



## ADVENT WREATH SHINES HOPE, PEACE, JOY, AND LOVE

The Advent wreath, it is a tangible reminder of our preparation and anticipation of the birth of Christ. It has evolved through the centuries and across cultures and faiths. Each element is symbolic of aspects of the Christmas story and our faith.

Traditionally the candles used are three purple and one pink. Purple, the color associated of royalty, represents prayer, penance, and works of mercy we take on during the season. The pink (rose) represents joy. This candle is lit on Gaudete Sunday (the third Sunday of Advent), which means “rejoice” and marks the halfway point until Christ’s birth.

Typically, the candles are displayed in a circle with a wreath of pine or similar around it. The evergreen is to signify God’s everlasting love. Some relate the circular shape to the crown of thorns.

Depending on culture or tradition the weeks represent hope, peace, joy, and love; or hope, faith, joy, and peace. It is a matter of semantics really. The overall meaning and respected custom are universal. Each are impressive and beautiful in their own right.

Some traditions name the candles. The first candle is called the prophet’s candle, representative of the prophecy of the birth of a Messiah in Isaiah, and signifies hope. The second candle, the Bethlehem candle, represents the humble town, seemingly at the time to be insignificant. However, God chose this town proving even the least is important to our Creator. This candle represents peace. The third candle is the shepherd’s candle and recalls the shepherds and their joy. According to Scripture, it was the shepherds who were first told about Christ’s birth (Luke 2:8-14). The fourth candle is known as the angels candle, a candle of love, symbolic of when they sang out, “Glory to God in the highest and peace to men of goodwill.”

Regardless of your advent wreath appearance, the most important element is in the pause for prayer and reflection. It prompts us to remember Scripture, the prophecy, Mary’s acceptance, and why Christ came to dwell among us. Let us remember that God is always present in our life and sent his only son to restore light and peace within and for us.

## ADVENT WREATH BLESSING AND PRAYERS

Dear Jesus, as we light the candle(s) on this Advent wreath, may the light of your presence bring joy to our hearts. Bless our family and our friends, and be with all those who are in need this holiday season. Amen.

### 1. FIRST WEEK - HOPE

All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever. Amen.

### 2. SECOND WEEK - PEACE

Dear Jesus, you entered our world on Christmas as the Prince of Peace. This Advent, as we strive to become the-best-version-of-ourselves, fill us with a deep and abiding peace. Help us share that peace with everyone we encounter, especially those who need it most. Amen.



### 3. THIRD WEEK - JOY

Dear Jesus, help us focus on you during this busy season. May we stay aware of the joy you bring into our lives. We want to find you in the everyday moments and come with hearts of gratitude to your manger on Christmas. Amen.

### 4. FOURTH WEEK - LOVE

All-powerful God, your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

# THE MEMORIAL OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

The Feast Day of St. Francis Xavier is a time to recognize this great missionary and also consider our own works of evangelization and care for others at the beginning of Advent.

In a quick summary of his life, St. Francis Xavier seemed pretty dynamic, happy, and confident; but he had his own struggles with depression and loneliness. His father died when he was just a young boy; in his teens he left home to study in Paris; while there his mother and sister died; and his other siblings were all married with families of their own. However, he chose to turn those negative energies into a challenge to be courageous with God as his navigator. He considered his faith as the greatest gift from his reverent parents. He chose to be a fisher of men and share his love of Christ.

He earned degrees in philosophy and theology. While studying at the University of Paris, he met St. Ignatius Loyola. They became close friends. In 1534, together with five other men they founded the Society of Jesus (the Jesuit order). In 1537, St. Francis Xavier was ordained a priest.



An unnamed fellow Jesuit said, “I have never met anyone more filled with faith and hope, more open-minded than Francis. He never seems to lose his great joy and enthusiasm. He talks to both the good and the bad. Anything he is asked to do, Francis does willingly, simply because he loves everyone.”

He chose that attitude. Despite what had to have been dangerous and often miserable travel and living conditions, he focused on God to keep him balanced and grateful. Not every stop or plan was successful for him, but he remained determined.

He believed that we can face any challenge and danger as long as we love God. In his words: “In this life, we find our greatest comfort living in the midst of danger, that is, if we confront them solely for the love of God.”

On his feast day, let us pray we are enthusiastic, adventurous, and passionate about evangelizing as he was.

## ST. ANDREW PRAYER IN PREPARATION OF CHRISTMAS

The Feast of St. Andrew is Nov. 30th.

There is a beautiful Christmas Anticipation Prayer that begins on the Feast Day of St. Andrew and is to be recited 15 times a day until Christmas. This meditative prayer in its repetition helps increase our focus on the true meaning of Christmas – the gift of the Christ Child.

*Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires (recite your request here) through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ and of His Blessed Mother. Amen*



Mural in the Basilica of St. Andrew in Patras, depicting the meeting of St. Andrew and St. Peter with Jesus. The inscription above it is translated from Greek to be “We have found the Messiah” based on John 1:41.

## FROM FISHERMAN TO A FISHER OF MEN

We don’t know a lot of details about him and his life. However, we do know he was an apostle. He was a true believer of Jesus Christ, because the Gospel tells us he left everything to follow him. It was Andrew and his younger brother (Simon) Peter who while casting their fishing nets into the sea, were asked by Jesus Himself if they wanted to be “fishers of men” as we know from Matthew 4:18-20.

So, while we may not be able to quote his wisdom or describe details of his life, we do know that as an apostle and a Galilean. He was loyal, a preacher, a witness to miracles, and called to holiness by Christ.

In 1964, Pope Paul VI had St. Andrew’s relics in Vatican City sent to the Basilica of St. Andrew in Patras, Greece, including the cross on which he was martyred.





# CONFRATERNITY OF ST. NICHOLAS

## THE GIFT OF PRAYER FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

As we begin Advent take time to learn about the Confraternity of St. Nicholas. This patron saint of children has a feast day to celebrate on Dec. 6. Consider honoring him by saying the Litany of St. Nicholas, the Daily Prayer of the Confraternity of St. Nicholas, and becoming a member of this group dedicated to pray for the protection of children.

Bishop Mark Brennan approved the formation of the confraternity in October, encouraging our pastors to promote it and invite parishioners to learn about the opportunity.

“In St. Matthew’s Gospel (19-14), Jesus tells his disciples: Let the children come to me

and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. Scandals in society and the Church, going back many years, have taught us how important it is to take the Lord’s words to heart,” Bishop Brennan said in his Oct. 15th letter. “That is why our Diocese has a comprehensive program to protect children and young people in our parishes, schools, and camps, including strong background checks, fingerprinting for clergy, teachers and youth ministers and enhanced reporting procedures.

“But this is not all we must do. We must seek God’s help and the intercession of His saints in order to protect our children and young people from threats to their moral and spiritual development,” he added.

The Confraternity of Saint Nicholas is a public association of the faithful who, through prayer, fasting, and good works, are dedicated to the protection of all children from scandalization, abuse, and trafficking. The Confraternity seeks to create spiritual millstones and depths of prayer to drown those demons which inspire men and women to commit evil against children. The members of the Confraternity, by fulfilling its obligations, gain many spiritual benefits. Members enjoy the intercession of St. Nicholas, great wonder worker, Bishop, and patron of children. We pray that, as St. Nicholas defended the Divinity of Christ, he too by our prayers, fasting, and good works defends all children from harm.

For information and registration go to: [DWC.ORG/EVANGELIZATION-AND-CATECHESIS/CONFRATERNITY-OF-ST-NICHOLAS/](http://DWC.ORG/EVANGELIZATION-AND-CATECHESIS/CONFRATERNITY-OF-ST-NICHOLAS/)

### LITANY OF ST. NICHOLAS

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God, the Father of heaven,

have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit,

have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, one God,

have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, Holy Mother of God,

Pray for us.

St. Joseph, Pray for us.

Nicholas, Holy Bishop of Myra,

Nicholas, Holy Saint in Bari,

Nicholas, Patron of children and seafarers,

Nicholas, Gift-giver and Wonder-Worker,

Nicholas, Friend of the poor and needy,

Nicholas, Icon of gentleness and generosity,

Nicholas, Model of meekness and charity,

Nicholas, Defender of the Christian Faith,

Nicholas, Myrrh of the fragrance of Christ,

Nicholas, Help of those who suffer wrong,

Nicholas, Faithful steward of the mysteries of God,

Nicholas, Guide of the penitent sinner,

Nicholas, Source of joy and thanksgiving,

Nicholas, Saint who points us to the Manger,

Pray for us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,

Spare us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,

Graciously hear us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,

Have mercy on us.

\*Let us pray:

May we, aided by the prayers of St Nicholas,

be strengthened on our earthly pilgrimage to pray, fast,  
and advocate

for the protection of all children from scandal, abuse, and  
trafficking.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit,

God from Age unto Age. Amen.

*\*This prayer also functions as the Daily Prayer of the Confraternity*

## ANOTHER WAY TO SAY “HAPPY THANKSGIVING!”

We often think about this holiday as a time to offer thanks for the abundance in our lives. Here at Catholic Charities West Virginia, we recognize another way to interpret this phrase:

Thankful for the ability to give of ourselves.



As the largest private provider of social and human services in the state, we are honored to walk with our neighbors on the path of dignity and self-sufficiency. We are grateful for each opportunity to encounter God in our brothers and sisters.

The Prayer of Saint Francis reminds us, “It is in giving that we receive.” In living our call to serve, we are blessed to be a blessing to others!

When our Case Managers work one-on-one with a client, they give resources and emotional support to lift a neighbor out of poverty. And they receive the gift of empathy.

Each time our Parent Partners encounter a toddler in the Birth to Three program, they give tools and a strong foundation to help a child thrive. And they receive the gift of heartwarming smiles.

As the Mobile Food Pantry winds its way down country roads, Outreach Workers give food and a bit of hope to hungry people. And they receive the gift of making someone’s day a bit less stressful.

We are immeasurably grateful to you for joining us in our mission of love! Donors and volunteers across the state give their time, talent, and treasure. And in turn, they receive the gift of experiencing the Kingdom of God here on earth.

Happy Thanksgiving!

To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia, visit [www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org](http://www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org).



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 **CATHOLIC**  
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# FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT NOV. 28

## First Reading JEREMIAH 33:14-16

The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and Judah. In those days, in that time, I will raise up for David a just shoot; he shall do what is right and just in the land. In those days Judah shall be safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure; this is what they shall call her: "The LORD our justice."

## Responsorial PSALMS 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14

**R. (1b) To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me; teach me your paths, Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior, and for you I wait all the day.

**R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

Good and upright is the LORD; thus he shows sinners the way. He guides the humble to justice, and teaches the humble his way.

**R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

All the paths of the LORD are kindness and constancy toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees. The friendship of the LORD is with those who fear him, and his covenant, for their instruction.

**R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

## Second Reading 1 THESSALONIANS 3:12-4:2

Brothers and sisters:

May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we have for you, so as to strengthen your hearts, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones. Amen. Finally, brothers and sisters, we earnestly ask and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that, as you received from us how you should conduct yourselves to please God and as you are conducting yourselves you do so even more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

## Alleluia PSALMS 85:8

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

Show us, Lord, your love; and grant us your salvation.

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

## Gospel LUKE 21:25-28, 34-36

Jesus said to his disciples:

"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the

heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand. "Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth. Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man."

## PRAYER INTENTIONS

For our Church, that we may be a sign of God's presence in the world, increasing and abounding in love for one another and for all, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For world leaders, that they may always strive to do what is right and just, so that all may dwell safe and secure, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That we may be generous in sharing the blessings we have received so that our generosity may benefit the millions in the world who struggle to find the necessities of life, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all of us, that we may prepare ourselves for the second coming of our Lord, cognizant that the Lord is already truly in our midst, let us pray to the Lord. . .

*Lord hear our prayer*

## SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



# 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)



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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](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/)