

## Catholic Culture Update 14

Quote to carry in your heart this week

“Justice shall flourish in his time.” Psalms 72

**December 8th is the Second Sunday of Advent “Practice of Charity >** In Paul’s reading, he urges the Romans to “welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God.” To learn more about how the US Catholic bishops advocate for immigrants, read the bishops’ pastoral statement *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity* and Catholic Social Teaching on immigration at [usccb.org](http://usccb.org). ♦ Invite to your home a neighbour or colleague who feels isolated from others. ♦ Challenge yourself to find common ground with someone with whom you have different beliefs. ♦ Support political candidates who work on solutions to social justice issues.” AT HOME with the WORD 2020, LTP, page 21

**Scripture Insights for Sunday’s readings** “Today’s First Reading from Isaiah look forward to the coming of the long-awaited Messiah, who will be filled with the fullness of God’s Spirit. He will bring peace to the world, a peace he describes in a vision where “the calf and the young lion shall browse together.” The coming of Jesus inaugurates this fulfillment. The reading from the Letter to the Romans connects back to the hopes of the Old Testament. Jesus’ coming fulfills the promises made to the patriarchs and extends them to the Gentiles “So that they might glorify God for his mercy.” Jesus’ coming brings all peoples together in their praise and glory of God. In the Gospel reading, God’s Word comes to the people in the desert through the person of John the Baptist. The desert is the place where the Israelites had wandered for forty years and where God formed them into a people. The prophets foresaw that God would lead the people back to the desert to form them again into God’s people. John the Baptist, who resembles the prophets with his clothing and diet, calls for a change of heart. “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” John speaks of one who is to come, one who is far greater than he. While John baptized with water, the one to come, Jesus, will baptize “with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” As John the Baptist called on his people to set things right, so we are called this Advent to set things right with God as we await the coming of Jesus at Christmas and welcome his presence into our lives.

- ♦ How do the first two readings show the connection between the Old and New Testaments?
- ♦ What does John the Baptist mean when he says that Jesus will “baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire”?
- ♦ How does Advent help you to experience Christ’s coming into your life?” AT HOME with the WORD 2020, LTP, page 21

**December 8<sup>th</sup> is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.** Because the 8<sup>th</sup> is the Second Sunday in Advent, this feast is moved to December 9<sup>th</sup>. “The dogma that Mary was kept free from original sin from the first moment of her conception was solemnly declared by Pope Pius IX in 1854, but it was by no means a new invention. The Eastern Church had celebrated this day from as early as the eighth century, and it soon spread to the West. It has been on the Church’s universal calendar since 1708. The Immaculate Conception is a singular grace, given to Mary to enable her to say “yes” to God. No stain of original sin touches her who is to become the Ark of the Covenant, the Temple in which God comes to dwell. This is a unique grace. And yet, Mary is our model for holiness. By our Baptism, we have been washed clean of the stain of original sin to become temples for the Holy Spirit. And we look to Mary for an example of the life of discipleship, open to God’s word, obedient to God’s will. This Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated with great festivity in many places around the world, particularly in Spain. In the Cathedral of Seville, there is a unique tradition called *Los Seises* or the “Dance of the Six.” Six boys perform a solemn dance before the Blessed Sacrament as hymns are sung in honour of the Immaculate Conception. It is a tradition that survives to this day, a vivid image of joy of the Church in this celebration of the grace of God at work in the Blessed Virgin Mary.” Companion to the Calendar – A guide to the Saints, Seasons, and Holidays of the

Year, Second Edition, page 148-149 *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners.* Do a little dance to celebrate Mary today.

December 9<sup>th</sup> ► “‘We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become.’ St. Clare of Assisi Take a few minutes today to make a list of what you love. This saints says, “‘We become what we love.’ Then, look at your list again. Does your list of loves express what you want to become?” My Year with the Saints for Kids compiled by Peter Celano, page 142

December 10<sup>th</sup> is **World Human Rights Day**. “2019 theme is **Youth Standing Up for Human Rights**. After a year marked by the 30th anniversary celebrations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which culminated on 20 November, 2019, our plan is to capitalise on the current momentum and spotlight the leadership role of youth in collective movements as a source of inspiration for a better future. Under our generic call to action “Stand Up for Human rights,” we aim to celebrate the potential of youth as constructive agents of change, amplify their voices, and engage a broad range of global audiences in the promotion and protection of rights. The campaign is designed to encourage, galvanise, and showcase how youth all over the world stand up for rights and against racism, hate speech, bullying, discrimination, and climate change, to name a few.”  
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day>

December 10<sup>th</sup> is the **Advent Day of Confessions** from 8:30 -8:00 p.m. at Precious Blood Cathedral. Prepare your hearts, prepare the Way of the Lord. Various priests will be available all day for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As we prepare for the coming of the Lord at Christmas, take this opportunity to encounter God’s mercy through this Sacrament.

December 10<sup>th</sup> ► “‘Brother Lawrence, who was a lay brother in a monastery in Paris 350 years ago, once said, ‘You don’t need to cry very loud. God is always nearer to us than we think.’ *God, I know you are right here with me. You hear me. I’m glad that you are my Friend, my Saviour, my Comforter.*” My Year with the Saints for Kids compiled by Peter Celano, page 142

December 11<sup>th</sup> ► “‘Be a Catholic: When you kneel before an altar, do it in such a way that others may be able to recognize that you know before whom you kneel.’ St. Maximilian Kolbe What do you think the saint meant by this? How would the way you use your body in prayer, or at Mass, show people that you know before whom you are kneeling?” My Year with the Saints for Kids compiled by Peter Celano, page 143

December 11<sup>th</sup> is **Taize Prayer** at St. Jerome’s parish from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Taize is an Ecumenical Christian Community in France whose music and meditative reflection on God’s Word had nourished people throughout the world. All are welcome.

**December 12<sup>th</sup> is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas.** “Today the Church throughout America (North, Central, and South) celebrates Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of America. Today is a feast in Canada, but in many Hispanic countries, such as Mexico, it is raised to a solemnity. The story of the origins of the miraculous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is well known. Juan Diego was a quiet, humble man, a poor peasant. When the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to him and asked him to tell the local bishop to build a church in her honour, Juan Diego became a very reluctant messenger. The bishop would not believe him. So Mary filled Juan Diego’s tilma, or cloak, with roses in December, and when he emptied out these beautiful flowers at the bishop’s feet, there, imprinted on his tilma, was a wonderful image of the Virgin, dressed like a young Aztec woman. Our Lady of Guadalupe, or *La Morenita*, as she is sometimes called – “the little dark one” – said to Juan Diego: “Now and understand that I am the ever virgin Mary, Mother of the true God through whom all things live.... Listen and understand, my humblest son. There is nothing to frighten and distress you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and let nothing upset you. Is it not I, your Mother, who is here? Are you not under my protection? Are you not, fortunately, in my care?”

(*Benedictine Daily Prayer*, The Liturgical Press, p. 1698) Companion to the Calendar – A guide to the Saints, Seasons, and Holidays of the Year, Second Edition, page 150 *Our Lady, inspire us to do what we can to have reconciliation in our relationships with our First Nations, Métis and Innu peoples.*

The Canadian Catholic Aboriginal Council, founded by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) in 1998, proposed that the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe be a National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples. All are invited to join their indigenous sisters and brothers in a special way this day through prayer and acts of solidarity. **In Sault Ste. Marie, on December 12th we are invited to Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Garden River for 3:30 for the rosary; 4:00 for Mass; followed by refreshments in the hall. All are welcome.**

December 12<sup>th</sup> ► “We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong.’ 1 Cor. 4:10 Our parents encourage us to be smart and strong, don’t they? They want us to succeed, to do well. But we have to remember, still, that it is okay. It is even good – to be foolish and weak before God. We are weak compared to God, and we always will be.” My Year with the Saints for Kids compiled by Peter Celano, page 143

December 13<sup>th</sup> is the memorial of **St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr.** “St. Lucy (c. +304), even from a young age, had a burning desire to serve God and an infinite love for the poor. Living in Syracuse, a city in Sicily, she fell prey to the Diocletian persecutions, which eventually resulted in her martyrdom. She resisted a man, believed to be a Roman soldier, who tried to rape her. He, in turn, denounced her as a Christian and had her tortured and killed. Numerous legends revolve around her death, but one that has gained popularity is that she tore out her eyes in an act to resist her attacker. Her name comes from the Latin *lux* / Lucia, meaning light; therefore, many northern countries honour her at this time of year when darkness is pervasive. Sweden celebrates the virginity and martyrdom of St. Lucy during the festival of light with a sacred process of young girls clothed in white dresses with red sashes, and crowned with lit candles. She is the patron saint of those with eye troubles and those needing awareness.” Companion to the Calendar – A guide to the Saints, Seasons, and Holidays of the Year, Second Edition, page 150-151 *St. Lucy we pray for your intercession for all who cannot see and for those who will not see. Sit in a room without the lights on for a few minutes and pray for those who have trouble seeing.*

December 13<sup>th</sup> ► “You correct little by little those who trespass, and you remind and warn them of the things through which they sin, so that they may...put their trust in you.’ Wisdom 12:1-2 ‘You will probably laugh at me and say how obvious such things are. But, until I closed my eyes to the vanities of this world, I did not see or understand who lived within my soul or what my soul deserved. If I had understood then, as I now do, how this great King lives within this palace of my soul, I would not have left him alone so much.’ St. Teresa of Avila“ My Year with the Saints for Kids compiled by Peter Celano, page 144

December 14<sup>th</sup> is the memorial of **St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church.** “John of the Cross (1542-1591) grew up near Avila in poverty. His father died when he was young, and his widowed mother struggled to support the family. Shortly after his ordination in 1567, he met Teresa of Avila and was drawn into her reform of the Carmelites. The reform set Carmelite brothers against brother, and John was even imprisoned but used the time to write the *Spiritual Canticle*. For this, and for his other great work, *Dark Night of the Soul*, he is considered one of the greatest poets to write in Spanish.” Companion to the Calendar – A guide to the Saints, Seasons, and Holidays of the Year, Second Edition, page 151 *St. John when we are feeling misunderstood, give us the courage to stand by our convictions. Write a verse of poetry to celebrate St. John’s day.*

## **Catholic Prayers – “Prayers of Sorrow**

### **The Jesus Prayer**

This prayer was prayed by the blind man who called out to Jesus (see Luke 18:13) who healed him. Don't hesitate to repeat this prayer over and over.

**Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”** Catholic Prayers – Second Edition – LTP pages 78

## **Igniting HOPE – A Future Full of Hope**

**The season of Advent points to a future full of hope when the kingdom of God is complete and Jesus returns.**

## **OCSGE – Ontario Catholic Student Graduate Expectations**

**A responsible citizen who respects the environment and uses resources wisely.** I was always upset when a student crunched up a piece of paper because they made a mistake in the first few lines. Why waste that piece of paper? We are a wasteful society. We need to be better models for our students so we can turn climate change around.

## **Hope is the Virtue of the Month of December. A prayer to strengthen the hope within us.**

“Good morning God, every day you wake me and fill my day with possibilities.

You send people into my life to help and guide me.

Show me how to make good choices so when the day is over

I will be able to feel joy and peace. Amen+

**Our Mission Statement – We strive to create sacred learning environments.** When we see our students and staff members with soft eyes, eyes of compassion and care, the learning environment becomes sacred. When we are allowed to make mistakes and learn from them, the learning environment becomes sacred. When we hear encouraging words, the learning environment becomes sacred.

## **Student Achievement – Strategic Direction of the Multi Year Strategic Plan**

Not everyone of learns in the same way. When a student is struggling it is important to try to teach to their strengths. If the learning can engage the senses, it can help those who need to experience the learning that way. If the learning can engage the whole body, it can help the kinesthetic learners. If a student likes numbers, can we find a way to use numbers to teach. Creativity is oh so necessary for good teaching and learning.

## **Staff Self-Care Tip of the Week**

“Electrical safety refers to practices, such as the appropriate use of lights, equipment, and extension cords, which help keep everyone from harm. As we prepare to celebrate the Advent and Christmas seasons with special events, such as liturgies, staff parties, concerts, family nights, and fundraisers, it is prudent for us all to adhere to safe practices. Be sure extension cords are not damaged or cracked.” Safety release for December

## **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2012 Calls to Action**

“In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes the following calls to action.

### **BUSINESS and RECONCILIATION**

92. We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.

## Church teaching on the Sacredness of all life

As explicitly formulated, the precept “You shall not kill” is strongly negative: it indicates the extreme limit which can never be exceeded. Implicitly, however, it encourages a positive attitude of absolute respect for life; it leads to the promotion of life and to progress along the way of a love which gives, receives and serves. (St. John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life [Evangelium vitae. . .]*, no. 54)

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/life-and-dignity-of-the-human-person.cfm>

## Twenty-first Century Learning

[https://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=11EMF1NU&utm\\_source](https://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=11EMF1NU&utm_source) > Jeanne Robertson On Getting The Perfect Christmas Gift – For adults – 2.41 min

[www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org) > Good reflections about the issues of the political debate as the election draws closer

[thecatholicthing@frinstitute.org](http://thecatholicthing@frinstitute.org) > Some grounded Christian theological reflections are offered almost daily

<http://wccm.org/> > World Community for Christian Meditation > This is a site for Christian Meditation for teachers and students alike.

[www.CARFLEO.org](http://www.CARFLEO.org) > best kept secret for religious education teachers of every grade

[www.gratefulness.org](http://www.gratefulness.org) > subscribe to this Word for the Day to receive one thought a day to help you to be grateful

**Saints Kit – All the saints of the Roman Calendar and More** by Sister Mary Kathleen Glavich, S.N.D., and other Sisters of Notre Dame, Chardon

**“St. Damasus I – 305-384** – Being a leader is not easy, Damasus I was elected pope at a crisis-filled time in the Church. In addition there were divisions between the East and West in the Roman Empire. Damasus tried to make decisions that showed progress yet held onto tradition. Damasus encouraged Christian missionaries, had architects restore and build churches and restore and decorate the tombs in the catacombs. He searched for relics of forgotten martyrs. He reformed the liturgy, making Latin the official language for worship instead of Greek. He had St. Jerome revise a Latin translation of Scripture, and he fought various heresies. Because of Damasus, the emperor Theodosius made Christianity the state religion. After Damasus was elected, a small group elected another man, Ursinus, to be pope. Finally Ursinus was exiled, but a few years later he returned with his followers and carried out a plot to get Damasus accused of a serious crime. Damasus defended himself both in civil court and in front of forty-four bishops at a Church synod. He proved himself innocent. The struggle of Damasus reminds us that Jesus promised his followers the same treatment that he received and the same victory. Damasus’s faith in the risen Jesus shines out from the epitaph that he wrote for his tomb. “He who walking on the sea could calm the bitter waves, who gives life to the dying seeds of the earth; he who was able to loose the mortal chains of death, and after three days’ darkness could bring again to the upper world the brother for sister Martha: he, I believe, will make Damasus rise again from the dust.” *St. Damasus, pray for us!*” Card 173

## CATHOLIC I.Q. – Quizzes for Fun and Learning

**Confirmed in Faith** – Catechist October 2019 David O’Brien, page 46

1. How many times do Catholics get confirmed?

- A. every time they go to Mass  
B. it depends on the parish  
C. twice  
D. once

2. After Jesus was baptized, the \_\_\_\_\_ descended upon him.

- A. Holy Spirit  
B. crowds  
C. angels  
D. rains

3. The Holy Spirit comes upon those being confirmed in the same way the Holy Spirit came upon the first disciples at \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. Good Friday                      **B. Pentecost**                      C. St. Peter's house                      D. Christmas
4. Once you receive your Confirmation you don't have to go to Sunday Mass anymore.                      T or F
5. As a sign of unity with the larger Catholic Church, the \_\_\_\_\_ is the person who normally celebrates the sacrament of Confirmation.
- A. deacon                      B. teacher                      **C. bishop**                      D. parent

**The Season of Advent** – created by Pat Carter csj

1. How is the First Sunday of Advent decided?
- A. It is always the First Sunday in December.                      C. It is the fourth Sunday before December 25<sup>th</sup>  
 B. It is 28 days before Christmas.                      D. It is drawn out of a hat.
2. How long is this year's Advent season?
- A. 4 X 7 = 28 days                      C. up to 27 days  
 B. 24 days                      D. as long as 30 days
3. The liturgical season of Advent is in what natural season in the Southern Hemisphere?
- A. winter                      B. fall                      C. summer                      D. spring
4. The liturgical colour(s) for the Advent candle(s) is/are
- A. purple                      B. white                      C. pink                      D. A & C
5. The Advent wreath is created with bows of
- A. coniferous trees                      B. deciduous trees                      C. any trees                      D. ivy

**Taking Jesus to the Movies** ...A blog by Sister Pat

**Alone in Berlin** – This movie was released in 2016 and stars Brendan Gleason and Emma Thompson. It is about a couple whose son dies in WWII and they begin a program of civil disobedience in Berlin under the noses of the Nazi regime. In their own way there are trying to topple the regime from within. I give this movie /5 hearts.

**A Blog for Eclectic Readers** – by Pat Carter csj

**Books & Islands in Ojibwe Country – Traveling Through the Land of My Ancestors** by Louise Erdrich. This bestselling author writes with clarity and passion about being an Ojibwe kwe (woman). The book begins a journey from Minnesota into northwestern Ontario, the Lake of the Woods region. The author travels with her baby to see the Islands and pictographs. I found it challenging to get into the story. I give this book /5.

**Catholic WORD of the Week – For Those Who Read to the end...Just like the credits at the movies**

**Impediment of Youth** – Canon 1083 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law establishes that boys must be at least sixteen years old and girls at least fourteen years old to enter sacramental marriage validly. In Roman law,

and throughout much of the history of canon law, the minimum ages for marriage were fourteen for boys and twelve for girls, which are roughly equivalent to the ages of puberty. The 1917 Code raised the minimum ages as above. They would have been raised higher still with the appearance of the 1983 Code, except for the great difficulty in arriving at a suitable universal age, given the fact that the Code of Canon Law operates in a wide variety of cultures and economic conditions. Because the minimum ages were determined by ecclesiastical law, it is within the power of the diocesan bishop to dispense from this matrimonial impediment. On the other hand, the conference of bishops may establish a higher age for the licit celebration of marriage. The Church's concern for the marriage of the very young extends considerably beyond the establishment of the impediment of youth. Canon 1072, for example, directs pastors to discourage persons from marrying when they are merely younger than the customary age for marrying in that area or community. The good sense behind this canon is self-evident. Canon 1071 requires the pastor (or other official witness) for a proposed marriage to seek the permission of the diocesan bishop when it is question of marrying persons who are under eighteen if their parents are unaware of the marriage of the or are reasonably opposed to it. And more broadly yet, Canon 1063 urges pastors to develop a system of marriage preparation suitable for young people; among others, in order to help them grow in their understanding of the fullness of Christian Marriage. Warning of the dangers of immature weddings can be an integral part of such preparation programs." Page 972