



## ON DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>, CELEBRATE FATHER CHRISTMAS ST. NICHOLAS DAY

His story began 1,750 ago. He was born in 270 AD in the Greek village of Patara in Asia Minor (part of what is now Turkey between the Mediterranean and Black seas). His parents died, when Nicholas was still a boy. He inherited great wealth, however, he used it all to help the poor and sick. He dedicated himself as a servant of God, knowing his parents would be proud. They were the ones who instilled in him the love of Jesus and unwavering faith.



He served as the Bishop of Myra and was not only known for his generosity to those in need and his love of children, but also for sailors and maritime workers. Because of the region he lived, he knew the hardships and of those who made their livelihood on the rough seas.

Around 325 AD, Bishop Nicholas, argued at the Council of Nicaea that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity be an integral part of the faith. The council's statement from that time has become part of the Nicene Creed we still say in our churches today. The good saint died on Dec. 6, 343, AD.

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 what he might have looked like based on forensic science. Learn all that and more by visiting: [WWW.STNICHOLASCENTER.ORG](http://WWW.STNICHOLASCENTER.ORG).

The St. Nicholas Center also presents a website specifically for children including a plethora of activities at: [WWW.STNICHOLASCENTER.ORG/FOR-KIDS](http://WWW.STNICHOLASCENTER.ORG/FOR-KIDS).

# MARY ~ PURE VESSEL FOR GOD'S PERFECT PLAN

December 8 is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is the day we honor Mary and celebrate her, knowing that from the moment of her conception she was without original sin.

Mary was preserved by God and the Holy Spirit to be "immune from all stain of 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 Joachim and Anne 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.

To share the true meaning of the day with children check out the coloring page on Catholic Icing at: [WWW.CATHOLICICING.COM/IMMACULATE-CONCEPTION-COLORING-SHEET](http://WWW.CATHOLICICING.COM/IMMACULATE-CONCEPTION-COLORING-SHEET).

A novena prayer for the Immaculate

Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

*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.*



Coloring Sheet from CatholicIcing.org

## HONOR OUR RETIRED RELIGIOUS ~ DEC. 12-13

During Advent we reflect on our faith and preparing for the coming of the Lord. Next weekend, we are asked to consider, remember and honor our retired religious through the Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR) national collection. The collection will take place Dec. 12-13, and benefits Catholic sisters, brothers, and priests in religious orders.

Bishop Mark E. Brennan shared a letter with the faithful in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston on Nov. 24th asking for support of the national collection for retired religious.

"If any national collection could be considered 'popular,' both in the sense of 'well regarded' and in that of being 'of the people' this one surely is," he wrote. "Many of us have fond memories of religious sisters and brothers who taught us or religious priests who served in our parishes and cared for our families. Now they are elderly and sometimes frail and sick and have had to withdraw from active ministry. It is our tur to serve them."

In West Virginia we have 20 religious communities serving in all reaches of the state.

While ongoing Covid-19 concerns mean that many in our parishes across the country are unable to attend Mass; and

the profound economic impact the pandemic has had on our parishes has been straining; please, know any contribution no matter how great or small is accepted with heartfelt gratitude,



said Sister Stephanie Still, PBVM, Executive Director of RFR.

"We hold you in our prayers, and we ask you to hold our mission for elderly religious in yours," she said.

If you are not able to be at Mass, donations can be made online directly to the Retired Religious Fund at: [RETIREDRELIGIOUS.ORG/WAYS-TO-GIVE](http://RETIREDRELIGIOUS.ORG/WAYS-TO-GIVE).

Donations are tax-deductible donation offer vital support for elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests, helping to provide prescription medications, nursing care, and more. It also helps religious communities implement retirement strategies that promote quality eldercare and continued service to the People of God.

The collection has been part of our Advent donations since 1988, when the Catholic bishops in the United States deemed it necessary to help the well over 500 religious orders here. It's important to note that only 29 of those have what is considered adequate retirement funding.

## ADDRESSING FOOD DESERTS IN WEST VIRGINIA

By: Katie Hinerman Klug, Catholic Charities West Virginia Marketing Communications Specialist

Building on the foundation of feeding the hungry, food programs have always been a core piece of Catholic Charities West Virginia's (CCWVa) work to fulfill its mission.

In recent years, the closures of grocery stores throughout Appalachia have led to limited access to fresh produce and other healthy whole foods for many West Virginians. These 'food deserts' are defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as "low-income census tracts where a substantial number or share of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store."

CCWVa's unique approach to addressing this issue is through a Mobile Food Pantry – a van loaded with pantry foods that travels to remote areas to distribute food to individuals and families who qualify as low-income.

CCWVa's Mobile Outreach travels to the West Virginia counties of Calhoun, Doddridge, Ritchie, Roane and Wirt. Within this specific area, poverty rates range between 15.0% and 20.9%. CCWVa clients in these areas have reported that they travel 40 miles or more across mountainous roads to reach a supermarket.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, procedures have been

adapted to keep staff, volunteers and clients safe. Food pantry boxes are pre-packed and loaded into clients' cars.

Tonya, a client from Wirt County, said:

"The COVID-19 virus led to a terrible time for my family. My husband lost his job as the company suspended operations.

Money was extremely tight and the shelves were empty. We had very little food and very few resources to get more. I was in a panic.

Thankfully, the (Catholic Charities Mobile Outreach) coordinator called me to check on me and my family, and also to let me know that the food pantry would be giving away food on its regularly scheduled day.

He also let me know where more food and resources were available. On the pantry day there was enough food available to feed my family for a week.

While other pantries were shut down or delayed, Catholic Charities continued to serve us as always. I will be eternally grateful."

In addition to food distribution, the CCWVa Mobile Outreach also offers a variety of enrichment activities, including health insurance enrollment, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollment, and cooking demonstrations.

To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia, visit [CATHOLICCHARITIESWV.ORG](http://CATHOLICCHARITIESWV.ORG).



CCWVa Regional Food Pantry Coordinator Jeremy Lessner loads a pre-packed box of food into a client's vehicle.

## GIVING TUESDAY GIFTS TREASURED BY PARISHES, CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, MINISTRIES

Giving Tuesday 2020 is in the books. This first ever diocesan wide online-giving day to benefit parishes, catholic education, evangelization ministry, and Catholic Charities of WV resulted in gifts totaling more than \$600,000 and rising as some donations were mailed in from faithful all over the diocese.

These monetary donations will provide tools to teach the faith, celebrate the Blessed Sacrament, expand charitable outreach, and build a vibrant culture centered around the Eucharist.

In addition, participants also pledged to participate in ministries, volunteer for their parish, and pray continuously for the greater Church and its mission.

Pastors, parish secretaries, school principals, and ministry

leaders were key in the promotion and success of this online giving day.

Donations collected are assessment free – no PHRA or Cathedraticum – and 100% of it goes to the entity chosen by the donor.

The Office of Stewardship and Development happily assisted diocesan organizations with this one day of giving, because of the financial hardships from COVID-19 safety measures. Our parishes, schools, and organizations' budgets have suffered with the sparse parish collections, cancelled fundraisers, and postponed appeals. The funds raised on Giving Tuesday will give them a much-needed boost.

*Thank You!*



[dwc.org/GivingTuesday](http://dwc.org/GivingTuesday)

# Christmas Mass<sup>2020</sup>

ENJOY LIVE MASS OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD  
FROM THE CO-CATHEDRAL THIS CHRISTMAS

We hope you will join Bishop Mark Brennan as he celebrates  
Mass for the Nativity of the Lord at the  
Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart  
in Charleston at 8 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 24.

The Mass will be livestreamed on our website, [DWC.ORG](http://DWC.ORG), and  
also available on our diocesan Facebook page at  
[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DIOCESEOFWHEELINGCHARLESTON](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DIOCESEOFWHEELINGCHARLESTON).

The faithful may also view the Mass on television. See below  
for a list of channels broadcasting the celebration.

If you are able to attend Mass in person, please check with  
your parish for Mass times and safety precautions.

May God bless you and your family as you prepare for the  
coming of Christ.

**CHRISTMAS MASS WILL BE BROADCASTED  
AT MIDNIGHT ON THE FOLLOWING CHANNELS**

WTRF-TV7

WHEELING

WBOY/NBC

CLARKSBURG/MORGANTOWN

WDVM

MARTINSBURG

WOWK

CHARLESTON/HUNTINGTON

WVNS

BECKLEY/BLUEFIELD

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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

Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service is at an end, her guilt is expiated; indeed, she has received from the hand of the LORD double for all her sins. A voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low; the rugged land shall be made a plain, the rough country, a broad valley. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken. Go up on to a high mountain, Zion, herald of glad tidings; cry out at the top of your voice, Jerusalem, herald of good news! Fear not to cry out and say to the cities of Judah: Here is your God! Here comes with power the Lord GOD, who rules by his strong arm; here is his reward with him, his recompense before him. Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care.

### Responsorial PSALMS 85:9-10-11-12, 13-14

**R. (8) Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

I will hear what God proclaims; the LORD—for he proclaims peace to his people. Near indeed is his salvation—to those who fear him, glory dwelling in our land.

**R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall look down from heaven.

**R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

The LORD himself will give his benefits; our land shall yield its increase. Justice shall walk before him, and prepare the way of his steps.

**R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

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

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. The Lord does not delay his promise, as some regard “delay,” but he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar and the elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be found out. Since everything is to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be, conducting yourselves in holiness and devotion, waiting for and hastening the coming of the

day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved in flames and the elements melted by fire. But according to his promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you await these things, be eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace.

### 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 MARK 1:1-8

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: *Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice of one crying out in the desert: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.”* John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. John was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. And this is what he proclaimed: “One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

## PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, our Holy Father Pope Francis, and all religious, may this Holy Season of Advent renew the desire to make way for the coming of the Lord by reaching out to all people and sharing the Good News of the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For our world, let the wonder of your light give hope and joy to all people, especially those confined by war, prejudice, and famine, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For our parishes and schools, help the faithful to be generous in sharing our gifts to supporting their needs, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all who mourn, may they find comfort and peace in the hope and promise of our Lord’s coming, 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](http://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.

[EBREVIARY.COM](http://EBREVIARY.COM) [LITURGY OF THE HOURS](http://LITURGY OF THE HOURS)



A LITTLE CATHOLIC HUMOR

**WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO EXPLAIN TO YOUR NON-CATHOLIC FRIENDS**



**THAT CHRISTMAS DOESN'T START UNTIL DECEMBER 25 AND ENDS FEBRUARY 2ND**

WV CATHOLIC RADIO  
BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOU

Berkeley Springs - Hancock, MD	FM	96.3
Berkeley Springs	FM	107.9
Clarksburg-Bridgeport	FM	97.5
Dunbar - Charleston	AM	1450
Grafton - Clarksburg	AM	1190
Montgomery - Beckley	FM	89.7
Purgitsville	FM	98.7
St. Marys - Parkersburg	FM	105.3
Star City -Morgantown	FM	89.7
Summersville	FM	91.3
Wheeling - Martins Ferry, OH	FM	90.7
Weirton - Steubenville	FM	97.7

~Also Streaming in WV at [www.rdo.to/WLOL](http://www.rdo.to/WLOL)~

WV Catholic Radio [www.WVCatholicRadio.org](http://www.WVCatholicRadio.org)

THE LATEST AND UPCOMING NEWS FROM THE CATHOLIC

*Spirit*

THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT  
IS NOW AVAILABLE BY E-MAIL!!

Join our e-list to receive The Catholic Spirit by e-mail. To be added, please e-mail Colleen Rowan, [CROWAN@DWC.ORG](mailto:CROWAN@DWC.ORG), with "The Catholic Spirit e-list" in the subject line. Please provide your preference of: "E-mail only" or "E-mail and Printed Copy."

Those selecting e-mail only, will no longer receive a printed copy. The Catholic Spirit is available under "Downloadable Spirit" at

[THECATHOLICSPIRITWV.ORG](http://THECATHOLICSPIRITWV.ORG).

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).

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/)