

Sunday, Dec 25, 2022

Jubilee, every day!

Christmas is the only day of the year designated as "merry." While most birthdays are declared "happy" in the celebration of life, the birth of God among us recommends merriment: a festival of delight, high spirits, good fellowship, and feasting. Yet Saint Théophane Vénard observed that our faith asks even more of us: "Try to fulfill each day's tasks steadily and cheerfully. Be merry, really merry. The life of a true Christian should be a perpetual jubilee, a prelude to the festivals of eternity." Capture the spirit of Christmas in your being. Resolve to bring joy to the world, every day of the year.

SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

TODAY'S READINGS: Night: Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (14); Day: Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18 (16). *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."*

Monday, Dec 26, 2022

A day for renewed commitment

Advent is full of anticipation that finally culminates on Christmas. But once the Savior is here, there's no time to wait to start Christianity's mission. So today we honor the first martyr of the faith, Saint Stephen, who was stoned to death. One of the first followers of the apostles, chosen by them to serve as a deacon, Stephen preached and performed miracles and forgave his attackers (Saul, later Saint Paul, among them) before dying. As we get ready to start a new year, let Stephen inspire you to reflect on your baptismal call to spread the gospel and how you might renew your efforts in word and witness.

FEAST OF STEPHEN, FIRST MARTYR

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Matthew 10:17-22 (696). *"You will be hated by all because of my name, but whoever endures to the end will be saved."*

Tuesday, Dec 27, 2022

Love remains

What should your true love gift you on the third day of Christmas? How about the reminder that Saint John was the "beloved disciple" of Jesus? So beloved that Jesus—even as he was dying on the cross—entrusted his own mother to John's tender care: "'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother'" (John 19:26). As the dust settles on our often hectic celebrations of Christmas, remember that "faith, hope, and love remain . . . but the greatest of these is love." So don't fret if your holiday feast doesn't include a Martha Stewart masterpiece; simple love should be the main course—and makes for the best leftovers.

FEAST OF JOHN, APOSTLE, EVANGELIST

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 1:1-4; John 20:1a, 2-8 (697). *"Beloved: What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen . . . and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life."*

Wednesday, Dec 28, 2022

Dry every tear

In the midst of celebrating the great octave of Christmas we are reminded that Jesus was born into a world much like our own: filled with violence and terror, impacting especially the most vulnerable. Pope Francis stated in his 2016 address for the Feast of the Holy Innocents: "Christmas is . . . accompanied, whether we

like it or not, by tears. . . . It is the sobbing of mothers bewailing the death of their children in the face of Herod's tyranny and unbridled thirst for power. Today too, we hear this heart-rending cry of pain, which we neither desire nor are able to ignore or to silence." How shall we respond, to bring some comfort to those who grieve?

FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 1:5—2:2; Matthew 2:13-18 (698). *"Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you."*

Thursday, Dec 29, 2022

No disposable lives

"Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?" Those words are attributed to King Henry II. This provocative question signaled to Henry's armed forces that Bishop Thomas [Becket] of Canterbury should be killed. And so he was. Catholic teaching tells us that every single life is precious, whether a bishop or a pauper. On this memorial of Saint Thomas Becket, consider ways our community can reject the notion of ridding ourselves of turbulent human beings—be they convicts, the bedridden, or other troublesome or inconvenient lives.

MEMORIAL OF THOMAS BECKET, BISHOP, MARTYR

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:3-11; Luke 2:22-35 (202). *"Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel."*

Friday, Dec 30, 2022

All in the family

Families come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. One thing they all share, however, is that they are not perfect. "Perfect families do not exist," said Pope Francis in a 2015 address. "This must not discourage us. Quite the opposite. Love is something we learn; love is something we live; love grows as it is 'forged' by the concrete situations which each particular family experiences. Love is born and constantly develops amid lights and shadows." As we remember the Holy Family, let us also recommit ourselves to this kind of love within all our family experiences.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 or Colossians 3:12-21; Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 (17). *"And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection."*

Saturday, Dec 31, 2022

Slow down to celebrate

Part of the wisdom coming to us from our long church tradition is found in the realization that some mysteries take a while to unfold. That is why during the Christmas season we celebrate the great mystery of God in the world for an entire octave, the eight days between Christmas and the solemnity tomorrow of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. As we approach the end of this great celebration, ponder for a few moments how the mystery of this event has unfolded for you this year. And take a moment to feel the joy of Christmas once again.

SEVENTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:18-21; John 1:1-18 (204). *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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