

# SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 5, 2021



Jesus, as we prepare  
to welcome you again this Christmas,  
speak your words into our hearts and lives,  
that by our preparation for your birth,  
we might proclaim what still needs to be made ready  
if our world is to become more like your Kingdom.  
Soften our hearts, calm our fears, and give us courage  
to proclaim your coming in our broken world.

## *Saint Stanislaus Catholic Church*

516 East 13th Street  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16503  
814.452.6606  
[www.ststanserie.org](http://www.ststanserie.org)  
email: [ststaner@outlook.com](mailto:ststaner@outlook.com)

Fr. Jason Glover, S.T.L., Pastor  
Msgr. Daniel Magraw, Senior Associate  
Debbie Oldenski, Secretary  
Thaddeus Fryczynski, Director of Music

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9:30AM - 3:00 PM  
(Closed 12:00PM - 1:00PM, Saturdays, Sundays, & Holidays)

**Weekend Eucharistic Liturgy:**  
**Saturday at 4:00PM; Sunday at 9:00AM**  
**\* Daily Eucharist: Call the Parish Office**

## *Holy Trinity Catholic Church*

2220 Reed Street  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16503  
814.456.0671  
[www.holytrinityrc.org](http://www.holytrinityrc.org)  
email: [parishoffice@holytrinityrc.org](mailto:parishoffice@holytrinityrc.org)

Fr. Jason Glover, S.T.L., Pastor  
Msgr. Daniel Magraw, Senior Associate  
Mary Ann Merski, Secretary  
Jeannie McGinley, Director of Music

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9:00AM - 4:00PM  
(Closed 12:00PM - 1:00PM, Saturdays, Sundays, & Holidays)

**Weekend Eucharistic Liturgy:**  
**Saturday at 5:15PM; Sunday at 10:30AM**  
**\* Daily Eucharist: Call the Parish Office**



# Saint Stanislaus & Holy Trinity

## Partners in Faith & Mission



December 5, 2021  
2nd Sunday of Advent

St. Ambrose shares some wisdom on our need to prepare the way and open the door for Christ. "You see that when the Word of God knocks hardest on your door, it is when his hair is wet with the dew of the night. In fact, he chooses to visit those who are in tribulation and trial, lest one of them be overwhelmed by distress. So, his head is covered with dew, with drops, when his body is laboring hard. It is important to keep watch so that when the Bridegroom comes, he is not shut out. If you are asleep and your heart is not keeping watch, he will go away without knocking; but if your heart is alert for his coming, he knocks and asks for the door to be opened to him." When life gets overwhelming and difficult and we find ourselves feeling a bit downhearted and miserable, these words can bring great comfort.

We sometimes choose to remain stuck in our uncomfortable darkness and being stuck becomes our norm. In this time of self-focus our hearts are closed to the graces and life God desires to give us. Wrapped in the robe of mourning and misery, we fail to see the mercy, justice, and love the Bridegroom wants to bring. If we take seriously the need to prepare the way for Christ and open our hearts in preparation for his visit, we can hear God's gentle voice calling us deep within. It beckons us to seek out its source and discover the inner calm and peace that can prevail over the darkness of despair. Sometimes our darkness is so dark that it may seem unsurmountable. Trusting in the spiritual friends who journey with us, and God's promise may bring a glimmer of light even when it is most difficult to keep our hearts' doors open. Sometimes, the only light in the darkness is found in trusting the faith of others both past and present.

We have to trust that God has already begun the accomplishment of good work in us and that humanity is on an incredible journey to something wonderful and awesome. God is not done. When we open the doors of our hearts, straighten the paths of our lives, and prepare the way, Jesus can come with God's simple gifts of peace, grace, and joy. God is knocking. Answer the door. You will see and understand life in ways you never thought possible before.

### Readings for the week of December 5, 2021

Sunday: Bar 5:1-9/Ps 126:1-6/Phil 1:4-6, 8-11/Lk 3:1-6 [2nd Sunday of Advent]  
Monday: Is 35:1-10/Ps 85:9-14/Lk 5:17-26  
Tuesday: Is 40:1-11/Ps 96:1-3, 10-13/Mt 18:12-14 [St. Ambrose]  
Wednesday: Gn 3:9-15, 20/Ps 98:1-4/Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38 [Imm. Conception]  
Thursday: Is 41:13-20/Ps 145:1, 9-13/Mt 11:11-15 [St. Juan Diego]  
Friday: Is 48:17-19/Ps 1:1-6/Mt 11:16-19  
Saturday: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Ps 80:2-3, 15-19/Mt 17:9a, 10-13 [St. Damasus]  
Next Sunday: Zep 3:14-18/Is 12:2-6/Phil 4:4-7/Lk 3:10-18 [Third Sunday of Advent]

**Sacrament of Baptism:** Sacramental preparation is required of the parents who desire to share the Catholic faith with their children and are held monthly throughout the City of Erie. Call the parish office to register to schedule your preparation. Godparents must be Confirmed and practicing Catholics with a letter of recommendation from their pastor to serve as a sacramental sponsor.

**Religious Education, First Holy Communion, and First Reconciliation** programs are hosted at Saint Luke's Church for all eastside Erie parishes. Contact their parish office for more information and to register your child (814.825.7105).

**Confirmation** preparation for all eastside Erie parishes is hosted at Saint Luke's Church. Contact their parish office for more information and to register your child (814.825.6920).

**Sacrament of Holy Orders:** God calls all people to holiness. Some men are called to fulfill this vocation as priests. If you are interested in the priesthood, or have questions about it, please contact a parish priest or our Diocesan Vocation Director, Scott Jabo, at 1.814.824.1181.

**Sacrament of Matrimony:** Before a date can be scheduled, a priest must be contacted at least six months in advance to complete the required documents.

**Sacrament of the Sick:** Communal celebrations of Anointing the Sick are scheduled periodically. The sacrament can also be requested by any parishioner who is seriously ill or in danger of death. *Please note:* Federal law no longer permits hospitals or nursing homes to contact churches when a parishioner is admitted. It is important that family members notify the parish office if a loved one needs a visit, desires to receive Holy Communion, or needs to be Anointed.

**Leave A Legacy:** Consider Saint Stanislaus and Holy Trinity as you meet with your attorney or financial planner regarding your estate planning. Remember the needs of your parish family and leave a legacy of faith for future generations with your generous remembrance.

**Bulletin Information Deadline:** Please submit information to be included in the weekend bulletin by noon the Monday prior. Holiday bulletin announcements must be received by the parish office two weeks in advance.

*Saint Stanislaus & Holy Trinity  
Partners in Faith & Mission*

**"PRAYER, CARE, AND CONCERN" MINISTRY**

Those who participate in this ministry express the care and concern of our entire parish community to those who are ill, hospitalized, homebound, or in nursing facilities, through birthday and holiday cards, visits, and prayers. To request prayers, or to participate in this ministry, contact Saint Stanislaus Office (814-452-6606).

**"PRAYERLINE" MINISTRY**

These ministers devote themselves to prayer for any needs made known to them and any special intentions. To participate in this ministry, or to request prayers for a particular need, contact Saint Stanislaus Office (814-452-6606 or Holy Trinity Office (814-456-0671).

**PCEP (Parish Catholic Education Program)**

Parishioners of Holy Trinity can receive a parish grant to assist with the cost of tuition for families who wish their primary or secondary school age children to have a Catholic education. To be eligible, families must participate in the program, attend Mass regularly, and be involved in the parish community. For more information, contact the parish office.

**LITURGICAL MINISTRIES**

Parishioners interested in serving our worshipping community as an altar server, lector, Eucharistic minister, or music minister, please let one of your priests know.

**"PRAYER SHAWL" MINISTRY**

The enjoyment of knitting, crocheting, and sewing are uniquely combined with prayer to offer a deeply personal and meaningful spiritual ministry. Shawls are prayerfully made and freely given away to those suffering bereavement, those recovering from illness, the elderly, homebound, and those in nursing facilities. To join us in this ministry, please contact Saint Stanislaus Office (814-452-6606).

**THE "ZABAWA COMMITTEE"**

Held on the parish grounds of Holy Trinity, Zabawa is the largest Polish heritage celebration in the region, drawing tens of thousands of people to our neighborhood. The Zabawa Committee organizes the festival through food preparation, donation solicitation, food and beverage service, and so on. The committee always welcomes any help they receive. If you would like to offer your time, and experience hands-on learning about these rich cultural traditions, contact Holy Trinity Office (814-456-0671).

**PROLIFE COMMUNITY**

This ministry advocates through for the protection of all human life from conception until natural death through prayer, education, and action.

**"PRAYER CANDLE" MAKING MINISTRY**

This ministry makes prayer candles from the church's left over bee's wax. They meet on Wednesdays, from 10AM - Noon in St. Stanislaus Parish Hall. No experience necessary.

**ST. STANISLAUS / HOLY TRINITY INITIAL PARISHIONER REGISTRATION FORM**

(please circle which parish)

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Check:  New Registration  Change of Address  Change of Telephone Number

Change of E-mail  Moving out of Parish  Want Envelopes

*Place in offertory basket or mail to Parish Office. We will contact you to complete our Census Form.  
Welcome to our Parish Family!*

*A Community of Faith Built on Tradition, Where Everyone is Welcome*

# Saint Stanislaus Parish Community

## MASS INTENTIONS

Mon., Dec. 6th - Private Intention  
 Tues., Dec. 7th - Deacon Bob Walker (Carolyn Vendetti)  
 Wed., Dec. 8th - The Engist Family  
 Thurs., Dec. 9th - Stanley Widomski (Andria & John Votovich)  
 Fri., Dec. 10th - Joseph Macioch (Family)  
 Sat., Dec. 11th, 4:00PM - For the People of St. Stanislaus (*Pro Populo*)  
 Sun., Dec. 12th, 9:00AM - Charles Britton (Family)

## "HOLIDAY CASH RAFFLE"

The Women's Society is, once again, selling raffle tickets for a chance to win either \$1,000 in cash, or \$1,000 worth of scratch-off lottery tickets. Tickets are \$5 each and can be purchased from any member of the Society, the Parish Office, or by calling Nancy (814-454-4046). All proceeds benefit Saint Stanislaus Parish.



Our sanctuary candle burns in for **JAMES VALAHOVIC**, as gifted by Janet & Ed Grunzel

## SSJ SOUP KITCHEN

The Sisters of Saint Joseph will NOT need baked good for the month of December, but are ever grateful for your generosity and charity.

## WOMEN'S SOCIETY CHRISTMAS PARTY

... will be held on Sunday, December 12th, at the 3rd Street Falcon's Club from Noon until 3:00PM. Dinner will be served at 12:30PM and will consist of either 1/2 baked chicken or breaded pork chop. The cost is \$15 per person; guests are welcome to attend. To make a reservation, please call Sharon at 814-790-1226 or Diane at 814-825-5748. Reservations must be made by December 8th.

## ADVENT MEDITATION BOOKS

Advent reflection books, "Awaken to New Light," are available next to the bulletin bins for a nominal cost of \$1.25. Please use the envelope provided and place it in the collection basket. Many blessings for a graced Advent season.

## LESSONS & CAROLS

Lessons & Carols, a traditional Advent devotion which blends scripture readings, music, and prayers focused on the coming Christmas season, will be celebrated on the Third Sunday of Advent, December 19th, at 2:00PM. Please consider joining us for the simple, yet prayerful, experience as we prepare to welcome the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

## JANUARY LOTTERY RAFFLE

The Holy Name Society is, once again, selling raffle tickets based off the evening lottery drawing during the month of January. See any member of the Society for tickets for your chance to win. Tickets can also be purchased in the Sacristy or in the Parish Office. They make great Christmas gifts! Thanks for your support. Proceeds of the raffle have benefited our parish in many ways.

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

Saint Stanislaus Christmas Cards are available in the vestibule of the church. All we ask is for a reasonable donation for the cards.

## WEEKLY OFFERING (NOVEMBER 28, 2021)

	This Week	July 1 to date
Amount we need	\$4,156.00	\$91,432.00
Amount Received	\$2,399.00	\$59,208.00
Net over/under	(\$1,757.00)	(\$32,224.00)

Mass Attendance:  
 4:00PM = 48; 9:00AM = 25  
 Envelopes: 50/168



## GOD'S PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

If you have ever planned a large-scale event, whether it's a musical performance or a religious conference, you may have dealt with someone's personal assistant. Possibly this person would be a representative of the keynote speaker or the master of ceremonies for the local bishop; perhaps it's even the staffer of a local politician or the lackey of a well-known musical act. Personal assistants are masters of stewardship — overseeing things in their boss' absence. They prepare the way. This person's job is to get everything ready for the person in charge, so that when he or she shows up — whoever he or she is — it's smooth sailing for them to do whatever it is they need to do: sing, speak, pray, mingle, what-have-you. It's usually a big job full of little things, a gig where attention to detail is key. God is the guest of honor in our life, the keynote speaker, the main event. And what He wants — what He needs — to do is to change our hearts. Constantly, over, and over, and over again. We are all His personal assistants in this endeavor. We need to prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight His paths. We need to make everything ready so that when He shows up — however He shows up, whether it's in the form of a neighbor in need or a burning bush right in front of us — everything is ready for Him to do His job.

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

# Holy Trinity Parish Community



The sanctuary candle burns this week in memory of **TERRY HINEY**, as gifted by Pearl & Kathy Wisniewski.



12/08 - Diane Dressner & Sally Jankowski  
12/10 - Douglas Lubak

### Holy Trinity Parish Giving Tree

Share with the Lord's people who are in need.  
Practice hospitality.

~ Romans 12:13



Donated gifts will be delivered to the  
**MERCY CENTER FOR WOMEN**

Your generous donations will help bring the joy of Christmas to the Mercy Center mothers and their children

Remove a card from the tree

Purchase a gift, as noted on the card

Return gifts, *unwrapped*, with card attached

Gifts accepted November 25<sup>th</sup> - December 10<sup>th</sup>

\*\*\*Donations of wrapping paper, gift bags, gift tags and tape also welcome\*\*\*

**Thank you for your  
generosity**

### MASS INTENTIONS

Mon., Dec. 6th - Kulig, Laszczewski, & Habas Families (Estate)  
Tues., Dec. 7th - Terry Hiney (Pearl & Kathy)  
Wed., Dec. 8th, 5:15PM - For the People of Holy Trinity (Pro Populo)  
Thurs., Dec. 9th - Msgr. John Daniszewski (Estate)  
Fri., Dec. 10th - The Souls in Purgatory  
Sat., Dec. 11th, 5:15PM - Christine Kempisty Moles (Mary Ann)  
Sun., Dec. 12th, 10:30AM - For the People of Holy Trinity (Pro Populo)

The readings for the Second Week of Advent offer both encouragement and challenge as we reflect and prepare for the two "comings" of Christ — His coming as a baby on the great feast of Christmas, and the anticipation of His second coming at the end of time. Our First Reading, from Baruch, is a wonderful reminder that God has triumphed over sin and death and that we — His faithful disciples — will live in the light of His glory one day. Until He comes again, we must remain faithful to Him as true disciples and good stewards of all the gifts He has given us. This reading calls us back to the spiritual reality that this life is passing and that we are made for eternal life with God. We are called to prepare for eternal life by the way that we use our time, our talents, and our treasure now. The Gospel reading from Luke shows us how personal and detailed is God's love for humanity as He prepared the way for Christ's coming among us. We are told the precise time, place, and person, John the Baptist, He appointed to announce the arrival of our Savior. John tells us how to celebrate to the fullest this first "coming" on the feast of Christmas and how to prepare for the second coming — through repentance. This Advent let's turn away from any bad habits or sin that may have crept into our lives and turn our hearts and minds back to Christ. This is what the stewardship way of life is all about — moving closer ever closer in relationship with Christ and imitation of Him, ready to celebrate His birth, with eyes fixed on eternal life with Him.

### WEEKLY OFFERING FOR NOVEMBER 28,, 2021

Regular Offering: \$1,796.00 (23/131)

	THIS WEEK	JULY 1 TO DATE
Dream Goal:	\$3,000.00	\$57,000.00
Budgeted:	\$2,365.00	\$47,871.00
Total Offertory:	\$1,796.00	\$52,056.00
Net (over/under):	(\$569.00)	\$4,185.00

Attendance: 5:15PM = 39; 10:30AM = 47

#### 2021 CSA UPDATE

Assessment: \$13,285.00  
Pledges: \$26,895.00 (71 families have participated)  
Paid to Date: \$25,630.00  
Balance Owed: \$1,265.00  
**Parish Profit: \$13,600.00**

\* Thank you to all who have participated!

### Fanfare for a King

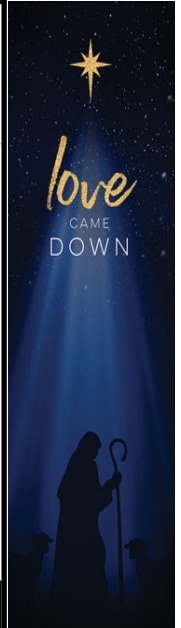
As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:  
"A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" Luke 3:4 (NIV)  
The puzzle is based on Luke 3:1-6



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J B J W W F I U R G D B I H K
J O E L U R C O Z U C Z Y N F
B T R P Z V A V P Z E P M T U
A Z C D P W P F O R E P E N T
P S J R A R E R Z I Q E I V A
T G N Y O N E E E I C B H A P
I A G B K O V P O A A E S L V
S I W Y V I K H A L C G D L B
M K X V G E Q E O R E H R E T
D R Q R S I N S D S E S I Y T
N E O Q S T R A I G H T R N A
K F S U E M L Y S A X Q O X G
B X O E G C A L L I N G O G F
N M O I R H Z Q O E M L R N R
O K E C H T M M S M O O T H W
    
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VOICE	ROUGH	FORGIVE	PREACHING	STRAIGHT
JORDAN	VALLEY	DESERT	REPENT	SINS
PREPARE	CROOKED	SMOOTH	BAPTISM	CALLING



*"Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his path."*

- Luke 3:4

## News for Our Partnership

### CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Friday, December 24th:

4:00PM - St. Stanislaus

5:15PM - Holy Trinity

Saturday, December 25th:

9:00AM - St. Stanislaus

10:30AM - Holy Trinity

Sunday, December 26th:

9:00AM - St. Stanislaus

10:30AM - Holy Trinity



### SURVEY REMINDER

Just a kind reminder to please return the surveys that were included in last week's bulleting by placing them in the collection baskets by next weekend. Additional surveys are available next to the bulletin bins. We are asking each person on each household to complete a survey. Thank you, in advance, for your participation.

### CHILD PROTECTION/SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

The digital world is constantly evolving with new social media platforms, apps, and devices, and children and teens are often the first to use them. Sometimes with negative impacts such as cyberbullying, sexting, or the posting hateful messages or content. Parents need to become aware and stay up-to-date on the latest apps, social media platforms and digital slang used by children and teens. Parents should monitor their child's social media sites, apps and browsing history regularly.

On December 6th, Saint Nicholas Day recognizes the third-century saint who became an inspiration for the modern-day Santa Claus. St. Nicholas is known for selling all his possessions and giving his money to the poor. Raised as a devout Christian, St. Nicholas dedicated his whole life to serving the sick and suffering. Legendary stories about St. Nicholas later become part of the inspiration for the modern-day Santa Claus. For example, during the third century, a daughter's chances of marriage increased when her father offered a large dowry to prospective husbands. One story tells of a poor father with three daughters. He had no dowry to offer. Traditionally, families left their shoes by the fires at night so that they could dry. On three separate occasions, Ol' St. Nicholas provided a dowry for each girl. Legend says he made gold appear in their shoes, drying by the fire. While St. Nicholas Day is not to be confused with Christmas, though similarities do exist. Traditions include leaving gifts in shoes (or stockings) or the exchange of small gifts. Another tradition suggests leaving treats for good boys and girls.

### THE 31 CLUB - PRAYING FOR VOCATIONS

12/6) Msgr Dan Magraw & Joan Oldenski; 12/7) Ed Korytowski & Lori Krasnesky; 12/8) Steve Rimpa, Stephanie & Bill Wycech; 12/9) Marcia Nitczynski & Rose Marie Radomski; 12/10) Tony Jankowski & Eleanor Walker; 12/11) Sandy Kempisty & Ray Przybyszewski; 12/12) Edie Luniewski & Debbie Oldenski

### PRAY FOR OUR PRIESTS

12/6) Fr. Ray Gramata; 12/7) Fr. Richard Allen; 12/8) Msgr. Henry Kriegel; 12/9) Fr. Phil Pinczewski; 12/10) Fr. Matt Kujawinski; 12/11) Fr. Casimir Bogniak

### Holy Trinity Annual Christmas Market

Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup> 4:00 – 7:00PM  
Saturday, December 18<sup>th</sup> 9:00AM – 12:00 Noon  
Holy Trinity Social Center, 23<sup>rd</sup> & Reed Street

Orders being taken -  
November 6<sup>th</sup> until December 6<sup>th</sup>  
PAYMENT IS DUE WITH ALL ORDERS

\*\*credit cards accepted\*\*

*Order in advance. Supplies  
will be limited during the  
market*

Cookies\*\*\*Pierogi\*\*\*Nut  
Roll\*\*\*Sweet Bread\*\*\*Oplatki and more...

Order forms available at  
[www.holytrinityrc.org](http://www.holytrinityrc.org)

To place an order call Edith, 456-5300



### LITURGICAL CHANGES

Bishop Persico recently decreed some changes in the way liturgy is celebrated in the Diocese of Erie. "Bishop Persico has determined now is an appropriate time for all of us to return to the practice that most dioceses in the United States employ. After the Lamb of God, the people will kneel. Once the people return after receiving Holy Communion, they may kneel or be seated. This restored practice is intended to help to unify posture throughout the Diocese of Erie, place us in greater harmony with the Church throughout the United States, lessen confusion, and assist those parishioners who are unable to stand for long periods of time. In situations where the people are unable to kneel, they may sit instead."

## Sunday, Dec 05, 2021

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### In praise of community service

Baruch 5:1-9; Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11; Luke 3:1-6

"A voice of one crying out in the desert:

'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.' "

Consider him an early volunteer. John the Baptist preached and baptized through the countryside, preparing the community for the way, truth, and life about to open to them. He wasn't paid for these services, which is probably why his diet was locusts and honey, and his clothing coarse. Today on International Volunteer Day, we give thanks for all who helped their neighbors with grocery runs and check-ins during the long season of sickness. We can continue this spirit of social engagement: giving blood, organizing group clean-ups, shoveling a neighbor's sidewalk. Volunteering builds empathy!

## Monday, Dec 06, 2021

MEMORIAL OF NICHOLAS, BISHOP

### The wonder of it all

Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 5:17-26

"We have seen incredible things today."

Very little is known about the historical Saint Nicholas, but he evolved into a legendary figure so intertwined with Christmas, it's almost as if he were part of the Nativity story. The actual Nicholas lived 300 years after the birth of Jesus. Whether he secretly gave gifts to children or not, the spirit of his story is real. Centuries later as presents are wrapped in mystery and kept under the tree in anticipation, emotions of waiting for the Christ Child heighten as we ponder a miracle we can't fathom.

## Tuesday, Dec 07, 2021

MEMORIAL OF AMBROSE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

### Wage peace

Isaiah 40:1-11; Matthew 18:12-14

"Comfort, give comfort to my people."

Advent anticipates the Prince of Peace. But as we recall Pearl Harbor, Catholics also embrace a tradition that includes Just War Theory - sketched out by the likes of Saint Augustine, fleshed out by the likes of Saint Ambrose. King David "never waged war unless he was driven to it," Ambrose observed, illustrating that wars should be fought only as a last resort. Further, war should be waged selflessly - to help and protect others. War that "preserves one's country [or] defends the weak... is full of justice." Pray for those in the armed services who sacrifice and protect, and also pray for peace.

## Wednesday, Dec 08, 2021

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

### A day of pure celebration

Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38

"... he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him."

Today we celebrate the Immaculate Conception, the church's teaching that Mary was preserved from original sin from the moment of her conception. It is one of only two dogmas proclaimed infallibly by a pope. All of today's readings are related: They trace the tale back to the Fall, followed by a celebration of the "marvelous deeds" of God's salvation, culminating in the gospel reading of the Annunciation. Today, honor our Blessed Mother and thank God for her preservation from sin so that she might bring Christ into the world.

## Thursday, Dec 09, 2021

MEMORIAL OF JUAN DIEGO CUAUHTLATOATZIN

### Be a witness to the miracle of God's love

Isaiah 41:13-20; Matthew 11:11-15

"Whoever has ears ought to hear."

We are told that Saint Juan Diego was undistinguished before he became the person to whom the Virgin Mary appeared at Tepeyac, Mexico in 1531. Juan Diego had an opportunity to open himself to God's grace—Mary's appearance and miracle. He responded in faith by listening to the Virgin and persistently communicating her message, even though as an indigenous person, his word was at first discounted. His part in the miracle at Tepeyac has had enduring impact by opening other indigenous and mestizo Mexicans to the gospel message, and by opening church leaders—albeit slowly, in fits and starts—to the message indigenous peoples have for the wider church. Are you ready to receive God's grace, as did Juan Diego?

## Friday, Dec 10, 2021

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF LORETO

### Jesus makes his presence known

Isaiah 48:17-19; Matthew 11:16-19

"The virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us!'"

Emmanuel, "God is with us," is our guiding truth. Christians find many ways to remind ourselves of God's Real Presence. Of course, the primary way is through the Eucharist. But shrines and relics are also a very Catholic way of pointing to the reality of Christ in our lives. Take for example the shrine of Our Lady of Loreto, which resides in Loreto, Italy, a small town on the Adriatic coast. It is there that the original home of Mary is said to have been moved, either by angels or more probably by a wealthy Italian merchant, after the late 13th-century siege of Jerusalem. At this shrine we can presumably touch the same stones that Jesus touched as a boy. What a remarkable reminder that the Word was made flesh and lived among us. Pray to Our Lady of Loreto for continued reminders of God's abiding presence.

## Saturday, Dec 11, 2021

MEMORIAL OF DAMASUS I, POPE

### By the book

Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."

By the fourth century of the Christian era there were 20 or so gospels floating around the early church communities along with the familiar four. Dozens of epistles existed in addition to the 21 we now recognize. It was today's saint, Pope Damasus I (c. 305–384), who presided over the Council of Rome in 382 that determined the canon, or official list, of the Bible. He also encouraged Saint Jerome to produce a translation of the existing Greek and Hebrew texts into Latin, the common language of the day. Inexpensive versions of the Catholic New American Bible Revised Edition make great Christmas gifts for friends and family looking to deepen their faith.

