



*Feasts and Seasons  
to Celebrate*

## ORDINARY TIME

Apart from the seasons of Easter, Lent, Christmas, and Advent, there are thirty-three or thirty-four weeks in the course of the year which celebrate no particular aspect of the mystery of Christ. Instead, especially on the last Sundays, the mystery of Christ in all its fullness is celebrated. This period is known as Ordinary Time.

*N.C.D., Par. 144, p. 82*

## ANGELS

Personal and spiritual beings created by God, who know and praise him and share God's life. They possess both intelligence and will. They are servants and messengers of God. Guardian Angels watch over and guide each human person as agents of God's love.

*TTOC p. 87*  
*CCC #328, 329, 336*

## SAINTS

Persons who responded to the call to holiness and chose to follow Jesus faithfully.

We celebrate and honor our patron saints, parish/school saint(s) and the feast days of special saints.

*TTOC pp. 339, 468*  
*CCC #956, 957, 2030, 2156*

## SEPTEMBER 8 – BIRTH OF MARY

Mary was brought into the world unlike other children of Adam (not deprived of sanctifying grace and prone to sin) pure and holy, beautiful and glorious, chosen to be the Mother of God.

Her birth place is unknown, but Nazareth is favored by ancient tradition. Saints Anna and Joachim were her parents.

## SEPTEMBER 27 – SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

Vincent grew up in a large French peasant family. As a boy he cared for the family's farm animals. He was motivated to help others by the poverty of his parishioners. Vincent had many wealthy and powerful friends. But he loved the poor. He started a religious order and parish groups to help the poor. Today the Saint Vincent de Paul Society is active all over the world.

## SEPTEMBER 29 – SAINTS MICHAEL, RAPHAEL AND GABRIEL—ARCHANGEL

**SAINT MICHAEL** – The prophet Daniel mentions this heavenly prince who stands guard over God's people as leader of God's power against Satan, darkness and sin.

*Daniel 10:13f*

## SAINT RAPHAEL

The book of Tobit relates the story of the angel Raphael accompanying Tobit's son, Tobias, to Media. He is considered the Patron of Travelers.

*Tobit 5:1-28*

## SAINT GABRIEL

Luke in his account of the Annunciation depicts Gabriel as the angel who appeared to Mary and asked her to become the Mother of Jesus.

*Luke 1:26-38*

## OCTOBER 1 SAINT THERESE OF THE CHILD JESUS

All her life Therese suffered from illness. She endured prolonged periods of darkness when the light of faith seemed all but extinguished.

This Carmelite nun preferred hidden sacrifices to convert souls: "I prefer the monotony of obscure sacrifice to all ecstasies. To pick up a

pin for love can convert a soul," she was often heard to say.

Her autobiography is read and loved throughout the world. She died at age 24. She is the Patroness of the Missions.

#### OCTOBER 2 – GUARDIAN ANGELS

A day for renewing friendships and deepening them with a dear, gentle, unintrusive spirit who watches over us night and day for love of God and us.

#### OCTOBER 4 SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI (1182–1226)

This son of a rich merchant spent his youth gaily singing, while pursuing ideals that seemed quite lofty to him.

Something happened to shatter his dream. Serious illness brought the young Francis to realize the emptiness of his frolicking as leader of Assisi's youth.

Francis made a spiritual about-face, and began to tread along a way quite the opposite of the one he had been so enthusiastic about before. Yet, Just as before, a song was ever on his lips and his heart bounded even more gaily and happily.

Francis called himself "The Herald of the Great King."

- ◆ *He became poor, only that he might be Christ-like.*
- ◆ *He loved nature because it was another manifestation of the beauty of God.*
- ◆ *He did great penance (Apologizing to "Brother Body" later in his life) that he might be totally disciplined for the will of God.*
- ◆ *He was a sign of contradiction by being credibility to gospel values.*

- ◆ *He gave primacy to prayer and love for the crucified Lord and received the Stigmata the real and painful wounds of Christ in his hands, feet and side.*

This gentle man of Assisi astounded and inspired the Church by taking the Gospel literally, not in a narrow fundamentalist sense, but actually following all Jesus said and did, joyfully, without a bit of self-importance.

Francis of Assisi gave his life of total support and absolute loyalty to the Church and to peace.

He is the patron of ecology.

The blessing he places on you today is:

"May the Lord Bless you and keep you,  
Show you his face and be merciful to you,  
Turn upon you the light of his face,  
And give you peace.+"

#### OCTOBER 5 BLESSED FRANCIS XAVIER SEELOS, C.Ss.R.

Francis Seelos was born in Fussen, a small town of Bavaria in southern Germany. As a young boy he expressed his desire to become a priest. This desire also included his goal to become a missionary to the German speaking immigrants in the United States. In order to achieve this goal he entered the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

His first assignment was to work at St. Philomena parish in Pittsburgh, PA in August of 1845. Francis Seelos dedicated himself to people throughout the Pittsburgh area for nine years.

*Refer to Appendix "Pittsburgh Remembers".*

#### OCTOBER 7 – OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

According to the tradition of the Order of Preachers, recognized by many popes and accepted in the Roman Breviary, the rosary just as we know it was devised by Saint Dominic, in consequence of a vision in which our Lady revealed it to him.

No Christian is too simple or illiterate to make use of the rosary; it may be the vehicle of high contemplation as well as the simplest petition or aspiration. Though it is addressed to Mary, with an invocation of her intercession, it is chiefly a praise and thanksgiving to the Son for the divine mercy.

#### **OCTOBER 15 – SAINT TERESA OF AVILA**

The gift of God to Teresa in and through which she became holy, and left her mark on the Church and the world, is threefold: she was a woman, a contemplative and an active reformer. She was a Carmelite not so much wrapped in silence as in mystery.

She was beautiful, talented, outgoing, adaptable, affectionate, courageous, enthusiastic and totally human and womanly.

#### **OCTOBER 19 – SAINT ISAAC JOGUES, SAINT JOHN DE BREBEUF AND COMPANIONS**

Issac and Companions were Jesuit missionaries from France and became the first martyrs of the North American continent. He gave up his career of teaching in France to work among the Huron Indians in the New World.

The Iroquois beat, tortured and forced these missionaries to watch as their Huron converts were mangled and killed.

Issac was eventually tomahawked by the Mohawk Indians for having made the sign of the cross on the foreheads of some children.

#### **NOVEMBER 1 – ALL SAINTS (HOLY DAY)**

We celebrate All Saints as well as our own nameday on this date yearly.

The Church honors all saints reigning together in heaven to give thanks to God for the graces and crowns of His servants; to implore divine mercy through their intercession and to glorify God in those saints unknown to us or for whom no particular festivals are appointed.

#### **NOVEMBER 2 – ALL SOULS DAY**

A day set aside to emphasize the Church's relations with the souls in Purgatory by soliciting the divine mercy in their favor.

It is certainly a "holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead."

*2 Mach. 12:46*

#### **NOVEMBER 3 – SAINT MARTIN DE PORRES**

The son of a Spanish knight and a Panamanian woman, he became a Dominican lay brother. At a young age Martin learned the skills of medicine and surgery. He nursed the sick of the city and helped found an orphanage and a hospital for children. He died of quatern fever.

#### **NOVEMBER 13 SAINT FRANCES CABRINI (1850-1917)**

She is the first United States naturalized citizen to be canonized.

Frances always wanted to be a missionary in China since her early childhood in Italy. Instead she came to the United States and cared for Italian immigrants who were losing their faith and sense of family. She built hospitals, schools and orphanages.

She was known for her enormous faith, gift of prayer and great humility.

She died of malaria in Columbus Hospital in Chicago.

#### **NOVEMBER 21 – PRESENTATION OF MARY**

This feast is popularly associated with a story that the parents of our Lady brought her to the Temple at Jerusalem when she was three years old and left her there to be brought up.

## THE FOURTH THURSDAY OF NOVEMBER THANKSGIVING DAY

With festivity, we celebrate in praise and thanksgiving for all our gifts and blessings and we tell the stories of our lived experiences.

## ADVENT

1. Mary says "Yes" to the Father (primary level)
2. It is time of waiting and hoping, a Liturgical season that mediates salvation and deepens and strengthens the awareness of Christ's presence in His Church and its members.
3. Advent means "coming" and refers to the three-fold coming of Jesus:
  - ◆ *in the past in history*
  - ◆ *in the present in mystery (in and through others)*
  - ◆ *in the future in majesty*
4. We remember Jesus' family during Advent, i.e., Mary, Joseph, Zachary, Elizabeth, and John the Baptizer

## DECEMBER 6 – SAINT NICHOLAS, BISHOP OF MYRA

Nicholas, who lived in Asia Minor (now a part of Turkey) inherited great wealth when his parents died. He was a holy man. He used his money to help others. The stories about Bishop Nicholas' generosity to the poor and his love of children have become legendary. His feast day is December 6 and is celebrated in many parts of the world.

## DECEMBER 8 – THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Declared Patroness of the United States in 1846

Mary is queen of the Advent season, a new creation and a new Eve.

She is a woman untainted, whose response to her Creator is so total that He finds in her the fabric for His own enfleshment — His Incarnation.

From the first instant of her conception in the womb of her mother, Mary was free from original sin.

Plus IX, Bull, *INNEFABILIS DEUS* dogmatically defined this feast:

"By a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, Mary was preserved free from all stain of original sin."

*December 8, 1854*

## DECEMBER 12 – OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

In December 1531, Our Lady appeared to the gentle Aztec, Juan Diego, near Mexico City.

Hispanics whose roots are in Mexico call us to celebrate this feast. Through the intercession of this tender Mother, peace and healing may come to the troubled lands of the Americas. Our Lady of Guadalupe has been given the title "Mary, Patroness of the Americas".

## DECEMBER 25 – CHRISTMAS

God gives us the Son, Jesus. Glory breaks on the world. It is a holy night radiant with the splendor of God/Jesus our Light.

We remember Jesus' birthday:

- ◆ *Jesus is the Son of God*
- ◆ *Jesus is God's greatest gift to us*
- ◆ *A Light that dispelled the darkness*

We give gifts to recall that Jesus is God's finest gift to us.

Celebrate Christmas as a time of renewal of Faith, Hope and Love.

The ministries of Jesus, his miracles, sacred Passion, Death and Resurrection are illumined by faith in His divinity and the love that led Him to assume our humanity.

**DECEMBER – (SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS) –  
FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY**

A celebration on the day honoring the Holy Family. The Creator ordered the earth to bring forth life and crowned its goodness by creating a family of humankind. The Scriptures teach us the sanctity of human love and show us the value of family life.

*Colossians 3:17-21*  
*Lk. 2:41-52*

**JANUARY 1  
FEAST OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD**

1. the second Person became Incarnate through Mary
2. Jesus had two natures: divine and human; but He is one person — Jesus Christ
3. Mary is Mother of Jesus and thus Mother of God

Mother of God — a glorious title of one who was created in time to be Mother of the uncreated, eternal God.

**JANUARY – EPIPHANY  
SUNDAY AFTER NEW YEARS DAY**

God revealed His Son to the world by the guidance of a star. Astrologers from the East inquired about this great Light (Mt.2:1-12) which was promised in the Hebrew Scriptures, "The Lord and Ruler is coming; Kingship is his, and government and power."

*Mal. 3:1*  
*Chr. 29:12*

**JANUARY 4**

**SAINT ELIZABETH ANN SETON (1774-1821)**

This first natural-born saint of the United States is one of the keystones of the American Catholic Church. She was born two years before the Declaration of Independence. Reared as a staunch Episcopalian she learned the value of prayer, Scripture and a nightly examination of conscience.

She was the belle of New York and married a handsome, wealthy businessman. She became a Catholic after her husband's death and opened a Catholic school in Baltimore to support her five children.

Elizabeth had two great devotions: abandonment to the will of God and deep devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and His mother Mary.

**JANUARY 5 – SAINT JOHN NEUMANN, C.SS.R.**

John Neumann was born in Bohemia. There were too many priests in his home diocese and he would have to wait to be ordained. So he decided to come to the United States, seek ordination and serve as a missionary among the German immigrants.

After several years Father Neumann sought the support of a religious community. He requested acceptance into the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. Within twelve years he was appointed the fourth Bishop of Philadelphia. He died at the age of forty-eight, worn out with apostolic endeavors.

*Refer to Appendix "Pittsburgh Remembers"*

**JANUARY– CELEBRATE THE BAPTISM OF  
JESUS (SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY)**

The Spirit descended upon Jesus at His baptism by John in the Jordan River.

"He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power" (*Acts 10:37*)

"I have formed you and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations... (*Is. 42:1-7*)

After His Baptism a voice said, "This is My beloved Son. My favor rests on Him."  
(Mt. 3:17)

We share this sonship and are called to follow His journey of holiness and service to others by our Baptism.

#### **JANUARY 18-25 – CHAIR OF UNITY OCTAVE**

An eight-day period of prayer for Christian Unity.

#### **FEBRUARY 2 – PRESENTATION OF THE LORD**

Mary presented her Son Jesus in the Temple to make the ritual offering for her Purification.

The Church blesses candles for use in sacred liturgies and homes, and celebrates Jesus as Light of the World.

#### **FEBRUARY 3 – SAINT BLAISE**

The Church blesses throats as a holy prevention against diseases of the throat.

A lot of fiction crept in over Blaise's biographical details. It suffices that he is seen as one more example of the power those who have give themselves entirely to Jesus.

#### **FEBRUARY 11 – OUR LADY OF LOURDES**

This feast celebrates the tenderness of God's Mother, the Virgin Mary, for all of us on earth, and focuses on an important aspect — her Immaculate Conception.

In 1858, Our Lady appeared to fourteen-year-old Bernadette Soubirous as she and two companions gathered firewood. Bernadette suffered much but Our Lady appeared to her seventeen times. During the sixteenth visit, Our Lady identified herself as the Immaculate Conception. After four years of investigation the Church finally stated that Bernadette's claims were credible and that Our Lady had appeared to her.

#### **LENT – ASH WEDNESDAY**

This day marks the beginning of Lent. The Church marks our foreheads with ashes to remind us of our mortality. (Ashes are from burned palms of the previous year.)

1. Jesus says "Yes" to the Father (primary level)
2. The Church celebrates Lent as a time of conversion and a preparation for Easter.
3. During Lent we try to be more like Jesus:
  - ◆ *live more unselfishly*
  - ◆ *pray more*
  - ◆ *probe accounts of Jesus as Messiah/Savior*
4. We remember Holy Week as a series of events leading up to His Sacred Passion and death.
5. We remember Jesus' sufferings and death:
  - ◆ *He told His apostles to remember Him and that His last days were to be full of sorrow and sufferings.*

#### **MARCH 3 – BLESSED KATHARINE DREXEL**

Katharine Drexel was the daughter of Drexel, a wealthy Philadelphia banker. At a young age she and her sisters were taught that it is a privilege to share God's gifts with others. Katharine wanted to care for people in the United States who were given the least share — Native Americans and African Americans. As the founder of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, Mother Drexel spent over twenty million dollars of her own money to build and operate missions and schools.

*Refer to Appendix "Pittsburgh Remembers"*

#### **MARCH 17 – SAINT PATRICK**

Converting pagan Ireland was the outcome of a vision that called him to work there.

He was a man of action. In his apostolate of less than thirty years, Patrick converted Ireland as a whole to Christianity. He had a rocklike belief in his vocation and in the cause he had espoused. His holiness is known by the fruits of his work.

**MARCH 19  
SAINT JOSEPH (FOSTER FATHER OF JESUS)**

The Bible pays Joseph the highest compliment: he was a "just" man, which means he was one who was completely open to all that God wanted to do for him.

The lineage of Mary's husband as the legal father of Jesus is traced in Matthew's gospel. (1:18-25)

Matthew sketches the confusion, humiliation and misery experienced by Joseph when he recognizes that Mary is pregnant.

This just man was simply, joyfully, wholeheartedly obedient to God — in marrying Mary, in naming Jesus, in shepherding the precious pair to Egypt, in bringing them to Nazareth and in years of quiet faith and courage.

**MARCH 25 – THE ANNUNCIATION**

The Church pauses during Lent to reflect on the glory of humankind — the incarnation of the Son of God in the womb of a sinless woman — Mary.

Gabriel, an angel of the Most High greeted her, "Hail Mary," and invited her to be the Mother of God.

*Lk. 1:26-38*

**HOLY THURSDAY**

We celebrate the Last Supper and the institution of the Holy Eucharist and the institution of the priesthood.

On this evening Jesus experienced His Agony in the Garden.

*Mark 14:1-52*

**GOOD FRIDAY**

This day marks the memory of Jesus being crucified and dying in order to save us.

*Mark 14:23-47*

**THE EASTER VIGIL**

The Easter Vigil is the night before Easter, when the Church celebrates new life in Christ and the Resurrection of Jesus, the Light of the World.

**EASTER – JESUS LIVES FOREVER**

We remember and celebrate Jesus' new life:

- ◆ *He was raised from death*
- ◆ *He is alive now and forever*
- ◆ *He is with us in His Spirit now.*

**EASTER TIME**

The Easter Triduum of the passion and Resurrection of Christ is the culmination of the entire Liturgical Year. What Sunday is to the week, the solemnity of Easter is to the year.

*N.C.D., Par. 144*

**APRIL 17 – SAINT KATERI TEKAKWITHA**

Kateri was the daughter of a Mohawk Chief who lived near what is today Auriesville, New York, and, later, in Quebec, Canada. When she was only four years old both of her parents died of small pox. After that she was called Tekakwitha, which means "she who feels her way," because the small pox affected her sight. She was baptized on Easter Sunday.

### **MAY 1 – SAINT JOSEPH THE WORKER**

This feast was probably instituted in response to the “May Day” celebrations for workers sponsored by communists, although the relationship between Joseph and the cause of workers has a long history. Jesus is identified as the "carpenter's son." He was obviously trained by Joseph and the Church uses that title to emphasize his humanity and to remind us that we are like God not only in thinking and loving but also in creating.

### **MAY 9 – BLESSED MARY THERESA GERHARDINGER, S.S.N.D.**

Caroline Gerhardinger was born in a small town in Bavaria. When she was a young student, the political situation caused the suppression of all religious in parts of Europe. She held in her heart a dream to re-institute religious life as she remembered it from her early schooling. She and some friends under the guidance of the local bishop founded the School Sisters of Notre Dame to teach poor girls of that time. The community developed and spread throughout the world, and now numbers 5,000 Sisters.

*Refer to Appendix “Pittsburgh Remembers”*

### **ASCENSION**

Forty days after His Resurrection Jesus blessed His apostles and ascended to heaven.

*Lk. 24:50-53*

### **PENTECOST**

Fifty days after Easter the apostles were assembled in one room. They were filled with the Holy Spirit as Jesus promised.

*Acts 2:1-13*

### **MAY 31 – CELEBRATE THE VISITATION OF MARY TO ELIZABETH**

In obedience to the Angel Gabriel, Mary set out to visit her cousin Elizabeth who is pregnant by God's favor and would give birth to Saint John

the Baptizer. Elizabeth greeted her visitor with "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb." (*Lk. 1:42*) ...and Mary responds with the "Magnificat." (*Lk.1:46-54*)

### **JUNE 3 – SAINT CHARLES LAWANGA AND COMPANIONS**

One of 22 Ugandan martyrs, Charles is the Patron of Youth and Catholic Action. He protected his fellow pages from the homosexual demands of the Bogandan. He instructed them in the Catholic faith during their imprisonment for refusing those demands.

### **AUGUST 15 – ASSUMPTION (HOLY DAY)**

“Saint Mary's Day” par excellence, celebrates her honor; it is the birthday of her greatness and glory and the crowning of all the virtues of her whole life which we admire singly in her other festivals.