



MYSTERY OF THE HOLY HOUSE

As we approach the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8th, when we celebrate Mary being conceived without sin; we also acknowledge the optional memorial of Our Lady of Loreto – the feast of the Holy House on Dec. 10th.

Tradition says Mary's home from the first century was transported from Nazareth to Loreto, 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 typical for the time was carved into the mountainside. The grotto in 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 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 actually 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 the papal state in Italy, which included what is now Loreto.

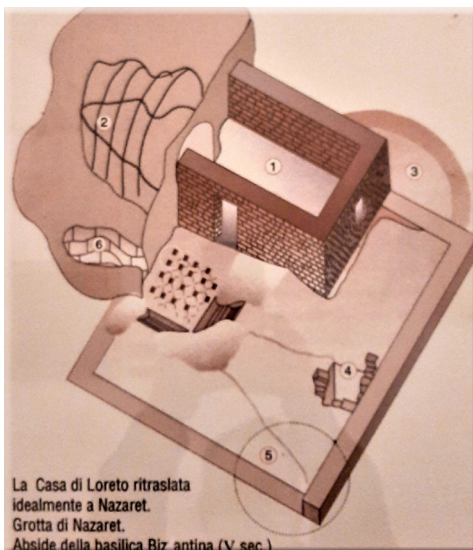
Whichever you are inclined to believe saints, blessed, and popes have said divine intervention must have happened in order for the three walls of the home to safely transported and

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 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."

You can read more about it in the Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC; or view documentaries online including this one by Janson Media: <https://youtu.be/oGq1nKLSjt8>.

CELEBRATE ST. NICHOLAS ON DEC. 6

On December 6th, celebrate Father Christmas - St. Nicholas Day!

Throughout the world Saint Nicholas is remembered as a religious and a giver.

Consider taking time to act like St. Nicholas and donate food to a food pantry, donate shoes to a local shelter, or ask your local hospital about donating toys and activities for children spending the holidays there.

Saint Nicholas day is a great day to experience the joy of giving and performing good deeds.

For the little ones in your life, on the eve of this feast day, share the Saint Nicholas story with them and that night place small treats in their shoes (slippers). Common surprises include coins, chocolate, clementines, prayer cards, candy canes, a Christmas ornament, etc. - simple gifts of sweet love and thoughtfulness, which is exactly what Bishop Nicholas has been celebrated for since 800 AD.

Get inspired by learning more about St. Nicholas, his



history, miracles attributed to him, how to celebrate or even - get this - what he might have looked like based on forensic science! Learn all that and more by visiting: <https://www.stnicholascenter.org>.

The St. Nicholas Center also presents a website specifically for children including a plethora of activities at: <https://www.stnicholascenter.org/for-kids>.

Here in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Bishop Mark Brennan will celebrate a special Mass on Monday, Dec. 6th the Memorial of St. Nicholas, at 6:00 p.m. in the Cathedral of St. Joseph, Wheeling. Members of the newly formed Confraternity of St. Nicholas, a public association of the faithful - through prayer, fasting, and good works, are dedicated to the protection of all children from scandalization, abuse, and trafficking - will receive a special blessing. For more about the confraternity go to [DWC](https://www.dwc.org/evangelization-and-catechesis/confraternity-of-st-nicholas).

[ORG/EVANGELIZATION-AND-CATECHESIS/CONFRATERNITY-OF-ST-NICHOLAS](https://www.dwc.org/evangelization-and-catechesis/confraternity-of-st-nicholas)



NEWS FROM CATHOLIC CHARITIES WEST VIRGINIA

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE: KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON FOR MARY

In our readings on Sunday the prophet, Jeremiah comforted God's people: *In those days Judah shall be safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure; this is what they shall call her: "The LORD our justice."*



As the days get shorter and the nights get colder, many of our sisters and brothers are struggling. Catholic Charities West Virginia provides the services people need to experience safety and security.

Our Emergency Assistance program is one example. We can act quickly when a client receives a shut-off notice for electricity or gas. In the winter, these are truly lifesaving utilities.

"Mary" is one client who benefitted from Emergency Assistance.

When Mary got hurt at work, she had to undergo major surgery because of her injury. She was in a particularly vulnerable situation because her worker's compensation benefits ran out before she fully recovered. She couldn't earn money. So Mary fell behind on her electric bill. And when she got a shutoff notice from the power company, her stress level skyrocketed. She reached out for help.

Catholic Charities West Virginia staff collaborated with other organizations to get her bill taken care of. Through a combination of grant funds and generous donations, we were able to offer Mary some of the safety and security she deserves.

For Mary, being "safe and secure" means she can keep the lights on as she focuses on her recovery. It means she is part of a loving community that cares.



MARY~CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN PURE VESSEL FOR GOD'S PERFECT PLAN

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is December 8th. On this day we honor Mary for she was conceived without sin. May is the purest vessel for God's perfect plan for from the moment of her conception she was without original sin.

Church doctrine teaches us that all humanity was harmed by the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve. However, by the grace of God, Mary was conceived with original innocence and holiness as both Adam and Eve were before turning their back on God and not listening to Him but taking their free will to give into sin. Unlike our first parents and all of us, Mary did not experience desires to put herself and her wishes before God.

On Nov. 21st we celebrated the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, when her parents, Saints Anne and Joachim, took her at the age of three to the temple and dedicated her to God. Joachim and Anne desperately wanted a baby and prayed unceasingly for a child that they would joyfully dedicate to God.

In the Gospel according to Luke she is described as, a "highly favored daughter," also translated as, "Mary, full of grace," when the angel Gabriel addresses her in Luke 1:28.

She was chosen, a pure and the worthy mother for Jesus. She would call Him her savior, as we know from the Magnificat in Luke's Gospel (1:46-55).

She is part of God's perfect plan.

Immaculate Virgin Mary, you were pleasing in the sight of God from the first moment of your conception in the womb of your mother, Saint Anne. You were chosen to be the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I believe the teaching of Holy Mother the Church, that in the first instant of your conception, by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race and your beloved Son. you were preserved from all stain of original sin. I thank God for this wonderful privilege and grace He bestowed upon you as I honor your Immaculate Conception. Look graciously upon me as I implore this special favor: (Mention your request).

Virgin Immaculate, Mother of God and my Mother, from your throne in heaven turn your eyes of pity upon me. Filled with confidence in your goodness and power, I beg you to help me in this journey of life, which is so full of dangers for my soul. I entrust myself entirely to you, that I may never be the slave of the devil through sin but may always live a humble and pure life. I consecrate myself to you forever, for my only desire is to love your Divine Son, Jesus. Mary, since none of your devout servants has ever perished, may I, too, be saved. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

First Reading BARUCH 5:1-9

Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning and misery; put on the splendor of glory from God forever: wrapped in the cloak of justice from God, bear on your head the mitre that displays the glory of the eternal name. For God will show all the earth your splendor: you will be named by God forever the peace of justice, the glory of God's worship. Up, Jerusalem! stand upon the heights; look to the east and see your children gathered from the east and the west at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that they are remembered by God. Led away on foot by their enemies they left you: but God will bring them back to you borne aloft in glory as on royal thrones. For God has commanded that every lofty mountain be made low, and that the age-old depths and gorges be filled to level ground, that Israel may advance secure in the glory of God. The forests and every fragrant kind of tree have overshadowed Israel at God's command; for God is leading Israel in joy by the light of his glory, with his mercy and justice for company.

Responsorial PSALMS 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion, we were like men dreaming. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with rejoicing.

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad indeed.

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the torrents in the southern desert. Those who sow in tears shall reap rejoicing.

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Although they go forth weeping, carrying the seed to be sown, They shall come back rejoicing, carrying their sheaves.

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Second Reading PHILIPPIANS 1:4-6, 8-11

Brothers and sisters:

I pray always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value, so

that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Alleluia LUKE 3:4, 6

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel LUKE 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert. John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah: *A voice of one crying out in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."*

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we may gain the strength and resolve to fill in the empty valleys facing those who are poor and despairing, giving material assistance to those most in need, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For world leaders, that they may make low the mountains and hills we have built with weapons of war and destruction, smoothing the way to global peace, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For those in danger of being without heat or shelter during this time of year when the weather grows colder, that they may have a warm place to call home, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all of us, that we may take to heart John the Baptist's call, repent of our sins, and prepare for the coming of the Lord into the world, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

First Reading GENESIS 3:9-15, 20

After the man, Adam, had eaten of the tree, the LORD God called to the man and asked him, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself." Then he asked, "Who told you that you were naked? You have eaten, then, from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat!" The man replied, "The woman whom you put here with me she gave me fruit from the tree, and so I ate it." The LORD God then asked the woman, "Why did you do such a thing?" The woman answered, "The serpent tricked me into it, so I ate it." Then the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you shall be banned from all the animals and from all the wild creatures; on your belly shall you crawl, and dirt shall you eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel." The man called his wife Eve, because she became the mother of all the living.

Responsorial PSALMS 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4

R. Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous deeds.

Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done wondrous deeds; His right hand has won victory for him, his holy arm.

R. Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous deeds.

The LORD has made his salvation known: in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice. He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness toward the house of Israel.

R. Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous deeds.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation by our God. Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands; break into song; sing praise.

R. Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous deeds.

Second Reading EPHESIANS 1:3-6, 11-12

Brothers and sisters:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved. In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will, so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who first hoped in Christ.

Alleluia LUKE 1:28

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel LUKE 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his Kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we may bear Christ to the world, feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, consoling the ill and imprisoned and sheltering the homeless, welcoming the stranger and healing the wounded, finding favor with God in what we say and do, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For justice among all nations and peoples, and that that justice may bring a lasting peace the world over, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For young women and men, that they may respond with love and resolve to God's call, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all of us, and all the people of the Americas, as we look to our patroness, the Immaculate Virgin Mary, for intercession in our prayers, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer

LET US GO *Rejoicing* TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.

PSALM 122

UPDATED GUIDELINES RELEASED

Bishop Mark E. Brennan released updated guidelines for our churches and facilities.

- New Norms for Reopening Parish Facilities for Meetings and Gatherings
- Updated Liturgical Guidelines
- Music Protocols for Liturgical Celebrations

These are available online at www.dwc.org.

Liturgy of the Hours LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Pray the prayer for this day, this hour!

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

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A LITTLE CATHOLIC HUMOR



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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.

Below are four options for enriching your spirit through daily Mass online.

- EWTN airs daily Mass from Our Lady of Angels Chapel, in Irondale, Alabama, at 8am, noon, and 7pm: [HTTPS://WWW.EWTN.COM/TV/WATCH-LIVE](https://www.ewtn.com/tv/watch-live)
- St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York has daily Mass live streamed at 7am: [HTTPS://SAINTPATRICKSCATHEDRAL.ORG/LIVE](https://saintpatrickscathedral.org/live)
- Catholic TV also streams its daily Mass: [HTTP://CATHOLICTV.ORG/MASSES/CATHOLICTV-MASS](http://catholicTV.org/masses/catholicTV-mass)
- Daily Mass Online at Notre Dame' Basilica of the Sacred Heart is live at 11:30 am Monday-Friday: [HTTPS://CAMPUSMINISTRY.ND.EDU/MASS-WORSHIP/BASILICA-OF-THE-SACRED-HEART/WATCH-MASS/SPECIAL-MASSSES/](https://campusministry.nd.edu/mass-worship/basilica-of-the-sacred-heart/watch-mass/special-masses/)