

The Days of Advent

THE PROPHECIES
AND PROMISE
OF THE
SAVIOR



*An Advent Calendar
of the
Basilica of the National Shrine
of the
Immaculate Conception*

The Second Week of Advent

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Hope

Let us pray

The days are drawing nigh when the glory of the Son of God
will make radiant the night of a waiting world.

May we place our hope in that which has been promised.

May we not be impeded by those things that
hinder us from receiving the hope and light of Christ.

May we not be blinded by darkness;
may we see the vision of wisdom
as we await "God with us."



Sunday, Second Week of Advent

At the main entrance of the National Shrine, at the upper right flank of the main door, is a sculpture in relief of Elizabeth, the cousin of Mary, with her son, John the Baptizer. Not only are Elizabeth and John relatives of Mary and Jesus, but they are also precursors, the ones who come before them; heralds of their coming.

The Gospel of Mark (1: 4, 7-8) tells us:

*John the Baptist appeared in the desert
proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ...*

And this is what he proclaimed:

“One mightier than I is coming after me.

I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals.

I have baptized you with water;

he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

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December 6, Feast of Saint Nicholas, Bishop

Nicholas was the Bishop of Myra (3d C), a small town in modern day Turkey. As bishop, he was a strong defender of the faith who was imprisoned. He died on December 6. After his death, he became known as the patron of children and the poor because of one story in particular: his secret delivery of gold pieces for dowries for the three daughters of a poor, indebted father.





Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel
Sculpture in relief
Bernadette digging in the
parched earth, from which
healing waters poured forth.

Monday, Second Week of Advent

*The desert and the parched land will exult;
the steppe will rejoice and bloom.*

*Streams will burst forth in the desert,
and rivers in the steppe.*

(Isaiah 35: 1, 6)

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Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel
Sculpture in relief,
Moses striking the Rock from
which water
poured forth.





Tuesday, Second Week of Advent

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception (Dec 8)

Patronal Feast Day of the United States and of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

*A great sign appeared in heaven:
A woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet
and on her head a crown of twelve stars.*

(Revelation 12: 1; Matins, Nocturn II, Lesson vi, Response)

Mary plays a pivotal supporting role in salvation history. Within the world of Symbology, Christ is frequently depicted as the Sun; Mary as the Moon or that which reflects the radiance of the Sun.

In 1649, Francesco Pacheco, a Spanish painter and artistic advisor to the Inquisition, wrote the rules for the artistic representation of the Immaculate Conception based on Revelation 12: 1, the first of which was that the woman would have “the moon under her feet.”

The signature image of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is *La Purísima Bionda* (The Immaculate Conception) by Bartolomé Estaban Murillo (1617-82). This painting was replicated in mosaic at the Vatican Mosaic Shops at the command of Popes Benedict XV (1914-22) and Pius XI (1922-39).

On 23 September 1920, as part of the Foundation Stone Ceremony, then Msgr. Thomas J. Shahan made the public announcement of this papal gift to the National Shrine.

On 12 November 1930, Dennis Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia, chairman of the Building Committee, dedicated the mosaic.

In June 1960, the mosaic was moved from the Crypt Church to its current location near the entrance of the sacristy in the Great Upper Church.

On 23 September 2015, Pope Francis placed a bouquet of flowers at the base of the mosaic and offered a silent prayer.

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Wednesday, Second Week of Advent

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me ... For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

(Matthew 11: 28-30)

The crux of this gospel is the word “easy,” the actual translation of which refers to something “custom made,” a perfect fit. In ancient Israel, oxen wore wood yokes around their necks to pull heavy loads. Carpenters would custom fit the yoke to each animal so that it would not tear the skin of the oxen. Thus, they could bear the burden without pain; without harm.

To that end, there is an ancient legend that Jesus had a sign over his carpenter bench that read:

“My yokes fit well ”

Reredos mosaic, Third Sorrowful Mystery Chapel, East Apse
Great Upper Church.

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Thursday, Second Week of Advent

When the earth had become hardened in evil, God sent the flood both to punish and to release it. He called Noah to be the father of a new era, urged him with kind words, and showed that he trusted him and consoled him with hope for the future. ... With Noah sharing the work, God filled the ark with the future seed of the whole world.

(Saint Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo* 147: PL 52, 594-5.
Thursday, 2d Week of Advent, Office of Readings)

The feast of the Epiphany tells of the *magi* or kings who travel from afar to pay homage to the Child Jesus. Early art traditions the kings are depicted as the descendants of the sons of Noah (Genesis 9: 18-19) and represent the three known races and continents of the time: Europe, Asia, Africa.

Noe, Pewabic ceiling panel, West Apse, Crypt Church.

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Friday, Second Week of Advent

*The angel Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary
who was betrothed to Joseph.*

*The light filled her with fear, but the angel said to her:
Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.
Behold you shall conceive and bear a son and he will be called
Son of the Most High.*

(See Luke 1: 26-27, 30-32
Lauds, Responsory)

Crypt Church, East Apse, Pewabic Ceramic, *Annunciation*, the column
between St. Susanna and St. Catharine Chapels.

Mary Chase Stratton modeled this depiction after one of the earliest known
“Annunciation” scenes in the catacomb of Priscilla (Rome, 3d C) and the
mosaic in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore (5th C).

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Saturday, Second Week of Advent
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

*Who is She that comes forth like the rising dawn,
fair as the moon, bright as the sun?
Like the rainbow gleaming amid luminous clouds,
like the bloom of roses in spring.*

(Cant 6: 10; Sirach 50: 7-8
Gradual, Feast of Guadalupe)

In 1927 the John Carroll Altar was moved from the Crypt Church to a new, temporary chapel in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe in what was then the Art Museum in the sub-basement of the National Shrine.

An uprising against the anti-Catholic government had begun in Mexico in 1926. The battle cry of the Cristeros was *¡Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe!* From 1927-29, the National Shrine united its prayer with the Cristeros and began invocations to the Virgin of Guadalupe each Monday evening.

This temporary chapel was a double shrine in that the Carroll altar was also used at the Mass for the dedication of the land of the National Shrine (16 May 1920) and the Mass the day after the placing of the Foundation Stone (24 Sept 1920).



Jesus Christ is the joy and happiness of all who look forward to
his coming. Let us call upon him and say:
Come, Lord, and do not delay!

(Monday) In joy, we wait for your coming,
Come, Lord Jesus.

(Tuesday) Before time began, you shared life with the Father,
Come now and save us.

(Wednesday) You created the world and all who live in it,
Come to redeem the work of your hands.

(Thursday) You did not hesitate to become man, subject to death,
Come to free us from the power of death.

(Friday) You came to give us life to the full,
Come and give us unending life.

(Saturday) You desire all people to live in love in your kingdom,
come and bring together those who long to see you face to face.

Mindful of all who are suffering and who are in need
let us pray as Jesus taught us:
Our Father ...

Lord, prepare our hearts and remove the sadness
of the trials and sorrows of the current days.

May we find strength in hope.
May we be generous in our love for one another
and agents of your mercy and kindness.

Come, Lord, and do not delay!