



*Advent*  
*A Season of Hope  
& Expectation*

WEEK BEGINNING 2ND DECEMBER

**Prayers for the  
Week Ahead**

Light the candle of

Hope

Tuesday 3rd  
December

Like the prophets in the Old Testament, we hope for a Messiah from the sin in the world (Isaiah 9:6-7). We anticipate Christ's arrival. This candle assures us we can have hope that God's promises declared in the Old Testament about Jesus. He will not disappoint us (Romans 5:5).

In this day and age, where evil abounds and all seems lost, we hope that the prophecies about Jesus' second arrival to earth will be fulfilled. The sombre purple colour on the candle represents repentance and fasting as we anticipate the Lord's coming. Purple doubles as a colour for royalty throughout the Bible, a symbol of kingship and reign.

**Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the coming of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebration. We pray this with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

Wednesday 4th

December



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St John Damascene

John spent most of his life in the Monastery of Saint Sabas near Jerusalem. He was born in 675 in the city of Damascus, Syria. He spent all of his life under Muslim rule, indeed protected by it. He was born in Damascus, received a classical and theological education, and followed in a government position under the Arabs. After a few years, he resigned and went to the Monastery of Saint Sabas.

He is famous in three areas:

**First**, he is known for his writings against the iconoclasts, who opposed the veneration of images. Paradoxically, it was the Eastern Christian emperor who forbade the practice, and it was because John lived in Muslim lands that his enemies could not silence him.

**Second**, he is famous for his treatise, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, a summary of the Greek Fathers, of which he became the last. It is said that this book is for Eastern schools what the *Summa* of Aquinas became for the West.

**Third**, he is known as a poet, one of the two greatest of the Eastern Church, the other being Romanus the Melodist. His devotion to the Blessed Mother and his sermons on her feasts are well known.

John defended the Church's understanding of the veneration of icons. He explained the faith of the Church in several other controversies. For years, he combined a life of prayer with these defenses and his other works. His holiness expressed itself in putting his literary and preaching to the service of the Lord.

Our Father ...

*Thursday 5th December*



*Blessed Philip Rinaldi*

Philip met Don Bosco at age 5, and apparently instinctively understood the future saint. Though he felt a call to a religious vocation, Philip was tormented seriously considering marriage when he decided to become a disciple of Doc Bosco on 22. The Christian Brothers immediately saw something in him, and made him a novice master even before he took his vows as a Salesian on 13 August 1888. He had no intention to become a priest, his superiors, who saw his potential but did, ordered him to study and take the tests, and he was ordained on 23 December 1890. In addition to his work as novice master, Philip was placed in charge of the Salesians of those like himself who came to the Order as adults. As director of the Salesians of Sarriá, Spain in 1889 he opened several new houses, and brought in many vocations. He was the Salesian provincial director in Spain from 1892 to 1900 and the publication of *Lecturas Catolicas* in 1895.

Philip founded centres to minister to the daily and spiritual needs of young people and helped found the World Federations of Past-Pupils, and assisted the Salesians of Zelatrici di Maria Ausiliatrice he helped found the group that would evolve into the Volunteers of Don Bosco.

Philip was the Rector Major of the Salesians in 1922 and the third successor of Don Bosco and the last one to have been personally trained by him. From that position he brought Doc Bosco's vision to the 20th century, and the 20th century to the vision he could to spread Salesian spirituality and trust in God. He sent many young people to learn foreign languages and customs so they would become more effective missionaries and he asked Pope Pius XI to grant the "indulgence for sanctified work". He worked extensively, preaching, encouraging vocations and the spiritual life of the laity. During his tenure the number of Salesians went from 6,000 to 10,000, there were 250 centres and centres opened, and his teacher Don Bosco was recognized as a saint.

*Our Father...*

Friday 6th December

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The Feast  
of St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas of Myra was a 4<sup>th</sup> Century bishop famous for his generosity to the poor. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the world for his generosity to those in need, and his love for children. Through his life and many stories and legends have been told of St. Nicholas' life and death.

O good St. Nicholas, you who are the joy of the children,  
Put in my heart the spirit of childhood,  
Which the gospel speaks, and teach me to see happiness around me.  
We thank you God for the example of St. Nicholas,  
Who fed the hungry, brought hope to the imprisoned,  
Gave comfort to the lost, And taught us the truth to all.  
May we strive to imitate him. By putting you first in all we do.  
Give us the courage, love and strength  
Of St. Nicholas, so that, like him,  
We may serve you through loving  
Our brothers and sisters.  
Amen.