Faith IN WV
DECEMBER 14, 2025
DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

Rejoice! The Lord Is Near

This weekend we celebrate Gaudete Sunday, when we - the Church - rejoice because the coming of Jesus is so close we can feel it.

At Mass, we light the rose-colored candle on the Advent wreath, a bright reminder that even in the waiting, God is already at work.

Here in the Diocese of Wheeling–Charleston, our parishes and communities carry that same hope. Whether you've been Catholic your whole life or you're discerning the journey into the Church, this Sunday is a perfect time to pause and ask:

How is Christ shaping my life right now?

Can others see His presence in me—in my home, my parish, my workplace, and the way I serve my community in West Virginia?

During Advent we can become distracted by the daunting "to dos" we place on ourselves, but let Gaudete Sunday be a pause and reminder that this season is also so beautiful. As we prepare and wait intentionally place Jesus at the center of everything—our family schedules, our prayer, our decisions—our eyes, mind, and heart will begin to open. We will notice grace where we once saw frustration, possibilities where we once saw limits, and hope even in places that feel worn down or overlooked.

The prophet Isaiah gives us a gorgeous vision of what the Messiah brings: a parched desert blooming, weak hands strengthened, broken hearts healed, sorrow turned to joy.

Be strong, fear not! The Messiah is coming. (Isaiah 35:4).

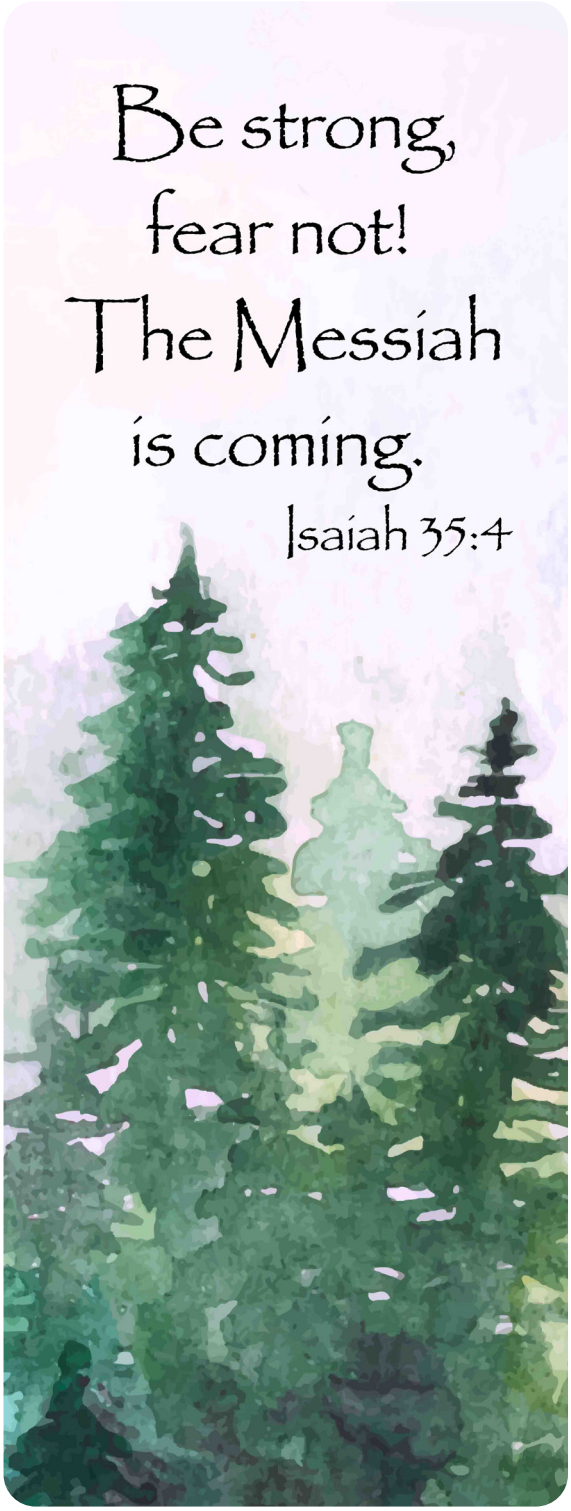
So, this Gaudete Sunday, let's truly rejoice as a diocesan family.

Let's celebrate and be intentional witnesses of His love in every corner of our state and beyond.

May our joy attract others to Christ.

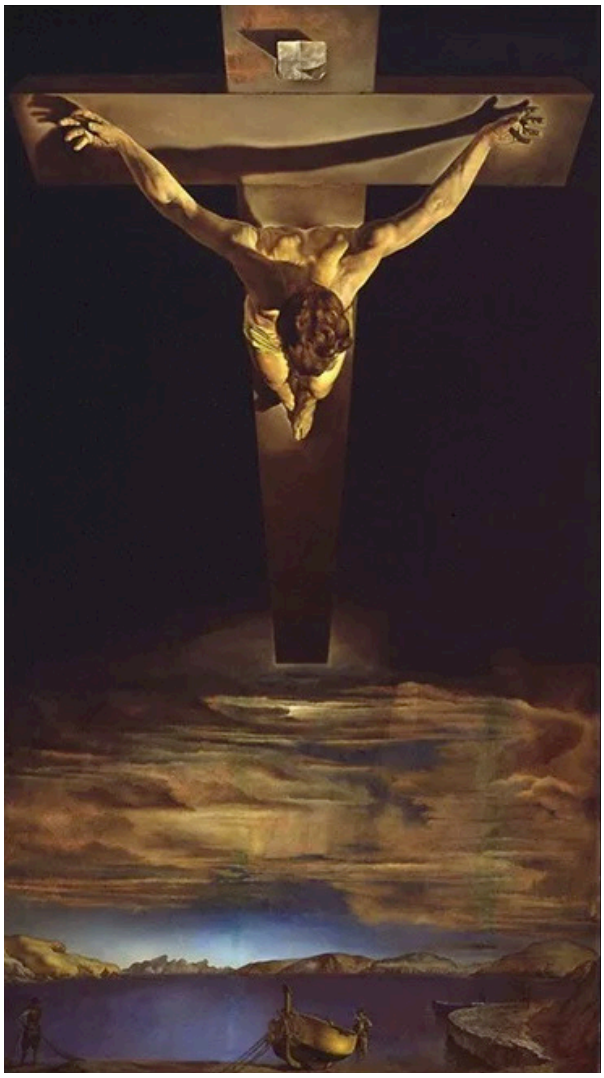
May our lives reflect the hope we proclaim.

And may this Advent lead us all—longtime Catholics, those returning to the Church, and those discerning the faith—closer to the heart of Jesus, who comes to make all things new.



Focus on Christ to Strengthen Mind, Body, & Soul

Saint John of the Cross, Pray for Us!



As we journey into the final weeks of Advent—our time of waiting, preparing, and longing for the coming of Christ—look to Saint John of the Cross for inspiration. We honor his feast day on December 14. He is a 16th-century priest, mystic, and Doctor of the Church who teaches us how to prepare our hearts with humility, hope, trust, and perseverance. His wisdom echoes the call of Advent: *to fix our eyes on Christ even when the road is dim, to welcome God's presence in the silence, and to trust that light is on its way.*

Saint John's very name reflects his mission—*to embrace the cross with faith as his strength.* He endured deep hardship, misunderstanding, persecution, and physical suffering. Yet, like the prophets and people who waited for the Messiah, he never let go of hope. He accepted each trial as a path that led him closer to God.

In this way, his life mirrors the spiritual posture of Advent:

hope in the darkness, trusting that God is working unseen.

His most celebrated writings—*The Ascent of Mount Carmel, The Spiritual Canticle, and Dark Night of the Soul*—teach us that the dark nights we endure are not signs of abandonment but invitations to deeper transformation. Advent reminds us of this too: before the dawn of Christ's birth came centuries of longing, silence, and hope.

The sketch featured on this page is one by Saint John of the Cross – his vision of the Crucifixion. It specifically shows Jesus' body slumped forward, His head bowed toward His chest.

This powerful perspective reminds us during Advent that the Christ we await is fully human, the One who understands our pain, fear, loneliness, and longing. The Savior born in Bethlehem is the same Christ who would embrace the cross for love of us.

He waits with us.

He suffers with us.

Wisdom from St. John of the Cross to echo in your mind and heart as we walk through the remaining days of Advent:

- 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."

Editor's note: while the smaller image is St. John the Cross's actual sketch of the Crucifixion, the larger art is by Spanish artist Salvador Dali, which he titled "Christ of St. John of the Cross." Both are from the same perspective of Christ – a view God Almighty would have from heaven.

HUMBLE LEADERSHIP

On December 20th remember St. Dominic of Silos (Santo Domingo de Silos). Born in 1000 AD, he was shepherd boy from Spain, who grew up to be a priest and performed many miracles of healing illnesses.

He grew up doing ordinary work, learning patience, responsibility, and gratitude – the qualities that build a respectful character across all centuries.

After entering becoming a priest he was named the Abbot of the Monastery of St. Sebastian at Silos. It was practically in ruin, but Dominic rebuilt it – structure and monastic reforms with the rules of St. Benedict, emphasizing traditional monastic life; sacred music, art, architecture, devotion to Mary, caring for the poor, and focused on the celebration of the Mass as a liturgy in Heaven. The monastery was eventually named after him.

After his death it is said that Blessed Juana de Aza was praying in the monastery of St. Dominic of Silos, calling upon him to interceded for her so she would conceive a son. She reported to the monks of seeing a vision of St. Dominic of Silos telling her God said she would have a child. It came to be she gave birth to a son and named him Dominic. We know her son as of St Dominic de Guzman, the founder of the Dominican Order.

FUN FACT:

The Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos recorded an album that topped record charts in 1994. The recording of Gregorian chants are a heavenly sound illuminating the life of the cloistered monks serving Christ through chastity, poverty, and obedience. Seven times a day the monks gather in the church sing of their praise and thanksgiving to God. Their songs blend Sacred Scripture and Church wisdom into an air "refresh the soul" with a sound of heaven on earth.

Search your music app for: Chants by Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos (recorded by Angel Records in 1994). An unofficial version is shared on YouTube. youtu.be/qFUFF-YK5v8?si=WJAML6oSRtZ3LR2K

All things are possible with

God

A Musical Celebration of Hope for the Advent/Christmas Season

John Angotti

with Dion Clay, J.T. Brown, John Paciga & other guests

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 6:30PM: CONCERT

Cathedral of St. Joseph

1300 EOFF STREET
WHEELING, WV 26003

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 6:30PM: CONCERT

Immaculate Conception

126 E Pike Street
Clarksburg, WV 26301

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Join Us for Mass of the Nativity of the Lord

Thursday, December 25 • 12:00am

Bishop Mark Brennan - celebrant

from the

Cathedral of Saint Joseph

Mass Livestreamed

dwc.org

facebook.com/DioceseofWheelingCharleston

Mass will be Broadcast Live

WTRF-TV7/CBS
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Clarksburg/Morgantown

Contact your parish for Christmas Mass times

Encounter with Jesus

JANUARY 10TH & 11TH 2026

"THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND STIRRING ADVENTURE THAT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU IS THE PERSONAL MEETING WITH JESUS, WHO IS THE ONLY ONE WHO GIVES REAL MEANING TO OUR LIVES".

-ST. JOHN PAUL II

AGES 18-30

CONTACT: (304) 240-6835

4030 MIDDLEWAY PIKE KEARNEYSVILLE, WV 25430

DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

2026 Men's Discernment Retreat

WWW.WVPRIESTS.ORG

FEBRUARY 13 - FEBRUARY 15

PRIESTFIELD PASTORAL CENTER
4030 MIDDLEWAY PIKE, KEARNEYSVILLE, WV 25430

- OPEN TO MEN 18 AND OLDER
- PRAY, SHARE MEALS, AND MEET WITH CURRENT WV SEMINARIANS
- HEAR TALKS ABOUT PRIESTLY LIFE AND DISCERNMENT

Register Today!

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
GAUDETE SUNDAY

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

The desert will be in full bloom.

Responsorial: Psalm 146

"Lord, come and save us."

Second Reading: James 5:7-10

Be patient like a farmer preparing and waiting for spring.

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

In prison, John the Baptist received word of the coming of Christ.

CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, Pope Leo XIV, Bishop Mark, and all shepherding the people of these times, may the joy found in the gospel and never tire to represent that joy of Christ to all who do not know him or wonder if Jesus is our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That world leaders work together so justice and peace flourish, weeding out hatred and evil, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For our Jewish brothers and sisters, whose celebration of Hanukkah begins this Sunday evening, that the light of the menorah brightens their days and fill them with warmth, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That we may be Christ's hands and feet as we care for the earth, the displaced, the suffering, the physically and mentally ill, and the building up of the Church all for the glory of God, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer

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Liturgy of the Hours

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Pray the prayer for this day, this hour! EBREVIARY.COM LITURGY OF THE HOURS

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.