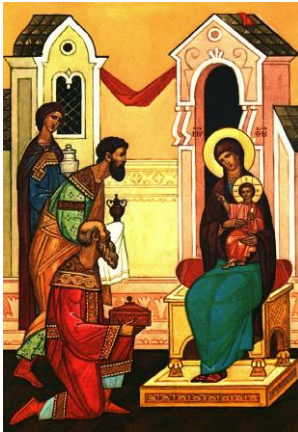
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Shoot for radiance

There's not much we can do about last year—beyond remembering and, perhaps, repenting. But the new year is laid out before us smooth as glass and innocent as a baby. Why not aim higher, cast our thoughts in a more benevolent direction, and shoot for radiance? Isaiah leads the way, beckoning us to walk in celestial light. A certain group of Magi did just that, and it led them to the Christ child. Affix a star where you can see it regularly. Let it remind you to keep your attention on the child at the end of its rays.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12 (20).* "Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow."



MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2020

MEMORIAL OF ANDRÉ BESSETTE, RELIGIOUS

Really see who's at the door

No matter how humble your work, sainthood is your call. The life of André (Alfred) Bessette (1845-1937) makes that clear. Rejected initially, Brother André was eventually accepted into the Congregation of Holy Cross. Physically frail and undereducated, he was given the work of doorkeeper at Montreal's Notre Dame College. He greeted and prayed with visitors, asking Saint Joseph to intercede for all who came seeking physical healing. In time, people came simply to pray with Brother André. When he died at age 91, more than a million mourners came to honor the Miracle Man of Montreal. Greet everyone today with love and compassion.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 3:22—4:6; Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25 (212).* "He cured the people of every disease and illness."

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2020

MEMORIAL OF RAYMOND OF PEÑAFORT, PRIEST

Good works live on

Today the church honors the brilliant Dominican Saint Raymond of Peñafort (d. 1275). At the behest of the pope, he organized decades of church decrees into the *Decretals of Gregory IX*, which made a major contribution to the development of Canon Law, and as head of the Dominicans, he wrote a congregational constitution that lasted nearly 700 years. Saint Raymond had no way of knowing his contributions would have such enduring impact. As you use your talents to help build the Kingdom for good, remember that your contributions are part of a lasting legacy.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 4:7-10; Mark 6:34-44 (213).* "When Jesus saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things."

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2020

CHRISTMAS WEEKDAY

Take a break with God

Need a vacation to recover from the holidays? We all know the feeling. As busy as most of us are—even in our leisure time—it's understandable when we fantasize about getting away from it all. That actually can be a good thing—when we do it to reconnect with God and recharge our spirit. Christianity has a long tradition that supports retreating from the world for prayer and reflection—whether for a lifetime or just a weekend. Jesus himself often took time-outs from his ministry. It's break time!

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 4:11-18; Mark 6:45-52 (214).* "He went off to the mountain to pray."

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2020

CHRISTMAS WEEKDAY

The greatest of these is love

Last weekend, the church celebrated the Epiphany—revealing Christ to the larger world. This weekend, we observe the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, where Jesus is revealed once more, this time by divine proclamation: "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." While many of us slog through the chilly bleakness of January, Saint John the Evangelist—often called the Beloved Disciple—warms hearts by reminding us that we too are beloved. If today finds you struggling with post-holiday blues or the darkness of winter days, reach out in love to others, remembering that faith, hope, and love abide—but the greatest of these is love.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 4:19—5:4; Luke 4:14-22a (215).* "If anyone says, 'I love God,' but hates his brother, he is a liar." *heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds."*

FRIDAY JANUARY 10, 2020

CHRISTMAS WEEKDAY

Sit. Stand. Kneel. Repeat.

Why is there so much up and down and gesturing in Catholic rituals and prayers? When we pray, we pray not just with a part of us but with our whole being—mind, body, feelings, thoughts. The posture of the body can express what is on our hearts, and, when we do postures in common, we also express our unity with one another and the universal church. For example, though infrequently used, the posture of prostration involves lying face down on the ground. This is a symbol both of deep humility and of placing ourselves in the embrace of the God who made earth and heaven. What postures help you communicate with God?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 5:5-13; Luke 5:12-16 (216). *"And when the leper saw Jesus, he fell prostrate."*

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, 2020

CHRISTMAS WEEKDAY

Ours is a fluid faith

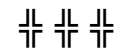
Today's gospel opens with both John and Jesus busy baptizing their followers. It's really no surprise that Baptism has been part of the Christian tradition from its earliest days. Even children understand the symbolism of water and its association with cleanliness and purity. From the River Jordan to today's baptismal font, the waters of Baptism and the deep desire for a clean, new life in Christ has a strong pull on us. The next time you place your hand in water, recall your own Baptism and pledge to follow John's simple directive in today's gospel: "He must increase; I must decrease."

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 5:14-21; John 3:22-30 (217). *"Jesus and his disciples went into the region of Judea, where he spent some time with them baptizing."*



TAKE FIVE FOR FAITH

DAILY RENEWAL FOR BUSY CATHOLICS



THE WEEK OF
CHRISTMAS TIME

For January 5 – January 11, 2020

*Invest just five minutes a day,
and your faith will deepen and grow
—A DAY AT A TIME.*

NOTE: THESE REFLECTIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE EVERY WEEK. YOU MAY PICK UP A PRINTED COPY FROM THESE PLASTIC FOLDERS, READ THEM ON-LINE ON THE OLV WEB PAGE (WWW.OURLADYOFVICTORY.NET), OR HAVE THEM E-MAILED TO YOU EACH WEEK BY SENDING AN A MESSAGE TO MMATUSZ@OURLADYOFVICTORY.NET AND SAYING "ADD ME TO THE TAKE FIVE LIST". LET US KNOW IF YOU'VE REGULARLY USED & ENJOYED THESE REFLECTIONS.

Our Lady of Victory Loving God. Loving Others. Making Disciples.