

2024 - 2025

A MULTICULTURAL GUIDE  
TO LITURGICAL LIVING

# Christmas

The Office of Multicultural Ministries  
Catholic Diocese of Arlington



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# The Three Kings

*A note from the author*

When I was about six years old, my family moved to Chiang Mai, Thailand for six amazing years. It was a beautiful country to grow up in, but it was also a very poor country. Many people were alone, hungry, and orphaned. My family witnessed unimaginable poverty on a daily basis. On Christmas mornings, after opening up presents, my parents would ask me and my siblings to select from our bounty one single item to give away to one of the local orphanages. As a child, this was *hard* to do. As an adult, I realize that this was the greatest gift my parents could have given us: a spirit of radical charity, to give even when it hurts.

In the Gospel of Matthew, he tells the story of the Magi, also known as the Three Kings or the Three Wise Men, who traveled from the east to Jerusalem to pay homage to the Christ child with their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We can only assume what a sacrifice this journey was for the magi. I like to think they knew that to travel so far would be costly and difficult. We know they were also warned by an angel to not return to Herod, so their route home may have been exceedingly dangerous.

In spite of all this, the wise men came just the same, and though they anticipated a great king, they met a poor and humble little child.

Like the wise men, and like my parents taught me, we should give even when it hurts, give *until* it hurts. In those who receive the gifts, the Christ Child is waiting.

*By Bridget Wilson, Director, Office of Multicultural Ministries*

# *What is Christmas?*

Christmas/Christmastime celebrates God becoming Man, the birth of Jesus Christ, hope for salvation, born to the Virgin Mary over 2000 years ago in Bethlehem.

The liturgical season of Christmastime begins with vigil Masses on Christmas Eve and ends on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. During this time, we celebrate the birth of Christ with Masses, prayers, hymns, feasting, gift-giving, and joyful traditions from all around the world. This guidebook will provide you with many opportunities to celebrate this sacred season. It is designed to be used Christmas Day December 25, 2024 through the Baptism of the Lord on January 12, 2025.



## *December 25 - Merry Christmas!*

From the Office of Multicultural Ministries to you and your family, we wish you a very Merry Christmas. We hope you have a joyful and peaceful day, surrounded by loved ones, rejoicing in the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

What does your Christmas day look like? If you have any special and unique traditions that you do today, we want to hear from you!

Please email us at [mcm@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:mcm@arlingtondiocese.org) and let us know, for a chance to have your traditions included in our 2025-2026 Christmas Guidebook! Some ideas below:



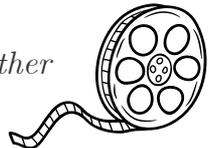
*Do you go to Mass Christmas Day?  
Midnight Mass? Do you have a favorite  
Christmas hymn?*

*Do you gather around the tree to open  
presents? Do you wait until Christmas Day  
to decorate?*



*Does your family make a big breakfast? A  
fancy dinner? What special dishes are you  
making?*

*Do you go to the movie theater on Christmas  
Day? Is there a film your family watches together  
every Christmas?*



## *December 26*

Feast of St. Stephen the Martyr. One of the first martyrs, St. Stephen was stoned to death. According to the Acts of the Apostles, Stephen was a deacon in the early Church. He is a patron to many, especially to deacons, as well as altar servers and even horses (one legend of St. Stephen's life tells of how Jesus cured the disciple's own horse).

His feast day, also called "St. Stephen's Day," is celebrated in many countries:

- In Ireland, it is a public holiday, and older generations celebrated by going door to door dressed in old clothes and straw hats.
- In England, it's known as "Boxing Day" because churches would put out boxes to collect donations in honor of St. Stephen.
- In certain parts of Spain, the tradition is to eat "canelons," a tube-shaped pasta.
- In parts of Germany and Austria, the day includes ceremonial horseback riding and blessing of horses! Old traditions in Finland also include horses, with traditional horse-drawn sleigh rides through the villages.

Some ways to celebrate this feast day:

- If you happen to own a horse, have it blessed! No horse? Make sugar cookies in the form of horseshoes!
- Eat canelons or other tube-shaped pasta you can find, filling them with leftover meat and veggies from Christmas dinner.
- Pray for deacons, especially those in the Diocese of Arlington.

*Meet one of the Diocese of Arlington Deacons and pray for him by name today:*

**Deacon Gerard-Marie Anthony**

Parish: Holy Trinity, Gainesville

Ordained: January 14, 2017

Favorite Saint: “Our Blessed Mother, no contest.”

Favorite Bible Verse: *"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."* (Rom. 12:21)

Advice for those discerning the diaconate: “You must first develop a great prayer life and remember this is the foundation for diakonia (service). If you have service without God's grace, it is not diakonia nor charity. You must discern how you can serve Christ and His Church with Christ-not instead of Him. You have to discern how you can keep your prayer life and then serve, not simply serve and try to ‘squeeze in your prayer life.’ Otherwise, you are doing something good, but not truly diakonia. Remember, the greatest gift you can give to the world is God! So as a deacon, know that must be the gift you give in EVERYTHING you do. This is how you bear good fruit. As Jesus was sent to point people to the Father, as a deacon you are there to point people to Jesus. Do this by staying in His Sacred Heart with adoration, rosary, prayer and devotion with love for our Blessed Mother.”

A book every person should read in their life: Two books that everyone should read: *Life is Worth Living* by Archbishop Fulton Sheen and *Catechism of the Spiritual Life* by Robert Cardinal Sarah

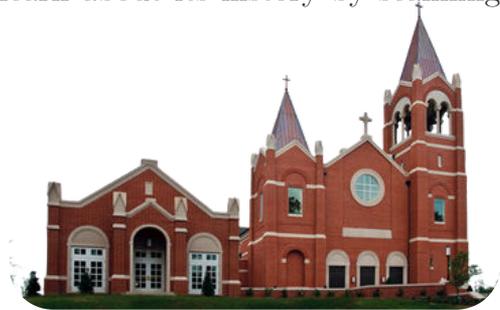


*December 27*

Feast of St. John the Apostle. John and his brother St. James were among the first disciples of Jesus, called the “Sons of Thunder” by Jesus for their fiery zeal. St John wrote the Gospel of John and is often represented in images with an eagle.

Ways to celebrate St. John’s feast day include:

- Read the opening of the Gospel of John (John 1:1-18).
- Drink blessed wine and toast to “The love of St. John” ... but those underage may toast using juice.
- Check out a local bookstore - he is the patron saint of booksellers, publishers, scribes, and editors!
- Visit St. John the Apostle Catholic Church in Leesburg, pictured below, and learn about its history by scanning the QR code.



*December 28 - Feast of the Holy Innocents*

December 28 is the “Feast of the Holy Innocents”, recognizing the innocent children that were executed by King Herod in his violent effort to find find the Christ Child.

On this day, remember these young children and ask for their intercession, praying especially for children, both born and unborn, in unsafe conditions. Parents may take the opportunity to bless their own children, or receive a “blessing of children” from your parish priest.

*First Sunday of Christmas*

## *The Warmth of Beauty in the Shadows of Time*

Even after Christmas, it's possible for the heart to continue its restless search in the commotion of restless world, and sometimes, in our families. Even as the first streaks of dawn appear, we can experience a time of shadows, when many seem to question God and seek light in every corner. And yet, Christmas reminds us that even in the coldest darkness, the dark, no matter how, dark, can never extinguish the warmth of the tiniest light, beauty can shine, and warmth can comfort.

As a child, I learned this lesson through an unusual guest who visited our home each Christmas Evening. After the presents had been opened by six overly enthusiastic children, all under the age of 12, with the leftovers of dinner still on the table, he would arrive. A man shaped by unimaginable history, we knew him as a colleague of my father when we were stationed in Wiesbaden, Germany in the 1970's. He had known the relief of the Allies when Germany was liberated, but not after having known the horrors of prison life following World War II. He now worked for the United States in the Air Force Medical Corps where my father served. He was an atheist, a man who did not profess faith, yet here he was, each year.

Something in Christmas drew him in. Each year, on this night, he came simply to sit in the glow of the Christmas tree and listen to our family pray the Rosary. Not for dinner. He would close his eyes, rest, and listen. I didn't understand why he wanted to do that. Not open toys? The toys beckoned, games enticed, victories awaited. Not eat dinner? It was the best meal of the year! He wanted to be still. My father explained, "I don't know what he sees, or how he hears, but he simply says, it's beautiful to him.

*First Sunday of Christmas*

He hears us praying the rosary as if chanted and sung by a beautiful choir.” I simply heard my siblings in less than the typical arguing voice within what had become, like the struggle for dinner, practice, homework, and the thousand other activities, just another moment in my life with my family. Just something that was and, like other things, taken for granted as my parents struggled to raise 6 children in the ‘70’s in a country far from home. But he compared it to the Berlin Philharmonic, listening to the finest German composers. Although he rejected God, and maybe thought God had rejected him, I could tell he came to experience something, perhaps the beauty within the rhythm and cacophony of family life. The noise and eventual rhythm of the Rosary must have seemed to him like the choir tuning their instruments with each other before the Performance.

That image has stayed with me—a man whose heart carried the shadows of war, captivity, and unbelief, finding refuge in the warmth of a home away from home, in the prayerful rhythm of the Rosary, and in the quiet brilliance of a lit Christmas tree. It was as if, for a moment, the light of Christ pierced through the walls of his heart, and ours, even if he could not name it. “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5). Now, within the Octave of Christmas, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—a family that shows us holiness and love dwell in the ordinary warmth of home. In their simplicity, they bore witness to the reality that God chooses to make Himself small, to enter into the heart of a family, and to transform the world from within. This is the beauty of Christmas—that God comes to us precisely in the cold and dark. Edith Stein, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, wrote: “*The world is in flames: the fire can spread even to our house, but*

*First Sunday of Christmas*

*above all the flame of love must burn within us and light up the dark world.”*

How easy it is to forget that God comes quietly. He does not tear apart the heavens or arrive with thunder. Instead, He comes as a child, shivering in the cold of night. He comes into our lives as a fragile promise, often unnoticed. The prophet Isaiah speaks of this hidden beauty: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone” (Isaiah 9:1). The man who sat in our living room year after year may not have understood the source of the beauty he encountered, but he felt it nonetheless. It was a silent witness that God had come—and was still coming—into the shadows of our heart.

The Feast of the Holy Family invites us to reflect on our own families and homes. Can we trust, that in the chaos of daily life, that something more exists too, something real, that can draw others in, even those who may not yet believe? Edith Stein reminds us that, “He who seeks the truth seeks God, whether he knows it or not.” Sometimes the beauty of a lit tree, the patience and courage required to harmonize the praying of the daily Rosary, or the struggles of impatience and forgiveness born in love together can lead others to God more powerfully than words.

In the Octave of Christmas, as we celebrate the fullness of Christ’s coming, let us not forget that God works in the quiet and the ordinary. The Holy Family shows us that holiness begins at home.

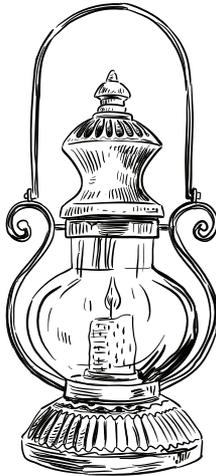
Perhaps you, too, know someone who sits quietly on the edge of faith—a friend or loved one who cannot yet bring themselves to believe. This Christmas season, do not underestimate the power of beauty to touch hearts.

*First Sunday of Christmas*

*“Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord!”* (Psalm 31:24). As you light your candles, pray your prayers, and gather with loved ones, know that God is already at work in the quiet places of waiting.

For me, the memory of that man has become a parable of Christmas Day—a reminder that Christ’s Light can enter through the smallest crevice of the human heart. He comes in warmth, in beauty, in silence, and in love. May we, too, carry His light and warmth into the cold darkness of a restless world, that all might come to know the One who waits for us, in the manger.

*“O come, let us adore Him...”*



*By Rev. John F. Heisler, JCL, Office of the Tribunal*

## *December 29 - Feast of the Holy Family*

Feast of the Holy Family. This feast day is normally celebrated on the Sunday after Christmas day. The origins of celebrating this feast day began in Canada in the 19th century! Since its establishment, the feast day aims to portray the Holy Family - Mary, St. Joseph, and Jesus - as the “true model of life.”

On this day, you can celebrate multiple ways:

- Attend Sunday Mass, and during time for prayer, ask for your home to be a place of the Lord’s peace and love and that each family member may help lead each other to Jesus.
- Meditate on the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt, and offer additional prayers for families who are refugees, and who are separated from each other.
- Have a special family meal with all members (or as many as possible!) present. If you are not in the habit already, bless the meal together before eating.
- Help with odd jobs around the house, recognizing everyone can pitch in towards a tidy, comfortable household.
- Pray for those who are engaged and newlyweds, who are starting new families of their own.
- Bring a meal to a family with a new baby, or who may have recently lost a loved one.
- Parents may bless their children.
- As a family, pray a rosary together, possibly the Joyful Mysteries.
- Offer a prayer for those who struggle with infertility, that their prayers may be aligned with the Holy Family.



*December 29*

Feast of St. Thomas à Becket. St. Thomas served as Lord Chancellor and later as Archbishop of Canterbury under King Henry II of England. Though formerly friends, St. Thomas and the king became rivals, disagreeing on Church affairs. He was ultimately put to death by the king, killed by his swordsman, in Canterbury Cathedral in 1170. He is considered a martyr, his death a direct result of defending the Church. He is one of the patron saints of priests.

Ways to celebrate St. Thomas à Becket's feast day:

- Visit St. Thomas à Becket Catholic Church in Reston, VA, and while you are there offer up prayers for priests in the Diocese of Arlington.
- Watch the 1964 film "Becket". Please keep in mind this is a dramatic retelling of the life of a saint, and some parts may be fictionalized. Certain elements in the movie may not be suitable for younger children, and parent discretion is advised.



*December 30*

December 30 is National Bacon Day! Who knew?

This calls for recipes that include some bacon as a tasty and savory ingredient.

Featured in the “Gather at the Table” cookbook (more on that in the “Recipes” section of the guidebook), here is a recipe for *Bigso*, aka Polish Hunter’s Stew, submitted by Andrea Bendo of St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church. This hearty, warm dish is perfect for a chilly winter day and calls for half a pound of bacon. *Sooie!*

Ingredients:

- ½ medium cabbage
- 4 cups of sauerkraut (fresh)
- 1 lb. 4oz. mushrooms, sliced
- 1 lb. boneless country style ribs or small pork butt, diced
- 1 lb. Kielbasa, sliced
- ½ lb. bacon, chopped
- 1 large onion, diced
- 6 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 small can tomato paste
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 tablespoons + Butter
- 3 tablespoons + Olive oil

*Helpful hint: Have all your ingredients pre-chopped and ready to go prior to starting.*

### Directions:

Cut your washed cabbage in thin slices and boil in a pot of salted water until tender. Drain and set aside in large bowl. In a separate pot, boil the sauerkraut in 2 cups of water. Strain the sauerkraut over a bowl and keep the sour water aside for later in the recipe. In large Dutch oven with lid (6 quart), add 3 tablespoons butter and 3 tablespoons olive oil. Sautee mushrooms adding more butter and oil if needed. Remove mushrooms to bowl with cabbage. Sautee diced pork until cooked through. Remove to bowl with other ingredients. Add kielbasa to pan (adding more fat if needed). Remove kielbasa to bowl when slightly browned. Add chopped bacon to the pan, cook until crisp. Remove bacon to bowl with the other ingredients. Add chopped onion and garlic to the pan (removing bacon fat if there is too much). Once onion and garlic have softened, add tomato paste, reserved sour water, cabbage, mushrooms, pork pieces, kielbasa, sauerkraut, and bay leaf. Season with salt and pepper if desired. Let simmer for at least 1 hour. It tastes even better the next day. Serve with crusty bread.



January 1

Happy New Years! On this day, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. This feast, closely connected to the feast of Christmas and celebrated on the octave of Christmas, is the most important and oldest of the major feasts of Mary. Mary's Divine Maternity became a universal feast in 1931. Liturgical reform initiated by Vatican II placed it on January 1 in 1969. Prior to this, the feast celebrated on January 1 was the circumcision of



Jesus. Mary is indeed the mother of God and our mother is well. As we begin a new year, it is fitting that we honor and venerate Mary as an essential part of the Catholic Church and of our own lives.

*In 2025, the obligation to attend Mass is not abrogated like it was in 2024. The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God is indeed a Holy Day of Obligation. Find a Mass by scanning the QR code.*



Other ways you can celebrate:

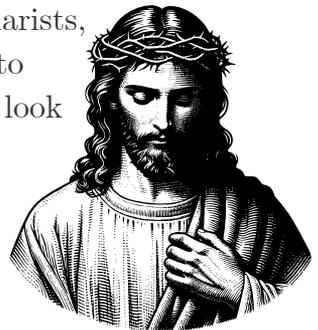
- Pray the Rosary.
- Wear Marian colors like blue, white, pink, or prints of stars, roses, or lilies.
- Decorate your house with flowers, and/or bring flowers to a statue of Mary.
- Pray the Litany of Loreto.

January 1

In addition to honoring Our Lady on New Years Day, today is also the feast of St. Zygmunt Gorazdowski of Ukraine. Ordained a priest in 1871, St. Zygmunt lived a life of charity and service, in spite of poor health. In 1884 he founded the "Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph" who would continue his charitable works. Those who knew him called him the "Father of the poor and priest of the homeless." In honor of this great saint, let us strive to grow in charity and in a special way, keep the people of Ukraine in your prayers.

January 2

Memorial of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church. They were 4th Century bishops who notably defense of the faith against the heresy of Arianism. Arianism stated that Jesus Christ is merely a created being, not divine, lesser than God the Father. Catholics, of course, believe Jesus is "consubstantial" (of the same divine essence) and *fully* God. The First Council of Nicaea (325 AD) formally condemned Arianism and affirmed the "homoousion" (meaning same in being or substance) doctrine. Today, in honor of these truly great saints, do your best to reflect on John 1:1, and make an effort to attend Mass to receive the Eucharists, and/or make a holy hour at your parish to visit with Jesus in the Eucharist. Take a look around the sacred space and note images of God represented at Father, Son (especially on the crucifix) and the Holy Spirit (often depicted as a dove).



January 4



Feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first canonized saint from the United States of America. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was a convert to the Catholic faith, becoming a religious sister. In August 2024, the Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Arlington reopened

to the public after extensive renovations. Included in the renovations is a beautiful niche featuring a statue of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and behind her are detailed stain glass images depicting scenes from her life. Additionally, one of the four relics placed in the altar is from her!

Things to do today:

- Visit the Cathedral of St. Thomas More to take a look at the new statue.
- Plan a day trip to The National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, located in Emmitsburg, MD, about an hour and half from Arlington, VA.
- Make a donation to a local charity, or go to Catholic Charities for ideas.
- January 4 is National Trivia Day! Share some of these interesting bits of St. Elizabeth trivia with your friends:
  - She was raised Episcopalian before coming into the Catholic Church in 1805
  - Her sister-in-laws also became Catholic!
  - She established the first Catholic orphanage in the US.

*Second Sunday of Christmas*

# *Three Kings Day:*

*A Pilgrimage of Hope for Mexicans and  
Catholics Around the World*

In Mexico, the Feast of Epiphany, better known as Día de los Tres Reyes Magos (Three Kings Day), is one of the most significant celebrations of the year. On January 6, families gather to welcome the Three Kings, who bring gifts for children of all ages. Many cities close streets to host impressive parades and festivals. One of the favorite family traditions is the rosca de reyes, a sweet king's bread shaped like a crown. The bread's circular form represents God's eternal love, which has no beginning or end. The jams, cherries, nuts, and dried fruits on top symbolize the jewels on the crown and the worldly distractions that keep us away from God.

Hidden inside the rosca de reyes, are one to three small figures of the Baby Jesus. This represents both the Holy Family's escape from King Herod and the hidden Christ waiting to be found in our daily lives. The person who discovers the figure must make tamales for the Feast of the Presentation on February 2, when families gather to celebrate and conclude their Christmas festivities, figuratively presenting Jesus in the Temple and putting away their nativity scenes and decorations until the next season.

The traditions of Three Kings Day serve as a reminder to all of us who are on a pilgrimage of hope toward eternity with God. The Magi were Wise Men from the East who followed a bright star to find the newborn King. Like them, we are invited to start our journey of faith and hope, looking for Christ during life's uncertainties. Their determination and trust in God's signs remind us to have

*Second Sunday of Christmas*

faith, knowing his light will guide us to joy.

The Gospel of Matthew tells us: “When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.” (Matthew 2:10-11). The Magi were filled with joy, awe, and reverence when they encountered the Newborn King. We, too, are called to experience this joy as we persevere in the hope that we will one day be with Christ for eternity in his Kingdom. Even during trials and difficulties, his bright light guides us in every step of the journey. The gifts the Magi brought—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—reflect their recognition of Jesus as King, God, and the one who would suffer for the salvation of humanity. What kind of gifts can we offer to the Baby Jesus? He wants nothing but our love!

The celebration of Three Kings Day or Epiphany also speaks to the universality of Christ’s salvific mission. The Wise Men were among the first to acknowledge Jesus as the Savior of all, fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy: “And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.” (Isaiah 60:3). This beautiful story reminds us of our call to share the light of Christ with others, becoming witnesses of His love and mercy in our homes, parishes, and communities.

As families in Mexico and around the world celebrate Three Kings’ Day, this feast intertwines the sacred with the everyday. The traditions of Three Kings’ Day encourage us to keep Christ at the center of our lives. Like the Magi, may we embark on our own journeys of faith with hearts full of hope, rejoicing in the promise of Emmanuel—God is with us.

*By Joel de Loera, Director, Office of Hispanic Ministry*

## *January 5 - Feast of the Epiphany*

Feast of the Epiphany is traditionally celebrated on January 6th, but in the United States, it is moved to the closest Sunday to the 6th! So, in 2025 the feast day is celebrated on Sunday, January 5th. On this day, the Three Wise Men, (also called the Three Kings or Magi), named Balthasar, Melchior, and Caspar, arrived to see the baby Jesus. They followed a star, finding the baby and giving Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. On their journey, they met with King Herod, who requested they tell him where the child is so he may pay Him homage. However, King Herod had dark intentions, and the kings, warned not to return to him in a dream, took an alternate route back home after visiting the Christ Child.

In Mexico (and other Spanish-speaking countries), Epiphany is known as Día de Los Reyes and is a major holiday. They make “Rosca de Reyes” (a version of kings cake), a sweet round bread covered in sugar and dried candied fruits. It is round in shape to symbolize a crown. Inside, a tiny figure of the baby Jesus is hidden. Before Santa Claus became a popular staple in Western culture, it was the Three Kings who were the traditional gift-bringers, and so on this day there is plenty of gift exchanges. It is another common tradition for children to leave their shoes out, like many do on St. Nicholas’ feast day, where the kings may leave gifts.



Ways to celebrate:

- Have your home blessed. You can find the prayer to do so here: [www.usccb.org/prayers/blessing-home-and-household-epiphany](http://www.usccb.org/prayers/blessing-home-and-household-epiphany)
- Make Kings Cake! Submitted by Kathleen Powers, parishioner of Nativity Catholic Church, on behalf of Sr. Celine Arrigo, CSJ, who managed her school cafeteria! This New Orleans staple is a delicious treat colored with sprinkles of purple, green, and gold. You can find this recipe in the “Recipe” section of the guidebook.
- With younger children, decorate and adorn crowns to wear.
- Move the Three Kings in your nativity set close to baby Jesus. You may even hold a “procession” of the Three Kings, walking around your home with the figures before placing them next to the baby.
- Sing “We Three Kings.”
- In many cultures, they wait until Epiphany to distribute presents. If this is a tradition you would like to incorporate, consider setting aside some small gifts to distribute to family on this day.
- In the evening, if skies are clear, go star gazing!
- Read Matt.2: 1-12, “The Visit of the Magi”.



- Children can collect grass and straw in a basket, and place it under the tree the night before for the king’s camels to eat!

*January 6*

Feast of St. André Bessette of Canada. Born Alfred Bessette in 1945 and orphaned at the age of 12, a young but sickly Alfred entered into the Holy Cross Novitiate in 1870, taking the name André. He became known far and wide for miraculous healings, all of which he attributed to the intercession of St. Joseph, to whom he had a deep devotion. He founded a shrine to St. Joseph, Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal, located in Montreal. There he was assigned as full time caretaker. To this day, the oratory receives many millions of pilgrims a year.

St. André Bessette was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 17, 2010.

Here are some ways to honor this great saint:

- Ask for the intercession of St. André Bessette and St. Joseph, for healing - whether it be physical, mental, or spiritual.
- Research more on Saint Joseph's Oratory. The oratory's [official website](#) is jam-packed with images and stories. Note: the website is in French. If you don't speak French, check if your web browser can auto-translate to your preferred language!
- Bake! Coincidentally, today is National Shortbread Day and we just so happen to have “Canadian Whipped Shortbread” as a recipe in “Gather at the Table” (look for the “Recipe” section towards the end of the guidebook!). Our thanks to Sandra Minihan of Precious Blood Catholic Church who submitted her cookie recipe.

*January 11*



Feast of St. Francisca Salesia Aviat, from Sézanne France. She, along with Blessed Fr. Louis Brisson, founded the Oblate Sisters of St. Frances.

Born in 1844 as Léonie Aviat, she objected to marrying a rich man in order to live out the vocational call to the religious life.

She was deeply moved by the men and women leaving rural life to find work in cities, where factories were plenty following the Industrial Revolution. Often, they ended up homeless. This prompted the creation of the new congregation, with the goal to serve this population. On 30 October 1868, she received her habit and the religious name Françoise de Sales. She established parish schools, guiding the workers, and helped to keep them employed during wartime. She served multiple terms as Superior General, before dying of bronchopneumonia on January 10, 1914. She was canonized by Pope John Paul II in November 2001.

*Third Sunday of Christmas*

# *The Three Wills*

*We present to you a special audio reflection from  
Buchi Akpati, a speaker and writer based in  
Northern Virginia.*

*A transcript of the reflection will be  
provided as a separate download.*



*\*We are testing out this feature! Let us know your thoughts!\**

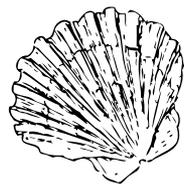
## January 12 - The Baptism of the Lord

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. On this day, we celebrate the baptism of Jesus, not a child as many are baptized today, but as an adult, by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan River. When St. John baptized Jesus, the Holy Spirit came down like a dove, and voice of God the Father announced “*This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.*” (Matt 3:17)

This also marked the start of Jesus’s public ministry, and we celebrate Jesus’s desire to become one with us, as He humbled Himself to be baptized by St. John.

Today, you can celebrate in many ways:

- If you don’t already know it, determine the date of your own baptism and mark it on your calendar with the goal to celebrate it annually.
- Renew your baptismal promises. This can be done at home, with the head of the household leading the call, and all others responding “I do.” This guide from *Ave Maria Press* provides a wonderful option:
- Shells are symbolic of baptism, as they are often used to pour water over the head. If you can find shells at a craft store, adorn your house with them, or use them in a centerpiece.
- Include scallops, clams, or shellfish of choice in one of your meals for the day
- Meditate on scripture that tells the story of the baptism of Jesus: Matt 3:13-17



# MERRY CHRISTMAS!

*in a different language*

Spanish: ¡Feliz Navidad!

French: Joyeux Noël!

Tigrinya: Ruhus Beal Lidet!

German: Frohe Weihnachten!

Italian: Buon Natale!

Portuguese: Feliz Natal!

Japanese: メリークリスマス (Merikurisumasu!)

Chinese: 圣诞节快乐! (Shèngdàn jié kuàilè!)

Norwegian: God Jul!

Danish: Glædelig Jul!

Finnish: Hyvä Joulua!

Korean: 메리 크리스마스! (Meli Keuliseumaseu!)

Russian: Счастливого Рождества! (Schastlivogo Rozhdestva!)

Icelandic: Gleðileg Jól!

Polish: Wesołych Świąt!

Dutch: Vrolijk Kerstfeest!

Croatian: Sretan Božić!

Czech: Veselé Vánoce!

Akan: Afishapa!

Swahili: Heri ya Krismasi!

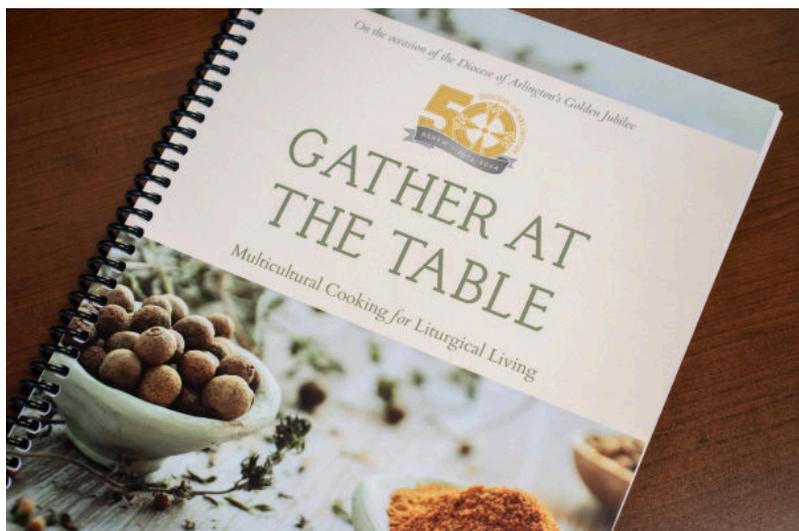
Irish: Nollaig Shona!



# RECIPES

All recipes included in the guidebook were submitted by the individual and used with permission to appear in the Diocesan cookbook, “Gather At the Table: Multicultural Cooking for Liturgical Living”. Inclusion in this guidebook is intended for promotional purposes.

To access the recipes referenced in this guidebook and learn more about the cookbook project, scan the QR code below:



If you would like to purchase the full cookbook, scan the QR code for the order form and more instructions.



# AT A GLANCE

## *Feast Day Calendar*



<b>December 25</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b>
December 26	St. Stephen (Jerusalem)
December 27	St. John the Apostle (Galilee)
<b>December 28</b>	<b>Feast of the Holy Innocents</b>
<b>December 29</b>	<b>Feast of the Holy Family</b> St. Thomas à Becket (England)
December 31	St. Melania (Egypt, Syria, Palestine)
<b>January 1</b>	<b>Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God</b> St. Zygmunt Gorazdowski (Ukraine)
January 2	St. Basil (Türkiye)
January 3	St. Genevieve (France)
January 4	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (America)
<b>January 5</b>	<b>Epiphany of the Lord</b> St. John Neumann (Bohemia/Czech Republic) Martyrs of Egypt
January 6	St. Andre Bessette (Canada)
January 7	St. Raymond of Pennafort (Spain)
January 9	St. Adrian (Africa, Naples, Canterbury)
January 10	St. Gregory of Nyssa (Türkiye) Bl. Anna of the Angels Monteagudo (Peru)
January 11	St. Francisca Salesia Aviat (France)
<b>January 12</b>	<b>Baptism of the Lord</b>

*This is not an exhaustive list of all feast days during the Christmas season, nor are all the feast days listed on this calendar expanded upon within this guidebook. We encourage you to research these saints and other feast days, and if any saint resonates with you, to learn more about him or her and determine ways your household can celebrate.*

# CHRISTMAS 2024 - 2025

DECEMBER 25 - JANUARY 12

SUNDAY

MONDAY

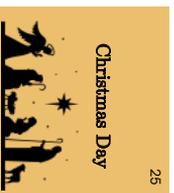
TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

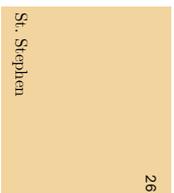
FRIDAY

SATURDAY



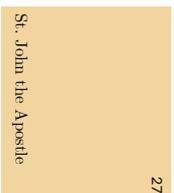
Christmas Day

25



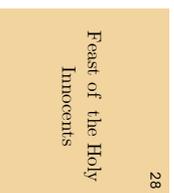
St. Stephen

26



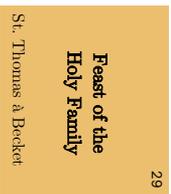
St. John the Apostle

27



Feast of the Holy Innocents

28



Feast of the Holy Family

29



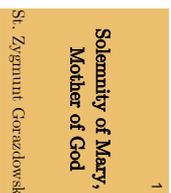
St. Thomas & Becket

30



St. Melania

31



Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

St. Zygmunt Gorzdzowski

1



St. Basil

2



St. Genoveve

3



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

4



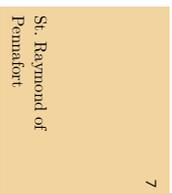
Epiphany of the Lord

5



St. John Neumann Martyrs of Egypt

6



St. Raymond of Penafort

7



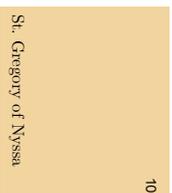
St. Adrian

8



St. Gregory of Nyssa

9



St. Francesca Salsesia Avial

10



Baptism of the Lord

12





*Are we missing anything?*

Contact us and let us know if we can include your traditions, recipes and/or parish, ministry, and/or school events and initiatives in future guidebooks!

Email us at [mcm@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:mcm@arlingtondiocese.org)



This guidebook is project of the Diocese of Arlington's Office of Multicultural Ministries.

If you would like your seasonal and cultural events, traditions, feasts, or more, included in future booklets please reach out to us at: [mcm@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:mcm@arlingtondiocese.org)

For more guidebooks, scan the QR Code or visit

[www.arlingtondiocese.org/multicultural](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/multicultural)

