



# CHURCH OF SAINT LUKE LENDING LIBRARY

## DECEMBER 2022 - NEWSLETTER

### Our Mission

To provide Christian resources that will spark spiritual growth and development for every St. Luke parishioner.



### Our Community Library Policies

Our Lending Library works on the honor system. Choose a book that you are interested in reading, log it out on the sign-out sheet and once read, return the book in the BOOK RETURN basket.

- Books can be signed out for up to a month, but we ask that you return them once read (extended time frame allowed for Lent and Advent book selections).
- Because we are a small library with a limited number of books, we ask that you only take one book out at a time.
- Each book contains a Lending Library bookmark. There is a space at the top of the bookmark where you can write the date that the book should be returned by.
- Please do not underline, highlight or write in the books.

We honor you by providing the best of Catholic reading. Please honor us by returning the books promptly so that they can be shared among all parishioners.

## December Featured Books

### *The Advent of Christ: Scripture Reflections to Prepare for Christmas*

by Edward Sri

Perhaps the Christmas story has become almost too familiar. A virgin giving birth. A child laid in a manger. Shepherds greeted by angels. The Christmas story has become so familiar that the profound, even shocking, nature of the incarnation might be overlooked. But what if we had never heard the story before? What if we were hearing it for the first time, like the first-century Jews? These events certainly would not be taken for granted—they would signal something new: the dawning of the long-awaited Messiah.

This Advent, put yourself in that ancient Jewish world. Containing an entry for each day of Advent and continuing through the Christmas season, Dr. Sri will help you to discover spiritual treasures in the Gospels and gain a new understanding of the coming of Christ.

### *Advent Devotions & Christmas Crafts for Families: 24 Scripture Reflections & Simple Projects to Anticipate Christ's Birth*

by Victoria Duerstock

The flurry of shopping, gift giving, recitals, and parties adds a certain amount of tension to a season meant to be infused instead with awe and wonder. Ask most families what the focus of Christmas really is and they will readily answer that it is the birth of Christ, yet so many of us find ourselves overwhelmed with activities, travel plans, hosting, and more. Trying to prepare our hearts and our families to celebrate His birth becomes secondary while we try to survive the busyness!

Each day of this family devotional includes not only a Scripture and short reflection for the twenty-four days leading up to Christmas, but also inviting full-color images and simple Christmas crafts that can be done as you focus on the rich meaning of this season.

## Devotion of the Month

### **The Immaculate Conception**

The month of December is traditionally dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. The Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first moment of her conception, by a singular privilege of Almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, our Savior and hers, was preserved from all stain of original sin. This age-old belief of the Church was defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854 as an article of revealed truth.

## The Pope's Intention for December

### **For Volunteer Not-for-Profit Organizations**

We pray that volunteer non-profit organizations committed to human development find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation.

## December Dates to Remember

- 12/03/22: St. Francis Xavier-Patron of Missionaries  
12/06/22: St. Nicholas-Patron of Children, Sailors  
12/08/22: **Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary (Holy Day of Obligation)**  
12/09/22: St. Juan Diego-Patron of Florists  
12/10/22: Our Lady of Loreto  
12/12/22: **Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe**  
12/13/22: St. Lucy-Patron of Eye Troubles  
12/14/22: St. John of the Cross-Patron of Mystics  
12/23/22: St. John of Kanty-Patron of Teachers & Students  
12/25/22: **Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (Holy Day of Obligation)**  
12/26/22: **Feast of St. Stephen-Patron of Deacons**  
12/27/22: **Feast of St. John the Apostle-Patron of Writers**  
12/28/22: **Feast of The Holy Innocents**  
12/30/22: **Feast of The Holy Family**

## Who was St. Nicholas?



St. Nicholas by Ken Widing

Nicholas, who was born during the third century in Patara, a village in what is now Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his inheritance to assist the needy. Bishop Nicholas became known through out the land for his generosity to the those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships.

Bishop Nicholas suffered for his faith, was exiled and imprisoned. After his release, Nicholas attended the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. He was martyred on December 6, 343 AD in Myra and was buried in his cathedral church, where a unique relic, called manna, formed in his grave. This liquid substance was said to have healing powers which fostered the growth of devotion to Nicholas. The anniversary of his death became a day of celebration, St. Nicholas Day.

## Our Lady of Guadalupe

In 1531, the Blessed Mother appeared four times to St. Juan Diego asking for a church to be built in her honor. The last time she appeared to St. Juan, on December 12th, 1531, she arranged roses in his tilma, which he then took to the bishop. When he opened his cloak, the image of **Our Lady of Guadalupe** was miraculously present on the tilma.

We therefore celebrate the feast day of Our Lady under the title of Guadalupe on December 12th. It is preceded on December 9th by the feast of St. Juan Diego, who was canonized in 2002 by Pope St. John Paul II.

The faithful who devoutly visit an image of the Virgin Mother of God of "Guadalupe," exposed in a church or public oratory, on any of the five Sundays immediately preceding the Feast of the Apparition of **Our Lady of Guadalupe** may gain: A plenary indulgence, if they make their confession, receive Holy Communion and pray for the intentions of the Holy Father. (From *The Raccolta* - #423)

*Please stop by and visit the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe found in the back left corner of St. Luke's Church.*

## A Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe

*Our Lady of Guadalupe, mystical rose, make intercession for Holy Church, protect the Sovereign Pontiff, help all those who invoke thee in their necessities, and since thou art the ever Virgin Mary and Mother of the true God, obtain for us from thy most Holy Son the grace of keeping our faith, sweet hope in the midst of the bitterness of life, burning charity and the precious gift of final perseverance. Amen* (From *The Raccolta* - #424)



## History of the Christmas Crèche

Of all the Christmas decorations we so lovingly place around our homes, the one that is indispensable as it is central to the meaning of Christmas, is the Crèche or Nativity Scene. The Christ Child in the manger have been used in church services from the first centuries. But the crib in its present form originated with St. Francis of Assisi. Through his famous celebration at Greccio, Italy, on Christmas Eve, 1223, with a Bethlehem scene including live animals, he made the crib popular.

The Franciscans and neighborhood families, prepared candles and torches to brighten the night. The crib was made ready, hay was brought, the ox and donkey were led to the spot. St. Francis stood before the crib, and a solemn Midnight Mass was sung. Then he preached a sermon to the people who stood around him, speaking about the nativity of the poor King and the humble town of Bethlehem. They were much impressed with the simplicity of St. Francis' crèche and it was from there that the tradition, as practiced today, took hold and spread around the Catholic world.

## Do You Know Our Lady of Loreto?

On Dec. 10, the Church celebrates the feast of **Our Lady of Loreto**. Loreto refers to the Holy House of Loreto, in the house in which Mary was born, and where the angel Gabriel appeared to her at the Annunciation.

According to tradition, a band of angels raised up the house from the Holy Land, transporting it first to Tersato, Dalmatia in 1291, Recanati, Italy, in 1294, and finally to Loreto, Italy, where it has remained for centuries.

It is this flight that has made **Our Lady of Loreto** the patron of people involved in aviation. The long life of the house led to her patronage of builders and construction workers.

**Our Lady of Loreto** is the first shrine of international renown dedicated to Mary. Popes especially have always had a special connection to the *Shrine of Loreto*, and it is under their direct authority and protection.

In a homily in 1995, Saint Pope John Paul II called the Holy House of Loreto, "**the house of all God's adopted children.**" He continued: "**The threads of the history of the whole of humankind are tied anew in that house. It is the Shrine of the House of Nazareth, to which the Church that is in Italy is tied by providence, that the latter rediscovers a quickening reminder of the mystery of the Incarnation, thanks to which each man is called to the dignity of the Son of God.**"

To learn more, please stop by our **Lending Library** and sign out a copy of "**The House of the Virgin Mary**" (HF-PG01).



**The Church of St. Luke Lending Library wishes all a blessed Christmas!**

