

DRESS UP YOUR
SPACE UP



A virgin shall conceive and bear a son.

*A*dvent

November 28 –
December 24, 2010

Philippe De Champaigne (1602-1674). The Dream of St. Joseph (detail). Photo Credit: © National Gallery, London/Art Resource, NY

DRESS UP YOUR ADVENT WREATH, SPICE UP YOUR ADVENT HOUSEHOLD

If you have an Advent wreath in your household, consider embellishing it, or perhaps a small table as an “Advent altar” nearby, with small images of the saints the Church remembers during this season—especially the ones who are patrons of the people, occupations, and national origins of your household. Choose an activity or food tradition to share on these days.

NOVEMBER 30 - SAINT ANDREW

Apostle, martyr, patron of Scotland. Symbolized by an X-shaped cross. Enjoy easy Scottish shortbread for dessert! (300 degree oven) Cream 1 C. butter with $\frac{2}{3}$ C. sugar. At low speed, add 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ C. flour until just blended. Chill 30 min. Pat into two 7-in. circles, place on baking sheet and mark generous wedges. Bake for 30 min. and cool for 10 min. Sprinkle with cinnamon, if desired.

DECEMBER 3 - SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER

Priest, missionary to the Far East. A quick Xavier soup can be made from chicken broth simmered with cherry tomatoes, bay leaf, fresh parsley, and basil to taste. It's delicious poured over cheese gnocchi or another pasta cooked according to directions. (Remember to remove the bay leaf before serving.)

DECEMBER 4 - SAINT BARBARA

Virgin, martyr, patroness of architects. When her pagan father learned of Barbara's baptism, he beheaded her. An old practice on St. Barbara's day is to cut branches of witch hazel, a shrub that blooms in December, and place them in a vase of warm water to release their fragrance. (Or use another plant that might be more readily available.)



DECEMBER 6 - SAINT NICHOLAS

Bishop of Myra, patron of children, pawnbrokers, and sailors. Remember his generosity by baking a big batch of iced cookies. Share with others at home, school, or church. Or hand out candy canes (representing his bishop's staff) or tangerines or foil-wrapped chocolate coins (representing the gold he secretly gave for dowries for three grateful sisters).

DECEMBER 8 - IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Patroness of the U.S. Celebrates how God preserved Mary from sin. Traditionally, fragrant spices are associated with Mary. This simple sugar and spice cookie will make your kitchen smell heavenly! (Oven 275 degrees) Cream 1 C. butter and 1 C. sugar till fluffy. Blend in 1 egg yolk. Stir in $1\frac{1}{2}$ t. nutmeg and 2 C. flour till combined. Pat evenly into greased 10 x15 rimmed cookie sheet. Brush top with egg white. Bake 50 minutes. Cut into squares while warm.

DECEMBER 12 - OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

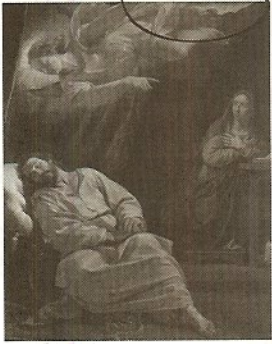
Patroness of Mexico. Celebrate this vision of Our Lady awaiting the birth of Jesus with a small bouquet of roses (Our Lady of Guadalupe's sign) on the dinner table or in your Advent wreath. Toast her with Mexican hot chocolate flavored generously with cinnamon and vanilla.

DECEMBER 13 - SAINT LUCY

Virgin, martyr, patroness of gondoliers. Her name means “light” and one of her symbols, a wreath of candles worn on the head, reminds us of the Advent wreath. In Sweden, the eldest daughter brings her parents coffee and cakes in bed before dawn on St. Lucy's day. Light lots of candles throughout the house!

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The Annunciation to Joseph



(Matthew 1:18–25)
An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”

Did you know there are five dreams in Matthew's telling of the birth of Christ? (Joseph has four, the magi have one.) Matthew's whole Gospel is also in five parts, to imitate the five books of the Jewish law, or Torah. As we discover through all five dreams, obeying God's will takes courage, dedication, and real love for the people and the mission God has placed in our care. Mary and Joseph obeyed God's will, and so must we.

Advent 2010

MAKE A PLAN FOR THE SEASON

Nature's seasons shape the ways we invest energy, time, and resources for daily living. Sacred seasons likewise shape how we invest energy, time, and resources for our spiritual lives. Advent is the season of preparation, of being attentive. We remember Jesus' coming in history; we work actively for his coming in our hearts; we eagerly anticipate his coming at the end of time.

Celebrating Advent gives us an opportunity to invite the sacred into our lives. It's a chance to make time, make an agenda, and make space in our lives for a deeper, more intimate relationship with God. It's not about piling more daily tasks onto our Christmas to-do list. It's about giving ourselves and others permission to love God in a renewed way.

MAKE TIME

- Wake up fifteen minutes earlier or go to bed fifteen minutes later
- Give time new purpose; ask yourself, do I squander the precious gift of time making unnecessary trips in the car?
watching television, texting, phoning, surfing the Web?
reading non-essential things?
- Spend your extra fifteen minutes of newly found time in brief meditation at bedtime or rising, a gentle entry into or exit from busy-ness,
saying a prayer, doing spiritual reading,
in some charitable work, or perhaps visiting with someone who may be lonely.

MAKE AN AGENDA

- Create a brief prayer list or choose one inspiring book.
- Peruse the seasonal traditions in these articles for the ones that appeal to you.
- Be dutiful in lighting your Advent wreath or using your Advent calendar.

MAKE SPACE

Put short prayers (like the ones found in this bulletin) where you'll see them throughout the day

- the bathroom mirror
- the back of your cell phone
- the visor in your car
- your bed stand
- your purse, pockets, backpack
- your computer screen saver

