



Praying with the Saints

OF THE ADVENT SEASON

One tremendous gift of the Advent season is the continued presence of saintly celebrations on our liturgical calendar.

We believe in the intercessory power of the Communion of Saints not only to inspire our own holy pursuits as role models but also to carry our prayer intentions to God.

Traditions abound to aid you in learning about the lives of the saints and celebrating their legacies.

Discover and celebrate those saints most meaningful to you and your family, or adopt new patrons. As we journey through Advent together, enjoy walking toward the light of the manger with these men and women to accompany you.

November 30—St. Andrew the Apostle

Patron of Fishermen, Happy Marriages, and Pregnant Women

Andrew, often referred to as “first called” because of his quickness to follow Jesus with his brother Peter, declared, “We have found the Messiah” (Jn 1:41).

He gave his life to and went to his death preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A traditional Christmas novena begins each year on his feast day and is repeated daily throughout the season until the Nativity of the Lord.

St. Andrew, you longed for and recognized our Lord as the one sent by God for our salvation. Be with us as we journey these days of Advent, that we may share your faith in the power and glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

December 3—St. Francis Xavier, Priest

Patron of Missionaries, Parish Missions, and Plague Epidemics

Born and educated in a wealthy family, Francis Xavier left behind a planned career in academics to join the cofounders of the Jesuits. He became their first missionary, ministering in India, the East Indies, and Japan. Francis gave his life to the sharing of the Good News far and wide. In his honor, read a gospel story today or feast on Asian food.

St. Francis Xavier, Apostle to the Far East, no distance was too great for you to share your love for Jesus. Help us to find the words and excitement to spread God’s love to someone today.

December 6—St. Nicholas of Myra, Bishop

Patron of Children, Newlyweds, and Firefighters

St. Nicholas, priest and bishop, is often associated with “Santa Claus” because of his generous and merciful spirit. Legends tell of his secret gift to the father of three unwed daughters who were unable to marry without dowries; three bags of gold were mysteriously provided for them. Some families follow the tradition of placing gold coins or other trinkets in children’s shoes on this feast. Today, consider a family donation to a charitable organization or enjoy a candy cane, symbolic of St. Nicholas’s crozier.

St. Nicholas, your heart blessed others. Please help us to open our eyes and hearts to those around us who need compassion. May we always act with love and generosity as you did.

Find more resources to help your family pray together this
Advent in *5-Minute Prayers Around the Advent Wreath* by Lisa M. Hendey.

December 7—St. Ambrose, Bishop, Doctor of the Church

Patron of Beekeepers, Schoolchildren, and Police Officers

Often called the “honey-tongued saint” for his gift of preaching, St. Ambrose was baptized, ordained a priest, and consecrated as bishop all in one day! To be a good role model to his community, he immediately gave his wealth away to those in need.

In remembrance of him, light a candle or enjoy a honey treat today.

St. Ambrose, although you felt unworthy, you accepted your vocation and God’s plan for your life. Help us through our words and actions to touch the hearts of others with God’s love and care.

December 8—Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Patroness of the United States

Formally decreed by Blessed Pope Pius IX, today’s solemnity commemorates our belief that the Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from the stain of original sin in the first instant of her conception. Attend Mass, receive the Eucharist, and say a decade of the Rosary today, praying for a heart like Mary’s.

Blessed Mother, Immaculata, be with us and guide our steps as we journey ever closer to your son, Jesus. We pray for purity of heart and mind today.

December 9—Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin

Patron of Indigenous Peoples

Born into poverty, Juan Diego was a husband, farm laborer, and adult convert to Christianity who received a miraculous visit from Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, on his way to Mass. Juan Diego devoted the rest of his life to teaching others about Jesus Christ.

Plant or draw a rose today in honor of Juan Diego’s faithfulness to his mission.

St. Juan Diego, you remained committed to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Today, we pray for hearts that are as open to her message as yours was. May the light of God’s love shine in us.

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December 12—Our Lady of Guadalupe

Patroness of the Americas and the Unborn

In December 1531, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared and offered a sign to a simple laborer named Juan Diego, asking him to carry a message for her. A shrine was built on the place of her apparition and welcomes faithful from around the globe to pray for God's grace and protection. Attend early Mass today, and enjoy hot chocolate spiced with cinnamon.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, open our hearts to the plight of those who are in need around the world, especially migrants, the indigenous, and those who labor without fair compensation. We ask that God protect the dignity of every human life.

December 13—St. Lucy, Virgin, Martyr

Patroness of the Blind, Farmers, and Writers

Born into a wealthy Christian family, Lucy consecrated her life to God at a tender age. When she rejected a proposal of marriage, Lucy was tortured and martyred for her faith.

Often associated with light and vision, St. Lucy's legacy is celebrated on this feast with processions and treats. In her honor, light a candle or bake special buns today.

St. Lucy, you clung to your desire to live for God alone. May God open our eyes and hearts to the light of his love so that we might share his grace with everyone we meet as courageously as you did.

December 21—St. Thomas the Apostle

Patron of People in Doubt and Construction Workers

Although Thomas is most associated with his doubt when Jesus appeared to his fellow disciples in Thomas's absence following the Resurrection, Thomas became the "Apostle of India," carrying the faith and building churches across that country. In Thomas's honor, ponder the simple yet powerful phrase "My Lord and my God!" today.

St. Thomas, like you we sometimes ask big questions about God and our faith. Help us to believe, to act, and to love as you did, even in our moments of doubt.

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