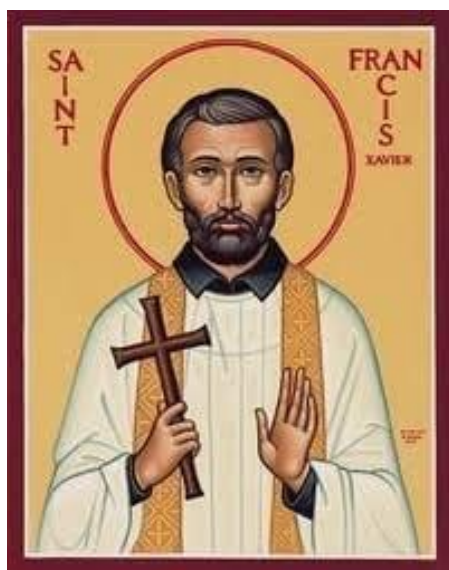


## Calendar / Feast Days

Date	Feast Days/Liturgical Occasions	Gospel for Sunday
3 December	1st Sunday of Advent	Mark 13:33-37
6 December	St. Nicholas	
7 December	St. Ambrose	
8 December	The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	
10 December	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent	Mark 1:1-8
12 December	Our Lady of Guadalupe	
13 December	St. Lucy	
14 December	St. John of the Cross	
17 December	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent	John 1:6-8, 19-28
24 December	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent	Luke 1:26-38
25 December	The Nativity of the Lord	
26 December	St. Stephen, First Martyr	
27 December	St. John, Apostle and Evangelist	
28 December	The Holy Innocents	
31 December	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	Luke 2:22-40

### 3 December: Saint Francis Xavier, Priest

The Jesuit priest, Francis Xavier, was a Spanish missionary priest who preached the Gospel as he travelled to the faraway countries of India, Japan and China, baptising thousands of people. He became known as the Apostle of the Indies and was eventually canonised as a saint.



**Saint Francis Xavier**

A characteristic of St. Francis Xavier was his positive personality, his cheerfulness and generosity, greeting others with a smile, winning so many people to Christianity. Pope Francis has frequently commented: “true Christians have cheerful faces and eyes full of joy”.

## **6 December: Saint Nicholas, Bishop**



### **St. Nicholas**

When Saint Nicholas was a little boy, he shared all of his toys and gifts happily. His parents were wealthy, and they bought wonderful things for him. No matter what he got, he shared with his friends. Saint Nicholas was always looking for ways to help people.

His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God. The feast of St. Nicholas, bishop, falls on December 6, at the beginning of Advent. This day brings much celebrating, especially in Eastern Europe and Germanic countries such as Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands. Italy also celebrates this saint's day. St. Nicholas is the patron saint of children, of Russia, of sailors and pawnbrokers.

## **8 December: The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**



On 8 December 8, the Church celebrates one of the most important feasts of Our Lady, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is the day when we remember and celebrate that God chose Mary to be the Mother of Jesus from the very first moment of her being; the moment of her conception.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception celebrates the sinless lifespan and Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, celebrated on 8 December, nine months before the feast of the Nativity of Mary, celebrated on 8 September. It is one of the most important Marian feasts in the liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church celebrated worldwide.

When we celebrate the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we celebrate the fact that Mary was, from the first instance of her existence (her conception), without sin, and chosen to be the mother of God.

**Let us pray:**

***“O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.”***

**Let us pray:**

***Loving God,***

***We thank you for the example of Mary,***

***Whom you chose to be the mother of your only Son, Jesus.***

***She lived her life with love for you and for others.***

***Help us to do the same.***

***We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.***

***Amen***

## **12 December: Our Lady of Guadalupe**



Our Lady of Guadalupe is Patroness of Mexico and the Americas. She is also venerated by Native Americans. Every year up to twenty million pilgrims travel from all over the world to visit the shrine at Guadalupe. The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is celebrated in the United States of America on 12 December. ). In the *Grow in Love* religious education programme for Fourth Class, you will read more about Our Lady of Guadalupe.

## 12 December: St. Lucy



### St. Lucy

The Church celebrates Saint Lucy's feast day on the 13 December during the Advent season. She is the patron saint of blindness. She had a very deep faith. The story of St Lucy's blindness reminds us how important light is in our world. In the season of Advent, we wait for the light of Christmas. When we live in the light, we live like Jesus who is the light of the world. Jesus said, 'I am the Light of the world.' (Jn 8:12). In the *Grow in Love* religious education programme for Fourth Class, you will read more about Saint Lucy.

## 14 December: Saint John of the Cross



### St. John of the Cross

Saint John of the Cross, a 16th century Carmelite priest, is best known for reforming his order, the Carmelites, together with Saint Teresa of Avila, and for writing the classic spiritual treatise "The Dark Night of the Soul."

Honoured as a Doctor of the Church since 1926, he is sometimes called the "Mystical Doctor," as a tribute to the depth of his teaching on the soul's union with God.

***Prayer of St. John of the Cross***  
***O Blessed Jesus,***  
***give me stillness of soul in You.***

***Let Your mighty calmness reign in me.  
Rule me, O King of Gentleness,  
King of Peace.***

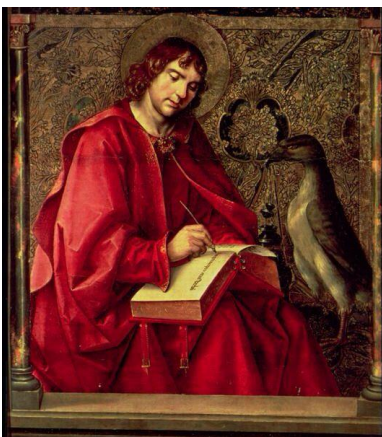
## **26 December: Saint Stephen**



### **St. Stephen**

Saint Stephen was one of the first deacons of the Church. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. He distributed food to the poor and he preached the gospel. Some people rejected his teaching. They persecuted Stephen, arrested him and brought him to court. Stephen remembered Jesus words (Mt 10: 19-20). Stephen believed the Holy Spirit would help him. He wasn't afraid. He witnessed to Jesus in the courts. The crowd didn't like what they hear. They killed Stephen. Stephen's last words were, 'Do not hold this sin against them.' (Acts 7:60).

## **27 December: Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist**

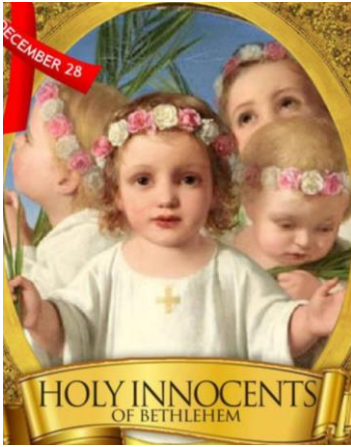


### **Saint John**

The Church celebrates the feast of Saint John the evangelist on 27 December. What we know about Saint John mainly comes from the Gospels He wrote three letters and the Book of Revelation. While John lived, he walked with Jesus in daily life, he listened to him and he saw Jesus working the miracles. Saint John is

known as 'the beloved disciple.' John was Jesus during many significant moments of his life e.g., the Transfiguration, the Garden of Gethsemane and the foot of the Cross.

## 28 December: The Holy Innocents



### Holy Innocents

December 28, is the feast of the Holy Innocents. King Herod murdered the babies after the Magi did not return after the baby Jesus' birth. He was furious. The Church recalls these holy innocents. After the Magi did not return to King Herod, he was furious! Today children suffer in many ways through the selfish ways of other. Jesus loves children and says in the Gospel, 'Let the children come to me and do not stop them. God our Father loves them in a very special way.' (Mt 19:14).