



# ST. ROMUALD CATHOLIC CHURCH

394 N HWY 259 · HARDINSBURG KY 40143

[www.stromuald.org](http://www.stromuald.org)

## dear Padre

### **Parish Office:**

Phone: 756-2356

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Hours: Monday - Friday

8:00am - Noon, 1:00 - 3:00pm

Email: [stromuald@bbtel.com](mailto:stromuald@bbtel.com)

### **Pastoral Staff:**

*Pastor*, Father Brian Johnson

Email: [Brian.Johnson@pastoral.org](mailto:Brian.Johnson@pastoral.org)

*Deacon*, Tony Anthony

*Deacon*, Mike Wiedemer

*Administrative Asst*, Jane Haynes

*CRE: Adult*, Rosa Hockenberry

*CRE: RCIA*, Lyvenia Anthony

*CRE: 7-12*, Gayle Poole

*CRE: K-6*, Kim Brumfield

### **Pastoral Council:**

Dana Bland, Harry Mattingly,

Janet Bland, David Morton

Christi Brooks, Kevin Oelze

Chris Brumfield, Don Payne,

Jerry Dowell, Gail Pollock

Betty Heavrin, Pam Pollock

### **St. Romuald**

#### **Interparochial School:**

Phone: 756-5504

Website:

[www.stromualdschool.org](http://www.stromualdschool.org)

Principal, Rob Cox

#### **School Board**

#### **Representatives:**

Jamie Barr, Amy Flood,

Jennifer Payne

***I have two questions about Christmas. First, why do we use red and green during the season? Second, what does the word Noël mean?***

The Church uses colors as symbols to mark the change of liturgical seasons and to remind ourselves of religious themes. White (or gold) is actually the liturgical color for the Christmas season, and violet (purple) for the weeks of Advent.

Red and green were associated with a wintertime feast that predates Christianity. However, since these colors have additional meanings for Christians that relate to this time of year, they are still in use and commonly associated with the holiday (holy) season. December 28 is the feast of the Holy Innocents, the male children of Bethlehem who were slaughtered by Herod's order. Its color is red, the color of martyrs. Poinsettia flowers and candy canes, popular Christmastime accents, also prominently feature red. Green—most visibly found in evergreen trees and wreaths—is the color of life. During Advent, it witnesses to the imminent birth of Jesus, which brings hope for new and eternal life to the world.

In response to your second question, Noël is an old French word meaning "Christmas," "the Christmas season," or "yuletide." The French word comes from the Latin for "birth" or "birthday." As we all know, Christmas is the time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus and the Incarnation of our Lord and Savior.

From Liguorian, December 2004 [sundaybulletin@liguori.org](mailto:sundaybulletin@liguori.org)

December 4, 2016 - Second Sunday of Advent

## Masses for the Week

### December 5th - 12th

Tues	1:00 pm	Anna Brown (Extended Care)
Wed	5:00 pm	J.W. Bland (LB)
Thurs	7:00 am	Harold Osborne (LO)
	9:30 am	Kathleen Stewart (Medco)
	12:05 pm	Mary Catherine Payne (DP)
	6:00 pm	Leroy Johnson
Fri	9:00 am	Tom & Cova Laslie (LM)
Sat	5:00 pm	Houston & Marcella Taul (RW)
Sun	7:00 am	Greg Wethington (SC)
	10:00 am	Mita & Clare Sulpa (MW)

### CONFESSIONS

**Wednesday** 4:00-5:00pm  
**Saturdays** 4:00 pm

## Readings for the Week

Sunday: Is 11:1-10/Ps 72/Rom 15:4-9/Mt 3:1-12  
 Monday: Is 35:1-10/Ps 85/Lk 5:17-26  
 Tuesday: Is 40:1-11/Ps 96/Mt 18:12-14  
 Wednesday: Is 40:25-31/Ps 103/Mt 11:28-30  
 Thursday: Gn 3:9-15, 20/Ps 98/Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38  
 Friday: Is 48:17-19/Ps 1/Mt 11:16-19  
 Saturday: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Ps 80/Mt 17:9a, 10-13  
 Next Sunday: Is 35:1-6a, 10/Ps 146/Jas 5:7-10/Mt 11:2-11

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## Stewardship of Finance

### November 20th Collection

Sunday Collection .....	\$6,461.50
Building Fund .....	\$65.00
Children .....	\$15.00
Loose change for the Poor.....	\$48.11
Campaign for Human Development.....	\$95.00

### November 27th Collection

Sunday Collection .....	\$7,230.50
Building Fund .....	\$5.00
Children .....	\$5.00
Loose change for the Poor.....	\$55.35
St. Vincent de Paul.....	\$830.00

### St. Romuald Parish Financial Summary

July-October, 2016

<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$177,800</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$173,200</b>
	<b>\$ 3,800</b>

**Thank you for your financial stewardship!**



## December 10th & 11th

	Eucharistic Ministers	Lectors	Ushers	Servers	Rosary Leaders	Music Ministers
5:00 pm	Shelly Jefferies Whitney Roach	Alex Bertschman Dale Board	C-Evan Barr* C-Jamie Barr S-Harry Mattingly S-John Roach	Benjamin Barr Eric Barr Andrew Tate	Angie Bertschman	Pippa
7:00 am	Cathy Lewis Jean Oelze	Buddy Payne	C-Tim Glasscock* C-Chuck Hardesty S-Michael Kennedy S-Cody Mingus	Madison Anthony Morgan Tabor	Crystal Greenwell	Pippa
10:00 am	Sally Hinton Mona Hinton Sandra Hinton Sandy Horsley	Donny Wethington Jessica Phillips	C-Patrick Critchelow* C-James E Henning S-Greg Hinton S-Noah Matthews	Hunter Ashcraft Will Lewis	Donny Wethington	Volunteer

Radio Minister: Joe Hess

Children's Liturgy:

## Words from the Pastor

+JMJ+

I want to offer a word about Christmas mass times..... it seems like a lot of masses, but please consider that two things are going on this year; we are adapting to a 1) call for an earlier night-time offering **and** trying out a true midnight, and also 2) this year Christmas Day falls on Sunday. I wanted to honor our regular Sunday schedule, much like we do on Easter Sunday having regular 7:00 am and 10:00 am mass. I am very sensitive to people's family traditions and schedules because Church is part of all of our lives. Any adjustment in one is an adjustment in the other. So to have an earlier eve mass, but still dark enough to have the full effect of all the candles and lights amid the darkness (Candlelight Mass), **we will be having an 8:00 pm mass in place of last year's 11:00 pm**, but also offer a **12:00 pm midnight** too! But we still have the 4:00 pm Children's Mass, followed up with Christmas morning at 7:00 am and 10:00 am. We can certainly review this schedule afterward to see how it works or doesn't, to accommodate family traditions. Of course, next year won't fall on Sunday, so that will be one difference. But I want to hear what people think about the schedule and how introducing an extra mass helps or not. We will be advertising the other area parishes' Christmas schedules to help everyone find a time most fitting to their family and company visiting and traditions. We will see-Let me know!

**What is the Advent 'watch-word'?** It is "Repent"! The word 'repent' means both 'Look' and 'Turn', as in 'look around' and 'turn back to God'. To me, John the Baptist is the 'poster-child' of Advent! He is always pointing toward Jesus, saying 'Get ready, Jesus is coming!' Matthew 3:2 has John speaking his basic message, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!**" As an introduction, he identifies himself in the line of OT prophets & quotes Isaiah 40:3 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths'. Advent calls us to 'make preparations, clear the way and straighten up, because God is visiting.' What can we do to best prepare for God's coming again into our world? Well, what do we do to prepare for any visitor? Open the door, turn on a light, clear the table, bring from the cabinet some food/ drinks, tidy-up and welcome the Guest! So, how much more should we do if that visitor is God?

What a great government conspiracy movie plot! Scoot over Oliver Stone and Michael Moore! Here comes Matthew! Matthew tells of political drama and palace intrigue in the Herod Dynasty. The conspiracy plots against John the Baptist are remarkable (and with Jesus later as the great betrayal by Judas & Temple Priests get into Jesus' inner circle!) In today's gospel we hear about some of the forces conspiring to eliminate John. For John the Baptist, only Jesus-God and God's kingdom matter. He wants everyone to repent and turn back to God. He does want the Pharisees and Sadducees to convert. But, John is not stupid or naive about the level of corruption within the power structure of Palestine-Rome. For example some people have said that John is not giving the Pharisees a chance to convert when he says "You brood of vipers, who warned you to escape the coming wrath." No, John is simply putting his own followers on alert and letting the Pharisees and others know he is aware of the devious and cunning plans of some of his adversaries. Someone has to let them know they need to change. So the question to answer is: **Are they coming to John to truly change their lives**

and convert to godly living? **Or are they coming out to spy** and find grounds to trump up charges later to have him tried and killed? I think John knows that King Herod is behind the Pharisees **conveniently** showing up, appearing at his spiritual revival meetings at the Jordan River! King Herod is the one who is going to have John killed (you can find all of the details in Matthew 14:3-5, about Roman politics & John's traditional teaching on marriage). Jesus is fully aware of this political, palace drama when he begins ministry later. Jesus even calls Herod 'that fox' after He is warned by some good Pharisees that Herod was plotting to kill Him too! (Find it in Luke 13:32). While the Pharisees have different motives (spiritual jealousy & envious pride) to want John eliminated, they still join forces with other threatened power groups. Storm clouds gather in a perfect storm when all these evil forces team up against Jesus as we hear about in Mark 3:6 "The Pharisees went out and immediately **took counsel with the Herodians against Jesus** to put him to death." Also in Mark 12:13 we hear about this axis of evil against Jesus when Mark writes that "They (**chief priests & scribes**) **sent some Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to ensnare him in his speech**" Now maybe this is way more information than we wanted to know about, but my point is simply that John the Baptist knew that many forces did not want people to convert and change their lives to more faithful living according to gospel of Jesus. They so opposed Jesus and His Kingdom to the point of working against Him and ultimately killing Him. Like the line in the movie "Cool Hand Luke, "What we got here is a failure to..... --- (commune with God), so you get what you saw happened to John!" John tried! John wanted them to convert, but he was also wise to their deception and cover. So John invites them to give a practical sign of their authenticity, to show their seriousness about conversion to God's ways. In Matthew 3:8, John says, ""Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance." Advent is a time of preparing and working up signs of **our own genuine conversion** and readiness for God's coming!

Here are some daily questions to consider in our prayer time!

**Sunday:** What did God tell me today at Mass? Is it a message to share with someone else?

**Monday:** If I had to give an accounting to God of my life today, what would I be saying?

**Tuesday:** Am I alert to the needs of those around me? Am I aware of my own heart's feelings, anxieties or needs? Do I need to spend more time in prayer about either or both?

**Wednesday:** Noah lived by his own faithful ness to God's call against everyone else's opinions. Am I that strong in faith to stand against the tide of others people's opinions?

**Thursday:** How much unfinished business do I carry from day to day? What do I need to focus most on to feel more prepared for Jesus' second coming?

**Friday:** Perform some act of mercy or anonymous act of kindness for someone today.

**Saturday:** Consider coming to mass early and pray the rosary with others and pray over the readings from the missalette before Mass.

Peace and Prayers, Fr Brian Johnson

**Marriage Help** – Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vi) has helped thousands of couples who are disillusioned or even experiencing misery in their marriage. This program can help you too. For confidential information about or to register for the January program beginning with a weekend on Jan 13, 2017, call 270-852-8346, or email: [flelliot@audubon-area.com](mailto:flelliot@audubon-area.com) or visit the web site at [www.retrouvaille.org](http://www.retrouvaille.org)

**Al-Anon Meeting:** Mondays 7:00 pm St Romuald Parish Hall. Come find support and understanding to recover a sense of serenity in your life.

## Celebration

**BIRTHDAYS:** Aulton Richards, December 7th and Mary Ann Johnson, December 12th.



**First Reconciliation  
November 20, 2016**



**All Expectant Mothers Blessing:** The weekend of December 3-4, we will be having a special blessing for pregnant mothers and families as they await the birth of their child! We ask God to bless mother and child with health and growth and safe delivery! And we look forward to celebrating the children's baptisms and welcoming our newest members at church!

**Anointing of the Sick Offered at Weekend Mass** on December 10-11. We look forward to praying with and anointing any ill or suffering parishioners at masses the weekend of December 10-11, as we offer the anointing sacrament of the sick.

Sometimes people ask who can be anointed, and the Church teaches that those who are seriously ill or suffering a chronic illness, preparing for surgery or recovering from surgery can be anointed for healing and comfort.

## **Men's Discernment Retreat:**

Any young man ages 18-25 seriously thinking about a possible vocation to priesthood is invited to a free discernment weekend retreat. This is an opportunity to set some time out in silence to listen to the voice of God in your life; listen to inspiring talks and guidance for discernment process; learn the tools of discernment, sharpen your discerning skills and have a one-on-one visit/spiritual direction with a priest. Retreat held December 16-17 at St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology. Registration deadline is December 12th. For more information, contact the vocations office: 270-683-1545 or [jason.mcclure@pastoral.org](mailto:jason.mcclure@pastoral.org)

## **Attention Business Owners and Generous Parishioners!**

**Mitch Taylor** will be working on setting up the advertising sponsorships for our annual directory/ Parish Handbook the week of **December 5th**. Please consider advertising in our directory.

Advertisements can be purchased for a business, family, or a sponsor ad can be purchased supporting community service organizations like emergency pregnancy counseling or the battered women's shelter, etc. **We need and appreciate your help.**

If you are interested or would like more information, please call Mitch directly at **(502) 492-4642** or (800) 950-9952 ext. 2597

Thank you in advance for your generous support, and please patronize our advertisers!

## THIS WEEK:

Sun	7/10 am	Blessing of the Child in the Womb
Mon	1:00 pm	Blue Army Rosary
	7:00 pm	Al-Anon Meeting
Tues	10:00 am	Scripture Study
	1:00 pm	Mass (Extended Care)
	6:00 pm	St. Vincent de Paul
Wed	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Mass
	5:30 pm	Altar Society Meeting
Thur	7:00 am	Holy Day Mass
	9:30 am	Mass (Medco)
	12:05 pm	Holy Day Mass
	6:00 pm	Holy Day Mass
Fri	9:00 am	Mass
Sat	5:00 pm	Anointing of the Sick at Mass
Sun	7/10 am	Anointing of the Sick at Mass
	8:30 am	K-6 Religious Education

## UPCOMING:

Dec 15	10:00 am	Senior Day
Dec 16	6:00 pm	Family Movie Night

## We Pray For:

Gene Aldridge, Jim Ball, Gene Bennett, Joe Bennett, Bradley Berry, Ronnie Bruner, Juanita Burch, Joann Butler, Waylon Carman, Billy Carwile, Jerry Carwile, Russel Carwile, Janet Chambliss, Diane Charlebois, Sharon Church, Joan Clark, Mary Crook, Vonda Decker, Roger Dowell, Kenneth Dowell, Davye Duggins, Mary Catherine Edge, Shelby Elder, Rodney Elliott, Michael Ernest, Carroll Ferguson, Rhett Flener, Donny Flood, Ginny Flood, Shannon Ford, Andrea Fuqua, Barnard Gagel, Henrietta Gibson, Dorothy Greenwell, **Bill Greenwood**, Jerry Grimes, Sr., Laura Beavin Hawley, Davy Haycraft, **Jessica Henderson**, Dale Henning, JoAnn Henning, Lisa Henning, Karen Herbert, Kitty Himmelhaver, Bill Hinton, Doug Hinton, Janet Hodson, Steve Hodson, David Horsley, Daniel Hoskins, **Rick Hurley**, Barbara Jarboe, Virginia Jeffries, Don Jerrell, Kiara Jo, Jerry Johnson, Jim Johnson, Mary Ann Johnson, Jack Jolly, Lovel King, Faith Klingsmith, David Lane, Angie Lawrence, Linda Ledford, Jennie Maiden, Mark Masterson, Keith McDaniel, Ann Medlen, Kevin McHugh, **Bevan Michael Miller**, Richard Miller, Blaise Mills, **Ian Moore**, John Moore, Barbara O'Connell, Don O'Donoghue, Eddie O'Donoghue, Joe Oelze, Earl O'Reilly, Libby Osborne, Rowan Palmer, **Peggy Phillips**, Judy Popham, Bobby Potts, Doris Priest, Joe Priest, Robert Priest, Sandy Priest, Tracy Ralston, Jamie Riley, Rita Roach, Julie Robbins, Shirley Robbins, Suzanne Rose, Annelise Sebastian, **Judy Seelye**, Colleen Simmons, Jerry Sosh, Lucye Stupak, Loretta Swink, Adalee Taul, Becky Taul, Beavin & Gina Thornsberry, Dorothy Tillberg, Paul Tucker, Brook Tyler, Bobby Upchurch, Gil Urban, Johnny Vessels, Nancy Vincent, Buddy Weatherholt, Greg Weise, Greg Wethington, Millie Whittler, Judy Whitley, Jimmy Whitworth, Mary Rita Whitworth, Carolyn Wilcheck, Kevin Wilcheck, Robert D. Wilson, Shaun Winstead, Anne Wolfe, Sandra Zanone. **Serving in the Armed Forces:** Mandie Adams, Kevin Arnold, Fred Barham, Austin Brown, Timothy Cashen, Cody Garst, Parker Findlay, James Hanor, Jack Hayes, Stevie Higgs, James Howard, Charles Kuhlman, SSgt Bradford O'Reilly, Jordan Pate, Cody Simmons, Liana Tindle, Chase Upchurch, Garrett Wadsworth



## Christmas Mass Schedule:

Christmas Eve: 4:00 pm, 8:00 pm, & 12:00pm  
Midnight-----Christmas Morning 7:00 am and 10:00 am

**Attention All Ministers:** We need volunteers to for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses. Please call the office if you are able to volunteer for any of the Masses. Thank You!

## Have your best Advent Ever! and Christmas!

All it takes is 3 minutes a day. Sign up for "Best Advent Ever: Rediscover Christmas", from Dynamic Catholic.com, a free email program that will help you slow down and focus on what matters most during the busy holiday season. Check out <http://dynamiccatholic.com/best-advent-ever/> to sign up!

## A Word from Pope Francis:

"The Kingdom of God is not a 'show' religion: one that is always seeking new things, new revelations and messages." God spoke through Jesus Christ: this is the last Word of God. The show of 'new' fashions is like fireworks that light you up for a moment and then what is left behind? Nothing. There is no growth, there is no light, nothing: just an instant. And we are tempted many times by this '**entertainment religion**' of seeking new things that are extraneous to the revelation, to the meekness of the Kingdom of God. For this is not about hope, this is about the desire to have something in our hands. Our salvation comes from hope, being faithful and waiting patiently for God." (Pope Francis 11-10-2016)



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## 7-12 Religious Education:

Youth group met last week and prepared a Christmas treat for our local workers at the hospital and nursing home. Just a thank you to them from us for the love and care they give their residents. We also finished out the night with our Christmas Party.

\*Any youth interested in a service project on Dec. 19 we will be traveling to St. Anthony's to help prepare and serve meals to shut-ins/widows for the Christmas Season. We will leave St. Romuald at 8am that Monday morning. If you plan to attend you will need to let Gayle know at 270-617-1308 so we can make sure we have enough seat belts. Also if you know of a parishioner/someone in our community that would love to see our youth on their doorstep with a meal please call me.

**Knights of Columbus Members:** Our Annual "Light Up for Christ" Christmas Dinner is on December 13th at 6:00 pm in the St. Romuald's Parish Hall. Please bring a covered dish and dessert. Meats will be provided by the Council.

**Family Movie Night:** In a town not so long ago and a time not so long ago, baby Rose was left in an orphanage. Under the tender care of Mrs. Stafford the children seemed to become her family. But then tragedy strikes and Rose loses the only home she ever knew, and shipped to Irongates, a place as cold as a winter chill and just as cruel. The head master seems to dislike Rose from the very beginning and her life at Irongates is anything but loving. Christmas comes around and Rose hears that every child will receive an orange but once again the headmaster steps in to punish Rose by not giving her a Christmas Orange. Share a slice of Christmas and come and enjoy this movie that is sweetened with friendship and love. Join us in the parish hall Friday, Dec 16 at 6pm for an evening of Christmas fellowship and a few Christmas snacks!

**Senior Day:** It's time again for us to come together and enjoy the Christmas Holiday. Bring your friends and a dish to pass as we enjoy our holiday feast. We again will be supplying a turkey and all the fixins (turkey, dressing, gravy, and mashed potatoes). Our topic of discussion will be St. Nicholas, St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin and Our Lady of Guadalupe also St. Lucy. Come and sing a few Christmas carols together as we once again enjoy the fellowship of the holiday spirit. Santa may be dropping off a few holiday treats...HOHOHOHO.



## **First Friday 24-hour Adoration:**

Following the 9:00 am Mass on December 2, we begin the 24 hour adoration until Saturday morning mass at 8:00 am. We are blessed with dedicated adorers for each hour, but can use extra people for some hours. Please call Minnie Nimmo 270-617-0297 or Patsy Whitfill 270-617-2557 to volunteer spending an hour if prayer with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

## **Practices for the 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass**

Monday Dec 5	3:00 - 4:00
Monday Dec 12	3:00 - 4:00
Monday Dec 19	3:00 - 4:00

All children are invited to participate. For more information please call Patty Curran at 270-945-8155

**Pray to end abortion:** Join other Catholics and those from other faiths that gather each Saturday at 2nd and Market in Louisville from 7:00-8:00 am (EST) to pray for families entering the abortion clinic. Many children have been saved and mothers spared future grief by this prayer action and support. With God, all things are possible! Archbishop Kurtz is known to show up and pray with everyone too!



**Sympathy:** Please pray for the repose of the soul of Sharon Winkler (sister of Denise Smith, Trish Aldridge and Joey Alexander) who was buried

on Wednesday. Please keep the family in your prayers.

We also extend our deepest sympathy to family of Susie Mattingly. Please keep her family in your prayers.

**We thank our advertiser for making the bulletin possible!** Please take a moment to read the back of the bulletin and note the generous advertisers from the business community who provide our bulletin each week! Each time you visit their business, let them know you are thankful for their support of our parish's weekly bulletin!

**Advertiser of the week:**  
**Commonwealth Machining**  
**270-756-1449**

**Thank you for supporting St Romuald Church!**



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2016**

**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**What's in your spiritual DNA?**

Genealogy is popular these days. Perhaps you've traced your family lineage and learned where your ancestors came from and what their names were. It's meaningful to learn your family history and heritage because it's a part of your identity. From

the Bible, we know the genealogy of Jesus, and at Christmastime we hear about Jesus' ancestor, Jesse, a good man from Bethlehem who fathered King David. Teach the children in your life about their faith inheritance as Christians by making a Jesse Tree with them as a crafts project—and reflect on what you've inherited from Jesse, too.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 11:1-10; Romans 15:4-9; Matthew 3:1-12 (4)*. "A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom."

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 5**

**ADVENT WEEKDAY**

**Civil rights are sacred**

On this day in 1955, the day of Rosa Parks' trial, the historic bus boycott began in Montgomery, Alabama in protest of her arrest. That day, some 40,000 African-American commuters chose to walk to work, no matter the distance. Despite many efforts (some violent) to put an end to the boycott, it lasted for a year. In June 1956, a district court declared that racial segregation laws were unconstitutional and in November of that year the Supreme Court upheld that ruling. We often forget that our notion of civil rights comes from our Christian heritage. Let's pray for rights for all, especially those who are most marginalized by our society.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 5:17-26 (181)*. "Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God."

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6**

**MEMORIAL OF NICHOLAS, BISHOP**

**Generous thoughts**

Nicholas was a beloved fourth-century bishop who has been appropriated as a patron saint of sailors, fishermen, merchants, broadcasters, the falsely accused, repentant thieves, brewers, pharmacists, archers, pawnbrokers, and students! But for most of us, he is associated by legend with Christmas and immortalized in Clement Moore's poem, "A Visit from Saint Nicholas." His feast is like a little Christmas, a reminder that the feast you are about to celebrate in 18 days has little to do with material gift-giving and everything to do with generous love-giving. Stories about Nicholas involve anonymous generosity to someone in need. Be generous today in honor of old Saint Nick!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 40:1-11; Matthew 18:12-14 (182)*. "Here is your God! Here comes with power the Lord God."

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7**

**MEMORIAL OF AMBROSE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH**

**Be a spirited voice for unity**

We live in polarized times. How can we find our way past our divisions? Perhaps Ambrose, a holy man from the fourth century, can suggest a way forward. Back in the day, arguments over the divinity of Christ spilled into disputes over church leadership. Ambrose, who at the time wasn't even a baptized Christian, appealed to all factions and was spontaneously called forth as bishop by popular acclaim. The Spirit moves in surprising ways. Be a force for unity wherever

you find division: in your church, your community, your family.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 40:25-31; Matthew 11:28-30 (183)*. "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart."

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8**

**SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY; PATRONAL FEAST DAY OF THE UNITED STATES**

**Mary, mother of America**

It's been one month since Election Day in the United States. Whether your candidate won or lost, today is an opportunity to pray for our nation. In tumultuous times, it's comforting to know that we have an advocate in the Blessed Mother, patroness of the United States. Mary watches over each one of us and in a special way our country. As we celebrate her Immaculate Conception, let us ask her intercession on behalf of our nation—that we might have the courage and perseverance to follow her example of fidelity to grace and obedience to God's will.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38 (689)*. "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9**

**MEMORIAL OF JUAN DIEGO CUAUHTLATOATZIN**

**Happy Juan Diego day**

Some Europeans in the newly conquered Americas considered natives to be less than fully human. But God chose Juan Diego, a poor, humble native man, to be his messenger by sending Our Lady of Guadalupe to him. This meant that all indigenous people were important. In 2002 Pope John Paul II canonized him as the first indigenous saint of the American continent, saying, "Happy Juan Diego, true and faithful man! 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. May all people, civic leaders and ordinary citizens alike, always act in accordance with the demands of justice and with respect for the dignity of each person, so that in this way peace may be reinforced."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 48:17-19; Matthew 11:16-19 (185)*. "Wisdom is proved right by her deeds."

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10**

**ADVENT WEEKDAY**

**What are we waiting for?**

An empty chair at the Passover table waits for Elijah. He's the mysterious prophet in 2 Kings who flew to heaven on a fiery chariot. Elijah's return is anticipated as the hour of restored justice. Jesus tells us not to wait on Elijah: The time for justice is already here. Since 1948 on this day, the United Nations has promoted International Human Rights Day. It's a time to declare that equality, freedom, peace, hope, dignity, rule of law, prosperity, and justice belong to all, not just to the lucky ones. Stand up for global human rights.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13 (186)*. "Elijah will indeed come and restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come."

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