



Pope Francis' Prayer Intentions for December

Universal: That the scandal of child-soldiers may be eliminated the world over.

Evangelization: That the peoples of Europe may rediscover the beauty, goodness, and truth of the Gospel which gives joy and hope to life.

An Advent Poem

by Saint John of the Cross

If you want, the Virgin will come walking down the road
pregnant with the holy, and say,
"I need shelter for the night,
please take me inside your heart, my time is so close."
Then, under the roof of your soul,
you will witness the sublime intimacy,
the divine, the Christ, taking birth forever,
as she grasps your hand for help,
for each of us is the midwife of God, each of us.
Yes there, under the dome of your being
does creation come into existence eternally,
through your womb, dear pilgrim
- the sacred womb of your soul,
as God grasps our arms for help:
for each of us is his beloved servant, never far.
If you want, the Virgin will come
walking down the street
pregnant with Light and sing.

www.Schmalen.com



Saint of the Month: Saint John of the Cross

Born in Spain in 1542, Feast day Dec 14

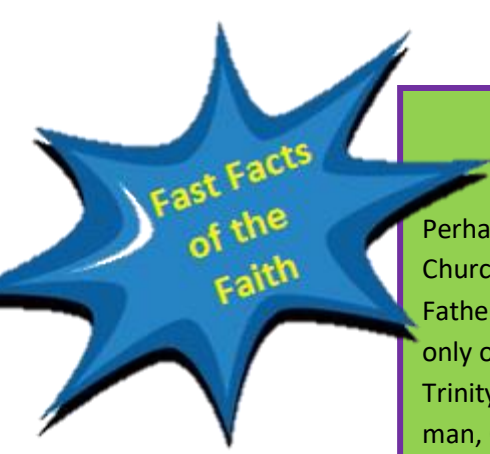
John was born to a poor family. At age fourteen, he took a job caring for hospital patients who suffered from incurable diseases and madness. It was out of this poverty and suffering that John learned to search for beauty and happiness not in the world, but in God. He later joined the Carmelite order and helped Saint Teresa of Avila try to return the order to a life of prayer. But many Carmelites felt threatened by this reform, and some members of John's own order kidnapped him. He was locked in a cell six feet by ten feet and beaten three times a week by the monks. There was only one tiny window high up near the ceiling. Yet in that unbearable dark, cold, and desolation, God brought John his greatest joys.

After nine months, John escaped. From then on, his life was devoted to sharing and explaining his experience of God's love. His life of poverty and persecution could have produced a bitter cynic. Instead it gave birth to a compassionate mystic, who lived by the beliefs that "Who has ever seen people persuaded to love God by harshness?" and "Where there is no love, put love -- and you will find love."

John left us many books of practical advice on spiritual growth and prayer that are just as relevant today as they were then. These books include: *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, *Dark Night of the Soul*, and *A Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom Christ*. Since joy comes only from God, John believed that someone who seeks happiness in the world is like "a famished person who opens his mouth to satisfy himself with air." He taught that only by breaking the rope of our desires could we fly up to God. Above all, he was concerned for those who suffered dryness or depression in their spiritual life and offered encouragement that God loved them and was leading them deeper into faith.

From *Catholic.org*

Email BethanyLoeffler@yahoo.com with questions or ideas for our next newsletter!



What is the Holy Trinity???

Perhaps the deepest, the most profound of all mysteries is the mystery of the Trinity. The Church teaches us that although there is only one God, there are three Persons in God. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, yet we do not speak of three Gods, but only one God. They have the same nature, substance, and being. The two doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation are the foundation of Christian life and worship. By becoming man, God the Son offered us a share in the inner life of the Trinity. By grace, we are brought into the perfect communion of life and love which is God -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This sharing in the life of the Trinity is meant to culminate in heaven, where we will see the three Persons face to face, united to them in unspeakable love. *Ewtn.com*

Christmas Traditions in My Family

By PREP Level 3

We put up the tree and when we're done we look at the tree like saying Thank you, Lord. And I got a puppy for my birthday and Santa puts my presents in different spots.

Every Christmas we go to the Poconos. We have fun there. I go snowboarding after Christmas.

Me and my family pick out a tree together and then decorate it. My cousins come over and we play tackle football in the snow.

My grandparents go to my house and we open one present on Christmas Eve. It's a process of elimination.

I go to my cousins' house in Syracuse, NY. I play with them but sometimes watch what they do because they are older than me. But I still go sledding with them.

My favorite Christmas tradition is going to my grandparents' house and singing songs, opening presents, and other stuff. I always sing while I am playing the piano. I like the presents they give me. My favorite song is Frosty the Snowman!

We just stay home and open presents and sometimes put up a tree and if my tree is up I get to put up the angel.

PREP Level K makes Advent wreaths

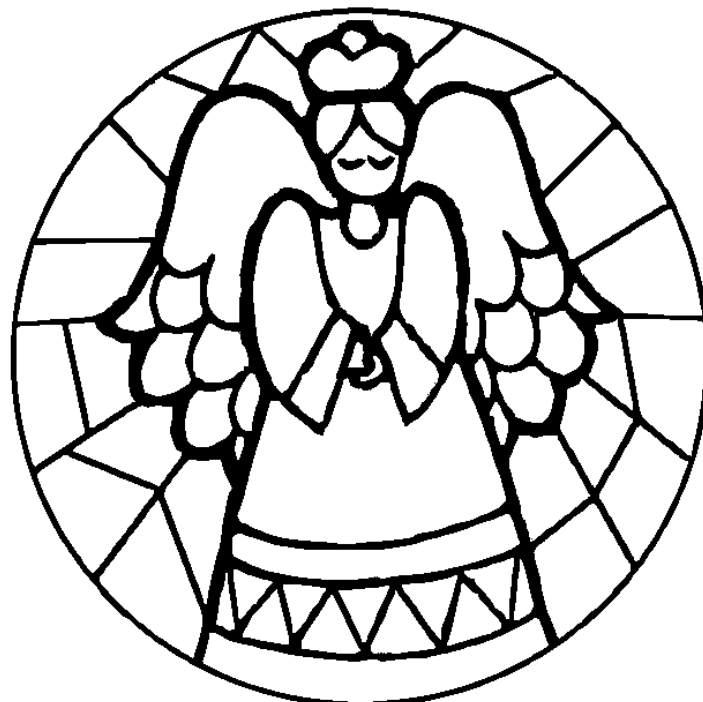




FEAR NOT
FOR, BEHOLD, I BRING YOU
GOOD NEWS
of
Great
Joy

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

Luke 2:8-20 (NIV)



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