



## OUR LADY OF LORETO THE FEAST OF THE HOLY HOUSE

We share the story of the Mystery of the Holy House as we honor Our Lady of Loreto this weekend. It's not a celebration of a Marian apparition but celebrating the Holy House of Mary.

Tradition says Mary's home from the first century was transported from Nazareth to Italy in the latter part of the 13th century. There are two theories of how it took place, but first understand these details. The house consisted of three stone walls that were built up against a grotto, which was typical for the time was carved into the mountainside (the sketch attached depicts how it may have looked). The grotto in



legend has it that on the night of May 9-10, 1291, the house was moved from Nazareth to Croatia. It remained there three years before the angels moved it again to Italy first by the sea, second in the woods, and third to its spot on a hilltop that was once covered in a field of laurel trees owned by a woman named Loreta. The

location is now known as the city of Loreto. The final move was the night between Dec. 9-10, 1294.

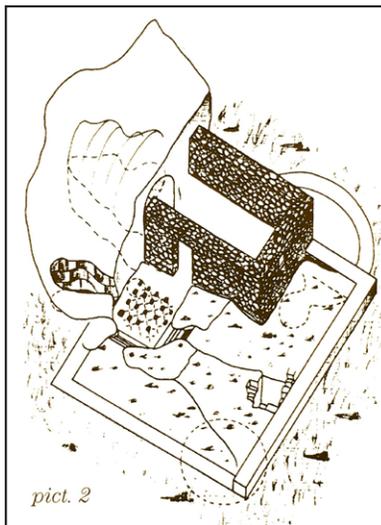
The modern interpretation by Vatican archivist involved documents found dated to coincide with the move. They indicate the walls were moved by crusaders during the Christian Crusades of the time, when Judeo-Christians were fleeing from Palestine. It is believed a wealthy family named Angelos or Angeli financed the move of the house to a papal state in Italy.

Whichever you are inclined to believe saints, blessed, and popes have said divine intervention must have happened in order for the three walls of the home to be safely transported and in the dark of night, disappearing from its original foundation.

Archeologists have confirmed that the carved stones in the Holy House are indeed from Nazareth and the time of Christ. Further the cut of the stone is that of Palestine nature. Markings in the house match markings inside the grotto in Nazareth.

Inside the house is a Latin inscription, "Here the word became Flesh," for it is believed that the incarnation took

the homes of the period were used for storage. It was the three walls that were transported. How they got to their present location in Loreto, Italy is a mystery that historians still argue. The grotto remains intact in Nazareth, and it is protected within the walls of the Basilica of the Annunciation.



The three walls of Mary's home are within the Basilica della Santa Casa (Basilica of the Holy House), in Loreto.

The first theory of how the walls of Mary's home were moved from Nazareth is supernatural. The ancient

place within those walls. Imagine young Mary gazing upon Angel Gabriel as she gave her “yes” to God.

This Marian sanctuary has been a place of prayer and reflection for millions of pilgrims, including many saints and popes throughout the last 700 years. All of them wanting to see the walls of the home Mary was born and lived; and where Jesus and Joseph also called home.

The basilica built around the Holy House is a tremendous masterpiece of Italian Renaissance, a drastic contrast to the simplicity of the dark and aged walls that form the house.

Another element of the house is the ancient altar of the apostles, where the disciples are believed to have gathered with Mary immediately after the Resurrection.



In 2019, Pope Francis made a decree noting that the Shrine of the Holy House of Loreto, “recalls the mystery of the Incarnation, leading all those who visit it to consider ‘the fullness of time’, when God sent his Son, born of a woman, as well as to meditate both on the words of the Angel announcing the Good News and on the words of the Virgin in response to the divine call.”

The Holy Father hopes the celebration of the optional feast of Our Lady of Loreto “will help all people, especially families, youth and religious to imitate the virtues of that perfect disciple of the Gospel, the Virgin Mother, who, in conceiving the Head of the Church also accepted us as her own.”

## BUILDING THE CHURCH

### *Our Lady of Guadalupe – December 12*

As the Americas celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe’s Feast Day on December 12, reflect on how you are building the Church?

Yes, you.

God chose humble Juan Diego for our Blessed Mother Mary to appear to on a remote hilly region in 1531. Appearing as an Aztec princess with dark skin and native clothing, visibly expectant with Jesus, and speaking in his language, Mary directed Juan to make sure a church is built in her honor on the Tepeyac Hill near Mexico City.

When the bishop of Mexico didn’t believe that Mary appeared and made this demand to a mere peasant, Juan returned to the site of the apparition pleading to Mary. She again appeared and had him gather roses in his cloak to give to the bishop. These roses were impossible to have grown in that region and in that season without a miracle. Saint Juan did as Mary instructed and when he went to the bishop and opened his cloak, the roses fell to the ground and to their amazement on the cloak was the beautiful image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

A chapel was built on the Tepeyac hillside. Today the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe is on that site. The foundations of the original temple and an expansion of it - dedicated to the Virgin Mary after the Our Lady of Guadalupe apparitions - are preserved under it.

It has been recorded that more than 9 million people in the Americas were converted to Christianity in the 10 years after the apparition. Conversions are still attributed to it today.

So, again, on this amazing feast day ask yourself, “What am I doing to help build the Church and love of Christ in our world?”



# THE SAINT OF LIGHT!

*Celebrate St. Lucy on Dec. 13.*



Lucy (Lucia) was born in Sicily in the year 283 to a noble family. The Roman Empire punished all known Christians with prison, torture, and death.

Saint Lucy was hiding her Christian life from non-believers. She served others as she knew Christ served the people. She would place a wreath with candles on her head to provide light during the dark night, when she would sneak food and necessities to Christians in hiding.

When she was promised in her teens to marriage to a non-Christian man, she adamantly refused, bringing anger to the potential groom and his family. Further it brought attention to Lucy, who said she was promised to God. Because she was Christian, she was tortured. One story recorded notes that her persecutors gouged her eyes out and tried to burn her. When the fire kept extinguishing, the torturers killed her by thrusting a sword in her neck.

People all around the world celebrate St. Lucy's Feast Day on Dec. 13th as a national holiday praying novena's, singing festive songs, and little girls dressing up like the sweet innocent saint.

Saint Lucy is an example of purity and chastity. She is the patron saint of the blind and those with eye/sight problems. Learn from her bravery, devotion, and compassion.

*The art of St. Lucy is by Krysten Brown of [www.thesaintsproject.org/](http://www.thesaintsproject.org/)*

## FOCUS ON CHRIST TO STRENGTHEN MIND, BODY, & SOUL

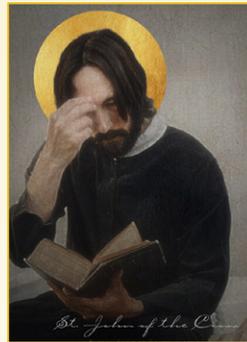
*Saint John of the Cross, Pray for us!*

He was a priest in the 16th century and one of the Doctors of the Church for his teachings of humility; having faith over fear; never losing hope; avoiding self-pity; trusting in God!

Saint John of the Cross on your feast day December 14, pray for us to have your mindset to find the purpose in all things and strength through our faith.

His name reflects his character – accepting his crosses with faith as his strength. He led a life with much hardship, agony, and persecution. He accepted these trials and focused on God, which gave him hope and peace. His most referenced works are *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, *Spiritual Canticle*, and *Dark Night of the Soul*.

His drawing of the crucifix (included with this article) was created after the saint had a vision of Christ on the cross. It illustrates our Lord's body collapsed with His head forward, resting at His chest. Never forget Christ was human and among us. He knows pain, agony, depression, doubt, and feelings of abandonment.



We have highlighted a few of his quotes to help us stay focused on Christ:

Avoid self-pity. “Whenever anything disagreeable or displeasing happens to you, remember Christ crucified and be silent.”

Faith over fear: “If a man wishes to be sure of the road he treads on, he must close his eyes and walk in the dark.”

Never lose hope: “The endurance of darkness is the preparation for great light.”

Joy awaits the heart that prays: “He who avoids prayer is avoiding everything that is good.”

Trust in God: “In tribulation immediately draw near to God with confidence, and you will receive strength, enlightenment, and instruction.”

Focus on Christ's peace: “Strive to preserve your heart in peace; let no event of this world disturb it.”

*The painting of St. John of the Cross is available through Saintly Co of New Zealand on Etsy in the US at: [www.etsy.com/shop/SaintlyCo](http://www.etsy.com/shop/SaintlyCo)*

*He said to them, "Come and see." - Jn 1:39*

# An Evening of Eucharistic Encounter

with Sr. Agnes Thérèse Davis, T.O.R.

Join us for an evening of Adoration,  
reflection, and music to deepen  
our understanding of, love for,  
and living out of the Holy Eucharist

**Thursday, December 14, 2023**  
**7:00 pm**

**Confessions at 6pm**  
**Light Social to follow**

Cathedral of St. Joseph  
1300 Eoff Street  
Wheeling, WV 26003



Sr. Agnes Thérèse Davis is a member of the Franciscan Sisters, TOR, of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother. She currently assists her community in downtown Steubenville, Ohio, serving those in material poverty.



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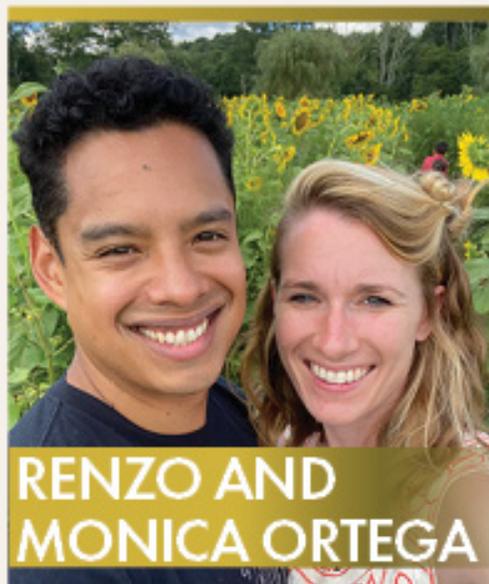
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## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT DEC. 10

### First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Prepare the way! The Lord will come to rescue and comfort!

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### Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 85

Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.”

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### Second Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-14

The day of the Lord is coming. Joyfully prepare, stay devoted to God, and turn away from all that steals peace and harms your soul.

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### Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

Mark references the Prophet Isaiah's declaration to "make straight" and prepare the way for the Lord. He further speaks of John the Baptist who again has a great hand in preparing the people for the "One mightier... who will baptize with the Holy Spirit."

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT](#)

[BIBLE.USCCB.ORG/BIBLE/READINGS/121023.CFM](http://BIBLE.USCCB.ORG/BIBLE/READINGS/121023.CFM)

## PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that help each other make prepare the pathway for Christ, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That world leaders seek peace and work toward protecting all people from evil, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all those celebrating Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, may God's blessings come into their homes and in their lives now and always, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For those burdened with grief of all kind, let their burden be eased by the comfort and mercy God graces us, let us pray to the Lord. . .

*Lord hear our prayer*



## WHEN CHRISTMAS EVE IS ON A SUNDAY....

Some are naturally wondering, do we have to go to Mass twice on Dec. 24th, because Christmas Eve is on a Sunday?

It's a bit confusing, but yes, if you are typically a Sunday Mass goer and enjoy attending the Christmas Vigil, you will be going to Mass twice that day. Just do not make the mistake of assuming your Sunday obligation and Christmas holy day of obligation can be met with one Mass on Dec 24th.

To be clear, the Sunday obligation for the Fourth Sunday of Advent may only be fulfilled by attending either the vigil Mass on Dec. 23rd or a morning Mass on December 24th. The Holy Day of obligation for Christmas is fulfilled by attending Mass at 4pm or after on Sunday, December 24 or Mass on Christmas Day.

On the fourth and final Sunday of Advent of we reflect on the peace that Jesus Christ brings to our world. The fourth candle we light on the advent wreath, called the "Angel Candle" represents the

moment the angels announced that Jesus has come to bring peace (Luke 2:14).

Enjoy these holy days of opportunity to grow in the faith, hope, love, and joy of Christ.



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## Liturgy of the Hours

# LITURGY OF THE HOURS

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Scan the QR code or visit the link below to view a PDF version of the Liturgy of the Hours.



### MASS ONLINE

Saturday 6pm Masses will continue to be livestreamed from the Cathedral of St. Joseph, and will be available on our website each Sunday at [DWC.ORG](http://DWC.ORG).