

Advent

*A Season of Hope
& Expectation*

Prayers for the Week Ahead

WEEK BEGINNING 9TH DECEMBER



Monday
8th December

The Feast of The Immaculate Conception

OFFICIAL

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 9th December



The Feast of St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatatzin

St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatatzin (1474-1548). Little is known about the life of Juan Diego before his conversion, but tradition and archaeological and iconographical sources, along with the most important and oldest indigenous document on the event of Guadalupe, "El Nican Mopohua"

Juan Diego was born in 1474 with the name "Cuauhtlatatzin" ("the talking eagle") in Cuautlitlán, today part of Mexico City, Mexico. He was a gifted member of the Chichimeca people, one of the more culturally advanced groups living in the Anáhuac Valley.

When he was 50 years old he was baptised by a Franciscan priest, Fr Peter da Gand, one of the first Franciscan missionaries. On 9 December 1531, when Juan Diego was on his way to morning Mass, the Blessed Mother appeared to him on Tepeyac Hill, the outskirts of what is now Mexico City. She asked him to go to the Bishop and to request in her name that a shrine be built at Tepeyac, where she promised to pour out her grace upon those who invoked her. The Bishop, who did not believe Juan Diego, asked for a sign to prove that the apparition was true. On 12 December, Juan Diego returned to Tepeyac. Here, the Blessed Mother told him to climb the hill and to pick the flowers that he would find in bloom. He obeyed, and although it was winter time, he found roses flowering. He gathered the flowers and took them to Our Lady who carefully placed them in his mantle and told him to take them to the Bishop as "proof". When he opened his mantle, the flowers fell on the ground and there remained impressed, in place of the flowers, an image of the Blessed Mother, the apparition at Tepeyac.

With the Bishop's permission, Juan Diego lived the rest of his life as a hermit in a small hut near the chapel where the miraculous image was placed for veneration. Here he cared for the church and the first pilgrims who came to pray to the Mother of Jesus.

Wednesday 10th December

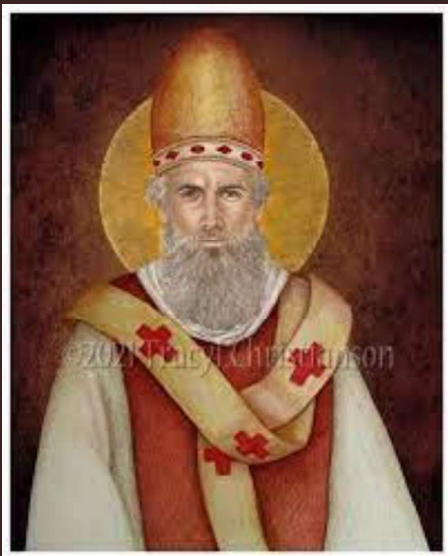


Our Lady of Loreto

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

Thursday 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...



Friday 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.