

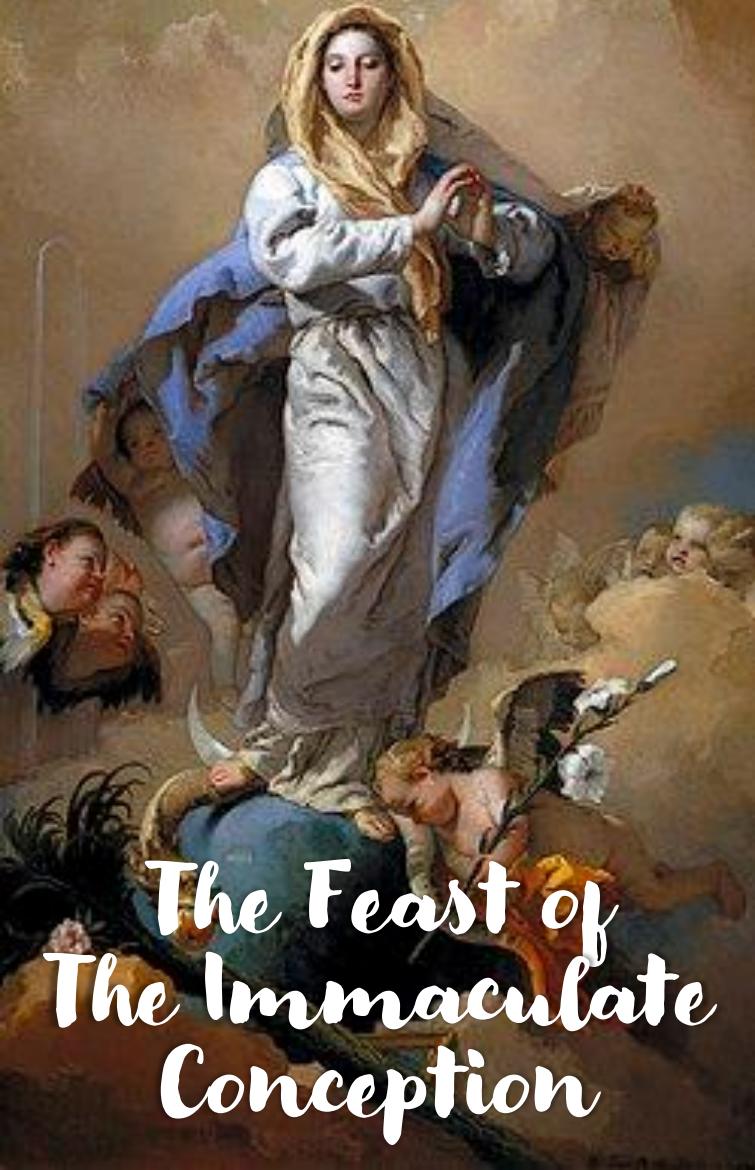
Advent

*A Season of Hope
& Expectation*

Prayers for the Week Ahead

WEEK BEGINNING 9TH DECEMBER

Monday
9th December



The Feast of
The Immaculate
Conception

On December 8, we honour Mary, our Mother. The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is a Catholic feast celebrating Mary's conception without sin. Even though this feast day occurs in the liturgical season of Advent, which prepares for the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Immaculate Conception refers to the conception of Mary in the womb of her mother, St. Anne. from the first moment of her conception, the Blessed Virgin Mary was, by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of Mankind, kept free from all stain of original sin. The observance of this feast began with a Papal encyclical by Pope Pius IX, when he formally defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 1854. Several years later, in 1858, the Blessed Mother gave her name to St. Bernadette at Lourdes stating, "I am the Immaculate Conception".

A Prayer for the Feast of The Immaculate Conception

O most Holy Virgin, immaculate in body and spirit, look kindly on me as I implore your powerful intercession.

O most Holy Mother, receive my prayers as I present them to God. O Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, you intercede for us with your Son.

O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

Amen.

Tuesday 10th December

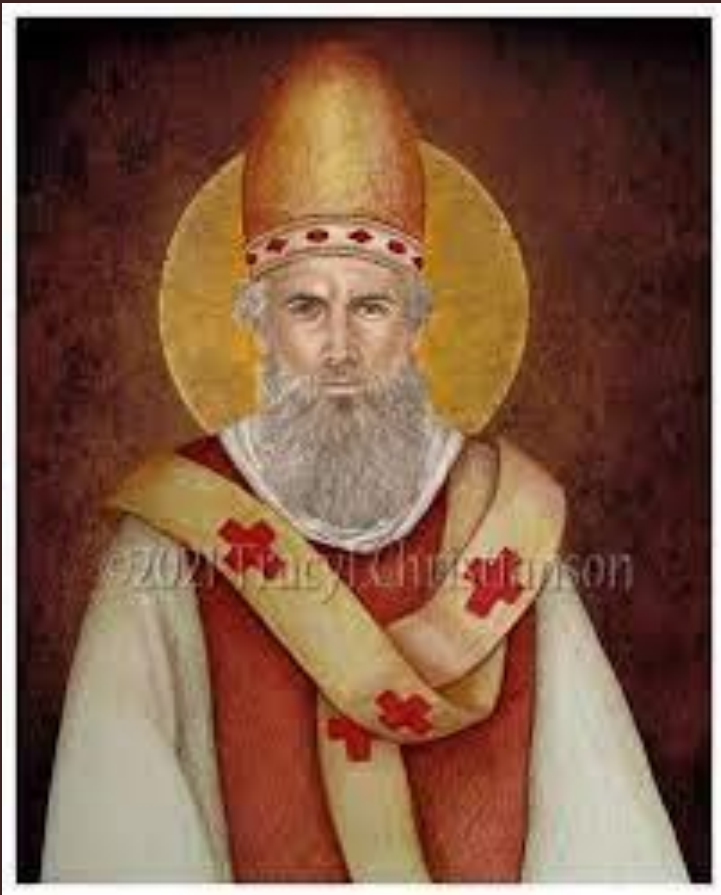


Our Lady of Loreto

Today's memorial celebrates one of the most revered relics within the Christian world—The Holy House of Loreto. This small house, which measures 31×13 feet, rests today in Loreto, Italy, inside the Basilica of the Holy House. In the first century, the Apostles revered the Holy House when it was attached to the opening of a cave that completed the home of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in Nazareth. It is also believed to have been the place where the Annunciation took place, making it the location where the Word became flesh within the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Some traditions also state that the Blessed Virgin Mary was born and raised in this house, but other traditions state she was born in Jerusalem and raised in the Temple. Within the house is the "Altar of the Apostles," traditionally believed to have been built by the Apostles after the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven, with Saint Peter being the first to offer Mass there. There is also a wooden statue in the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child.

Our Lady of Loreto, your home was a sacred place. Within it, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Within your home, you raised your divine Son and saw Him grow in grace and virtue. The love you shared with your Son in that home was pure and perfect in every way. Please pray for me, that my home will more fully reflect the grace and virtue that abounded in your home so that my home will become more like your Holy House. Our Lady of Loreto, pray for me

Wednesday 11th
December



Pope Saint Damasus

Saint Damasus I was born at Rome at the beginning of the fourth century. He was archdeacon of the Roman Church in 355, when Pope Liberius was banished to Berda, and followed him into exile, but afterward returned to Rome.

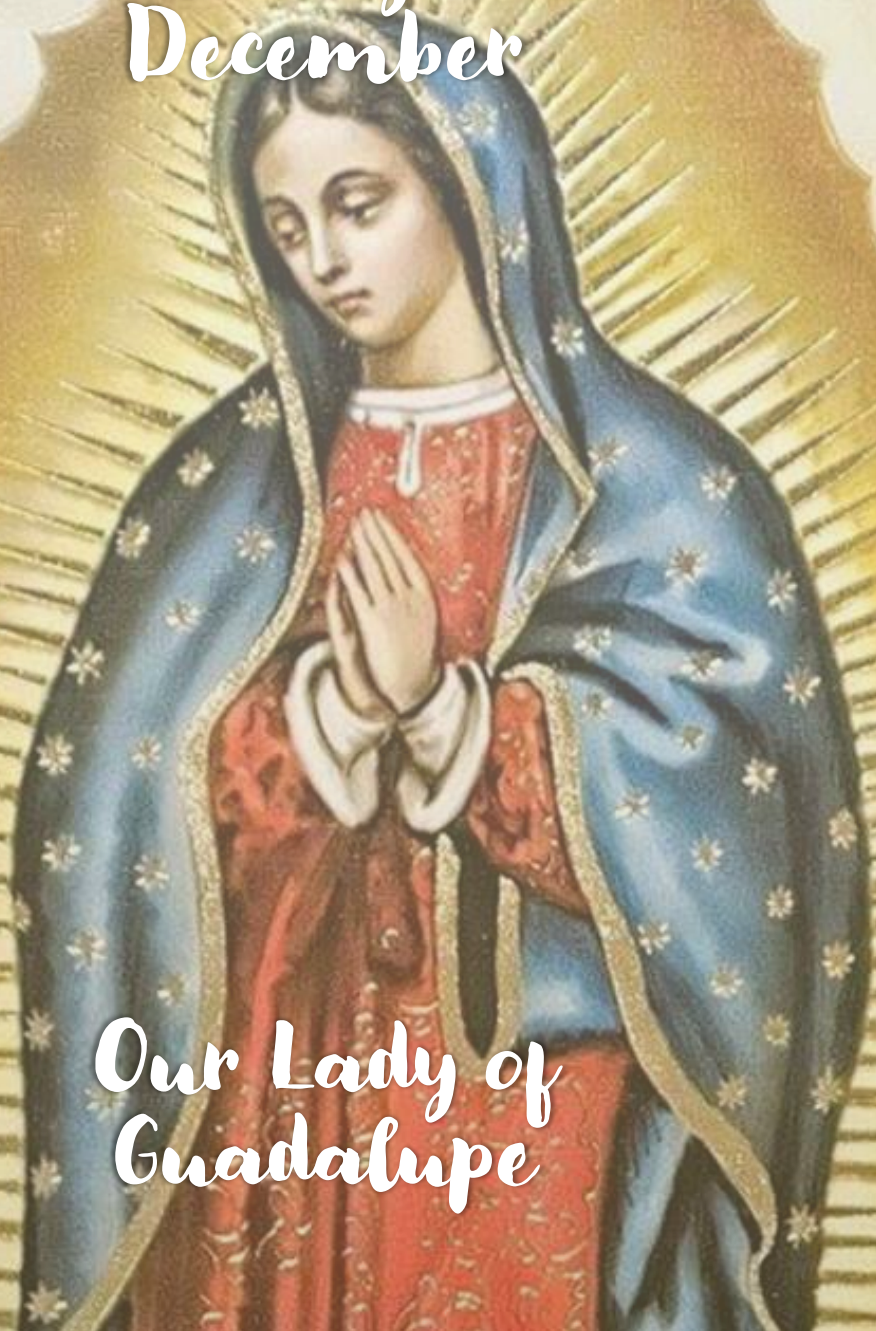
On the death of Liberius our Saint was chosen to succeed him. Ursinus, a competitor for the high office, incited a revolt, but the holy Pope took only such action as was becoming to the common father of the faithful. Having freed the Church of this new schism, he turned his attention to the extirpation of Arianism in the West and of Apollinarianism in the East, and for this purpose he convened several councils.

He rebuilt the church of St. Laurence, which to this day is known as St. Laurence in Damaso; he made many valuable presents to this church, and settled upon it houses and lands in its vicinity.

He likewise drained all the springs of the Vatican, which ran over the bodies that were buried there, and decorated the sepulchres of a great number of martyrs in the cemeteries, and adorned them with epitaphs in verse. Having sat eighteen years and two months, he died on the 10th of December, in 384, being near fourscore years of age.

Our Father...

Thursday 12th
December



Our Lady of
Guadalupe

Our Lady of Guadalupe first introduced herself as the Mother of God and the mother of all humanity when she appeared on the hill of Tepeyac in Mexico in 1531. An indigenous peasant, Juan Diego, saw a glowing figure on the hill. After she had identified herself to him, Our Lady asked that Juan build her a shrine in that same spot, in order for her to show and share her love and compassion with all those who believe.

Dear mother, we love you. We thank you for your promise to help us in our need. We trust in your love that dries our tears and comforts us. Teach us to find our peace in your son, Jesus, and bless us every day of our lives. Help us to build a shrine in our hearts. Make it as beautiful as the one built for you on the mount of Tepeyac. A shrine full of trust, hope, and love of Jesus growing stronger each day.

Mary, you have chosen to remain with us by giving us your most wonderful and holy self-image on Juan Diego's cloak. May we feel your loving presence as we look upon your face. Like Juan, give us the courage to bring your message of hope to everyone. You are our mother and our inspiration. Hear our prayers and answer us.

Amen.

Friday 13th December

Lucia of Syracuse (284-304 A.D.), was an early Christian martyr who died during the Diocletianic Persecution within the Roman Empire. She is highly revered within Christianity and remains only one of eight women mentioned by name in Roman Catholic Mass. Today, the feast day of St Lucy has come to be known as the festival of light. St Lucy is the patron saint of the blind which is tied to the belief that she lost her eyes during her martyrdom.



The Feast of St. Lucy

*Saint Lucy,
whose beautiful name signifies light,
by the light of faith which
God bestowed upon you
increase and preserve his
light in my soul
so that I may avoid evil and
be zealous in the performance
of good works,
and detest nothing so much as
the blindness and the darkness
of evil and sin.*

*Obtain for me, by your intercession with God
perfect vision for my bodily eyes
and the grace to use them for God's
greater honour and glory
and the salvation of souls.
St. Lucy, virgin and martyr
hear my prayers and obtain my petitions.*

Amen