

December Memo 2022



GROW IN LOVE

Junior Infants:	Theme 3: Advent and Christmas (Lessons 3, 4)
Senior Infants	Theme 3: Advent and Christmas (Lessons 3, 4)
First Class	Theme 3: Advent and Christmas (Lessons 2, 3)
Second Class	Theme 3: Advent and Christmas (Lessons 2, 3)
Third Class	Theme 4: Advent and Christmas (Lessons 2, 3)
Fourth Class	Theme 4: Advent and Christmas (Lessons 1, 2)
Fifth Class	<i>Seasonal/Additional Material</i> Lesson 5: Judaism (1): Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot Theme 4: Advent and Christmas (Lesson 3)
Sixth Class	<i>Seasonal/Additional Material</i> Lesson 5: Islam (1): Muhammad, the Qur'an and the 99 Names of Allah Theme 4: Advent and Christmas (Lesson 2)

Calendar - Feast Days

3 December: Saint Francis Xavier, Priest

4 December: 2nd Sunday of Advent

6 December: Saint Nicholas, Bishop

8 December: The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

11 December: 3rd Sunday of Advent

12 December: Our Lady of Guadalupe

13 December: Saint Lucy

14 December: Saint John of the Cross

18 December: 4th Sunday of Advent

25 December: The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

26 December: Saint Stephen, First Martyr

27 December: Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist

28 December: The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

30 December: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph



Calendar / Feast Days

3 December: Saint Francis Xavier, Priest



St. Francis Xavier

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.

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, 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

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.

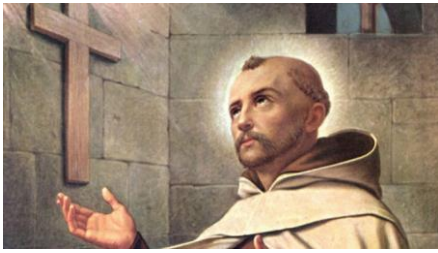
13 December: Saint Lucy



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

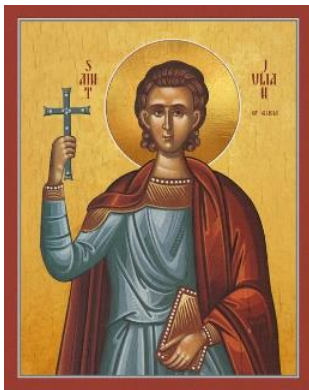
Saint John of the Cross, a 16th century Carmelite priest, is best known for reforming his order, the Carmelites, together with Saint Teresa of Avila, and for writing the classic spiritual treatise “The Dark Night of the Soul.”

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.

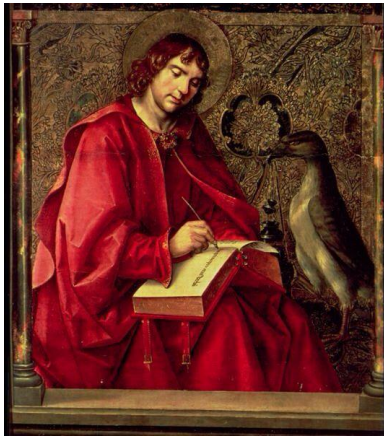
26 December: Saint Stephen



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 heard. They killed Stephen. Stephen's last words were, 'Do not hold this sin against them.' (Acts 7:60).

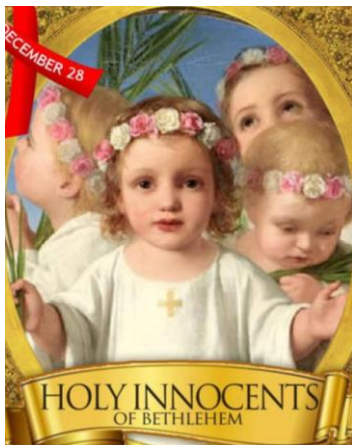
27 December: Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist



St. 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 with Jesus during many significant moments of his life e.g., the Transfiguration, the Garden of Gethsemane and the foot of the Cross.

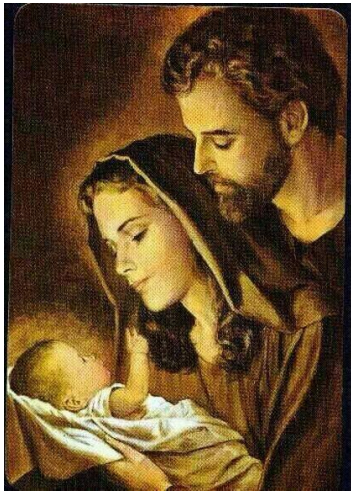
28 December: The Holy Innocents



Holy Innocents

December 28 is the feast of the Holy Innocents. King Herod murdered the babies when 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 others. 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).

30 December: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph



The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph is seen as the model for the human family, the religious community and the Church itself. The celebration of the Incarnation has helped us to see God's closeness. In the Holy Family we see the ordinariness of the life of Jesus and the simple acceptance of Mary and Joseph of the marvels of God. In the daily life of family and community we can touch the divine, we can come close to God. To do this we have to learn to live centred on God, with respect and love for each other.