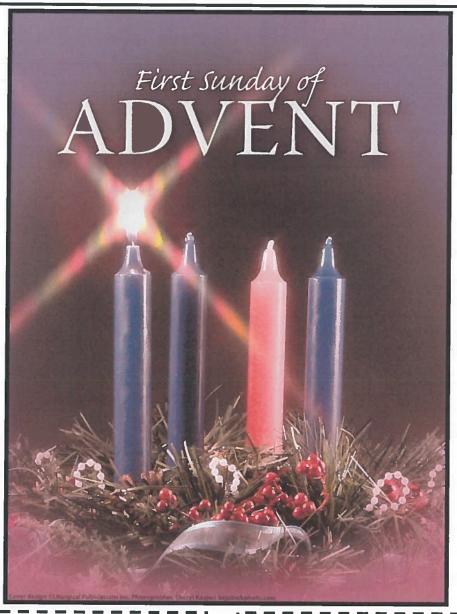
The Roman Catholic Parishes of St. Margaret Mary, Herscher St. James the Apostle, Irwin Sacred Heart, Goodrich

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 2-3, 2023



Weekend Masses:

St. Margaret Mary

Sacred Heart

Sat. 5:00 pm Sun. 10:30 am

Sun. 7:30 am

Sun 9:00 am

Confessions:

St. Margaret Mary Sacred Heart

St. James

Sat. 4:15 pm

Sun. 7:05-7:20 am

Sun 8:35-8:50 am

Church Mailing Address:

207 E. 5th Street

Herscher, IL 60941

Phone: 815-426-2550

Quotable: "Advent increases our hope. A hope which does not disappoint. The Lord never lets us down."

—Pope Francis

December 9-10, 2023

Second Sunday of Advent

Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, Dec. 9	Sacred Heart Sunday, Dec. 10	St. James Sunday, Dec. 10	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, Dec. 10	
Scriedule	5:00 pm	7:30 am	9:00 am	10:30 am	
Celebrant	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	
Ushers	Todd Datweiler Dan Hoffman Dave Emling Roger Jensen	James Mallaney Dennis Pankey	Jerry Ogrentz Arlen Hansen Bob Buente Vic Carlile	Larry Wolles Jeremy Wolles Kim Smicker Joe Smolkovich	
Lector	Hillary Webb	Mike Hertz	Andy Hansen	Dana Masching	
Servers				Caroline Fulton	
Greeters			Greeter – Dallas Ferris R. Leader – Karen Miller	Wayne Bisaillon	

Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, December 4 (SMM)

8:00 am +Connie Dionne (Her Family)

Tuesday, December 5 (SH)

8:00 am (SH) +Walter Pieszka (Angie Kmetz)

Wednesday, December 6 (SJ)

8:00 am +Leola Ader (Mr./Mrs. Robert Skeen)

Thursday, December 7 (SJ) Vigil Immaculate Conception

7:00 pm Gerald Bernicky (Larry/Birdie Stevenson)

Friday, December 8

8:00 am (SMM) +John Andrzejewski (Dennis/Janice

Schneider)

7:00 pm (SH) +Leland Denault (Jim/Rosie Mallaney)

Saturday, December 9 (SMM)

5:00 pm For All the Parish Family

Sunday, December 10

7:30 am +Carson Cross (Jerry/Terri Weakley)

9:00 am (SJ) +Harold & Louise Devine (Gary Devine)

+ Laurie Hansen (Gary Devine)

10:30am (SMM) +Mary Lou Fosnaugh (Anita Schluter)

+Al Wolles (Roger Wagner Family)

A Look Ahead

Wed., Dec. 6—Adult Education Class 7:00 pm

Thurs., Dec. 7—Vigil Immaculate Conception 7 pm SJ

Fri., Dec. 8—Immaculate Conception Mass 7 pm SH

December 9-10—2nd Collection for Retired Religious

Sunday, Dec. 17—RE Pageant at St. James

Sat., January 6—CCW Deanery Joy in January

Questions of the week

What will I do this week to prepare for Christ's coming, knowing that it may happen at any time?

Pastor— Fr. Ron Neitzke- 815-426-2550

Deacon - Ron Gagnon - rjgckg@aol.com

Home-815-933-4077

Parish Email – smm_sja_sh@yahoo.com

TriParish web page – www.triparishcatholics.org

Like us on Facebook triparishcatholic communities

Tri Parish Church office –Barb Riker 426-2550

Julie Bisaillon 426-2550

Bulletin - Debbie Jensen - 426-2550

debjen04@gmail.com

Religious Education -

St. MM – Jill Fulton <u>ifulton.stmm@gmail.com</u>

St. James - Carolyn Levyclevystjames@gmail.com

Sacred Heart - Rhonda Berns - 426-5015

Parish Nurse - Jackie Eberle - 815-421-4048

Prayer Line-SMM—Pat Wagner 815-592-0773

SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 Jdstreefarms@aol.com

St. James - Mary Offerman-602-670-8888 (call or text)

Collections Week of Nov 25-26, 2023

St. Margaret Mary-\$1,516

St. James-\$1,435

Sacred Heart - \$1,397

Thank you for your generosity!

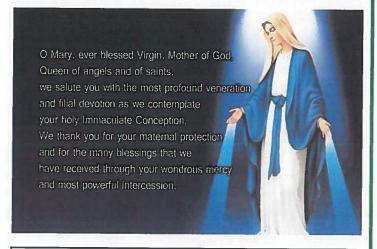
Gospel Shorts We are Under a Watch

Have you ever been in an area that was under a tornado or a hurricane watch? How about a flood watch? You know if you have that conditions are right for the event to occur, it's time to make preparations. You don't just sit there watching the weather channel until the tornado is sighted five miles down the road.

We are under a Second Coming Watch according to the words of our Lord in Mark 13: 24–37. And like other Watches we are called upon to be prepared. We do not train by selling off our possessions and going off to a mountain retreat. We prepare right where we are ... in our homes, offices, class-

Question of the day/Immaculate Conception

In what practical way can I bear Christ to the world this Advent?



Reflection

A Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who is a light to others giving witness in a mixed—up age doing well and willingly the task at hand namely being aware of another's needs and doing something about it.

A volunteer is a person who remembers to do the thing to make other people happy; who takes the loneliness out of the alone by talking to them; who is concerned when others are unconcerned, who has the courage to be a prophet and to say the things that have to be said for the good of all.

A volunteer is a person whose charity is fidelity; who is faithful in an unfaithful world; grateful in an ungrateful world; giving when all about are grasping listening when others need to tell about their fears and problems.

Parish News:

St. Margaret Mary-

- Please have wrapped Gift of Warmth gifts to Jackie or call 815-421-4048 by Dec 14th. Thank you supporting this great giving opportunity!.
- Also, thank you to those who bought gifts for the Gift of Joy and helped make many children very happy at Christmas!!!!

St. James-

- St. James CCW Christmas party will be at the Herscher Restaurant after Mass on Sunday, Dec. 3rd. Please sign up by 11/26 so we can make a reservation.
- Joy in January is on Saturday, January 6 at the Kankakee Country Club. Cost is \$35 and will be split between the CCW and the attendee. Please sign up by 12/4 if interested on the back bulletin board
- St. James Church Christmas cleaning and decoration will be on Monday, December 11 at 6 pm. All are invited to help!

Sacred Heart-

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All Parishes—

- Joy in January will be held a the Kankakee Country Club on January 6, 2024. Reservation deadline is December 14, 2023. If you wish to attend, please contact your CCW president to RSVP.
- All Ministries—as we are making the Christmas/New Year's ministry assignments, if you know a mass that you would be at and available to serve in a ministry position, please drop that information in the collection basket or call the office. We would like to accommodate your schedule and still have all of our needs met. Thank you!
- ♦ The Offering envelopes for 2024 are available in each of the parishes. If you do not find a box with your name, please contact the church office and we will make sure you get them.



You do not know when The Lord of the House is coming MK.13:35

From the Pastor's Pen

Saint of the week: St. John Damascene (Dec. 4) was the son of Mansur, representative of the Christians to the court of the Muslim caliph. Apparently he thrived as a Christian in a Saracen land, becoming the chief financial officer for caliph Abdul Malek. He was tutored in his youth by a captured Italian monk named Cosmas. Between the Christian teaching from the monk, and that of the Muslim schools, John became highly educated in the classical fields (geometry, literature, logic, rhetoric, etc.).

He defended the use of icons and images in churches through a series of letters opposing the antiicon decrees of Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople. Legend says that Germanus plotted against him, and forged a letter in which John betrayed the caliph; the caliph ordered John's writing hand chopped off, but the Virgin Mary appeared and re-attached the hand, a miracle which restored the caliph's faith in him.



After this incident, John became a monk near Jerusalem. He was anothematized by name by the *Council of Constantinople* over his defense of the use of icons but was defended by the *Seventh Council of Nicea*.

He wrote The Fountain of Wisdom, the first real compendium of Christian theology, along with other works defending the orthodox faith, commentaries on Saint Paul the Apostle, poetry, and hymns. He was known as a philosopher and orator; being such an excellent speaker he was known as *Chrysorrhoas* ("golden-stream"). St. John was he last of the Greek Fathers of the Church, and the first of the Christian Aristotelians. John adapted choral music for use in the liturgy. He was proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1890 by Pope Leo XIII.



Obscure saint of the week: St. Osmund of Salisbury was the son of Henry, count of Seez, Normandy, France. He received a good education and became count of Seez in his own turn. A companion of William the Conqueror, he was part of the force that invaded England in 1066.

Following the *Battle of Hastings*, he was made royal chaplain and Earl of Dorset. He helped prepare the *Domesday Book*, an analysis of the resources of England. He was named the Chancellor of England in 1072. Between his duties of chaplain and chancellor, he received a great education in administration and management.

Osmund was named the bishop of Salisbury, England in 1078. He took his duties seriously, concerned for the good of his diocese, even if many considered it conquered territory. His cathedral administration became a model for cathedrals throughout England. He is believed to have initiated the *Sarum Rite* in England. Os-

mund may have written a biography of Saint Aldhelm of Sherborne, which has not survived, and approved his beatification in 1078. He knew and sought the guidance of Saint Anselm. Osmund enjoyed copying and binding books.

His areas of patronage derive from the miraculous healings that occurred at his tomb and which paved the way for his canonization.

The Sunday Gospel in Everyday

"So keep a sharp lookout, for you don't know the timetable. It's like a man who takes a trip, leaving home and putting his servants in charge, each assigned a task, and commanding the gatekeeper to stand watch. So, stay at your post, watching. You have no idea when the homeowner is returning, whether evening, midnight, cockcrow, or morning. You don't want him showing up unannounced, with you asleep on the job. I say it to you, and I'm saying it to all: Stay at your post. Keep watch" (from Mark 13).

Christmas Traditions

I encourage you to celebrate a faith and family based traditional Christmas. Remember it's not what's under the tree that matters but those who gather with you around the tree. Consider the fun family tradition of the Christmas pickle ornament. After the kids have gone to bed or before the grandchildren come over, hide the pickle ornament on the tree. The person who finds it gets an additional, special gift of your choosing.



Think about adding something to your advent season this year...

ÜÖÜÖ	ADVENT CALENDAR 2023						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
The First Sunday of Advent Begin your Advent journey by blessing your Advent wreath. Light the first violet candle and sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."	What can you do this Advent to prepare your heart and life for the coming of Christ?	"The liturgical Season of Advent invites us to go to the encounter with the Lord who comes through prayer, penitence and works of charity. Prepare yourselves to celebrate the birth of Jesus with assiduous listening to the Word of God and a generous response to his grace." Pope Francis, Audience, November 30, 2022	In honor of Saint Nicholas whose memorial we celebrate today, consider ways that you can share your time, treasure, and talent to assist those who are in need.	On this Memorial of Saint Ambrose, a bishop and great teacher of the faith, pray for all clergy and others charged with forming others in the faith of the Church.	Today is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the United States of America. It is a holy day of obligation. Offer your Mass intention today for the needs of the nation.	Make plans to receive the gift of God's mercy in the Sacrament of Penance during this Advent season.	

Questions Catholics

What does Advent have to do with the Apocalypse?

A perceptive liturgical question! For most of us, Advent is our happy place. We think of it as the prequel to Christmas, an elongated season of joy and warm human feeling toward people of good will. But Advent is not to be confused with Christmas cheer from the perspective of the church calendar, nor from the view of the solar calendar. December is literally a dark time, full of long nights and end-of-year regrets for many. What we have done or failed to do is scrawled in the dust of the eleven months behind us.

Advent was conceived in a cultural context where the promise of the sun's return with the winter solstice was still devoutly anticipated and celebrated. A tinge of anxiety invaded that waiting space. Longing for the light—well before the dream of elec-

tricity—was bigger than some of us can imagine. All of which fit in nicely with the construction of a church season that celebrates the return of Christ our Light. "Return" is the operative word here. Just as the sun comes back around at solstice time, Christians anticipate that Jesus Christ will come again.

Most of us aren't thinking about the Second Coming, the End of the World, Last Judgment, or Apocalypse Now as we decorate O Tannenbaum, admittedly. "The Last Things," as this set of ideas is theologically catalogued, is not what we're consciously waiting and longing for during December. When we set up the empty crèche in our parishes, we anticipate the arrival of a little baby in the straw, not the dissolution of all things. But when you think about it, isn't one the same as the other?



The Last Judgement by John Martin (Tate Britain via

The Incarnation is the shattering belief that the eternal God entered the realm of time as one of us. This unprecedented event does dissolve business as usual in human history. It opens a door on one side of reality, just as the Resurrection leaves one open on the other side. Heaven—which is the realm that apocalyptic or hidden writing is most concerned with—has just stepped into time and made it possible for us to anticipate stepping beyond it ourselves. When we read the Book of Revelation, or Daniel, or gospel passages with apocalyptic themes, we awaken to the game-changing reality of our faith.

This is why the first two weeks of Advent each year are given over to Apocalypse. It really is the end of the world as we know it!



Che Season of Covent Lights our way to the Coro

Catholic Snacks, Get Fed

What do the liturgical colors of Advent signify?

This December, instead of red and green, learn from the colors of purple and rose.

(Once Thanksgiving has come and gone, our culture moves on quickly to the celebration of the Christmas season. All around us, there will be an explosion of Christmas reds and greens, holly and evergreen, ornaments and wreaths. However, you might notice that your parish is colored a different way.

Rather than reds and greens, the altar is draped in a deep violet, the priests wear violet vestments, and our wreaths have candles of that same violet and a lovely rose.

Why does the Church abstain from the colors of Christmas until the 24th? And why do these seemingly random shades of violet and rose take their place?

It is because violet and rose are the liturgical colors of Advent. As a preparatory season, Advent does not yet share in the joy of Christmas. Rather, it anticipates it through penance and the practice of patient waiting.

Violet is the liturgical color that symbolizes penance, sacrifice, and prayer, and as such, it characterizes both Advent and Lent. Moreover, during Advent, we meditate particularly on the coming of our King at Christmas. In this way, the color violet—traditionally associated with royalty—takes on a dual meaning, representing both the penitential nature of the season and the kingship of the coming Christ.

The Third Sunday of Advent is called *Gaudete* ("Rejoice") Sunday. On this day, we celebrate that our wait is almost over and we witness the sudden introduction of a lovely shade of rose in our churches and our Advent wreath. As the liturgical color used to signify joy, rose is used in the third week of Advent in anticipation of the coming of the Messiah.

These colors of the Advent season are not arbitrary—rather, they are intentional reminders of how we should orient our hearts as we prepare for the coming Christ. While it is fine to join in the festivity around us, we must keep our hearts aligned with the Church during this season, joining in the hopeful and penitential anticipation of our coming Savior.

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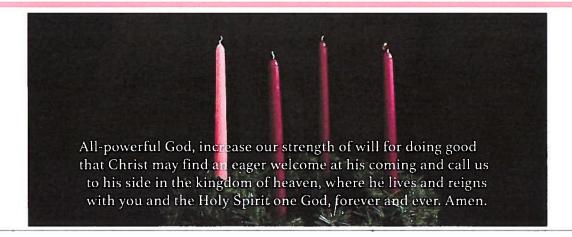
What do the candles of the Advent Wreath represent?

The first candle is purple and represents the prophets who predicted the coming of Jesus, the Messiah. It is also called the "Hope" candle as the prophets called on Israel to hope in the fulfillment of God's promise.

The second candle is also purple. This candle represents the Bible and its message of God's love and plan for salvation. This candle is called the "Prepare" candle as we are reminded to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord.

The third candle is rose colored. It stands for the Blessed Virgin Mary and her acceptance of her role as the mother of the Savior. We call this Gaudete Sunday because the rose colored candle and vestments tell us to rejoice (Gaudete in Latin).

The last candle, the fourth candle, is purple. This candle stands for St. John the Baptist, the one who called Israel to "prepare the way of the Lord". He reminded the people of Israel of God's promise made to King David. He also told the people that the Messiah was already here but they do not recognize him. This candle is called the "Love" candle.





December 3, 2023

First Sunday of Advent

Written by THE FAITHFUL DISCIPLE

Is 63:16B-17, 19B; 64:2-7 | 1 Cor 1:3-9 | Mk 13:33-37

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

In a nineteenth-century sermon, St. John Henry Newman wrote of today's Gospel: "[Jesus] mercifully whispers into our ears ... not to share in the general unbelief [around us], not to be carried away by the world but to 'beware, keep alert' and look out for his coming." I love the thought that Jesus is "mercifully whispering" to us. Welcome to Advent! We know that Advent is a time of anticipation and preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ, but today's readings also speak to me of training ourselves to be alert for God's presence in the small, everyday moments of our lives. In his Letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes that "[we] are not lacking in any spiritual gift" as we await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are gifted with his grace. Our loving God bestows countless graces on us each day, and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can seek ways to be more aware of these graces. Yes, we can be more "alert" to them, but can also be thankful for these small moments of God's presence with us.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Advent is a season of joyful hope. "I hope I can get my Christmas shopping done in time ... I hope I have time to get my house decorated this weekend." We all have "hopes and dreams" for this time of year, and, God-willing we will be blessed with a truly festive and joyous holiday season with our families. For Catholics, though, this season of "joyful hope" is one that has a much deeper meaning. We long for the return of Christ and our eternal union with him with a hope that is built on the promises of Jesus in the Scriptures. Our hope is not passive, but active. We know that God is always there for us, comforting us in bad times and rejoicing with us in times of happiness. Let us give thanks for our Triune God who desires to be in relationship with us enough that he sent his Son to take on our humanity. And let us silence any noise in our hearts so as to hear Jesus' merciful whisper of encouragement to be on the watch for his coming.

Of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.

Sunday, Dec 03, 2023

A season of welcome

The color violet reminds us that a new season has begun: a time to prepare to welcome Christ in our midst for all days and in all persons. Coincidentally this year, Advent starts on the World Day for Persons with Disabilities. How welcoming is our church to the people with physical and mental challenges? Not just improving accessibility with an entrance ramp or elevator but providing accommodations for those with hearing, visual, and intellectual impairments, including for liturgies and sacramental preparation? Take a look around your own parish. Is it true that "all are welcome"?

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:33-37 (2). "We are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands."

Monday, Dec 04, 2023

Iconic inspiration

Think of how much sacred images of Jesus, Mary, angels, and the saints—in painting, stained glass, and sculpture—have filled your life and stimulated your spirit. You might have many sacred images throughout your home. Perhaps you can find them in different public places in your city. Our Catholic churches are certainly full of them. Think of how much they inspire and prompt you to momentary prayer, a fleeting lifting of your heart and mind to God as you pass by them, or to long stretches on your knees, deep in conversation. You can partly thank John Damascene, who defended holy images against iconoclasm, a movement in the eighth century that was opposed to the veneration of icons. Treasure the rich imagery of our tradition.

MEMORIAL OF JOHN DAMASCENE, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 8:5-11 (175). "Many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the banquet in the Kingdom of heaven."

Tuesday, Dec 05, 2023

Be a light in the darkness

As Advent days grow ever darker, Isaiah offers hope: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isa. 9:1). We Christians seek the Son's light, but we also take the Savior at his word when he describes us as the "light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). 'Tis the season, to celebrate those who shared their light, such as Rosa Parks, who co-led the Montgomery bus boycott beginning this day in 1955. Or Mary McLeod Bethune, who formed the National Council of Negro Women 20 years earlier. To quote Saint Isidore of Seville (who opened the Fourth Council of Toledo on this day in 633): "Just as we must love God in contemplation, so we must love our neighbor with action."

ADVENT WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 11:1-10; Luke 10:21-24 (176). "He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth."

Wednesday, Dec 06, 2023

Peace on Earth requires living on the edge

This year we celebrate the centennial of the birth of Phil Berrigan, the famed peace activist and one-time Josephite priest. His dedication to serve the African-American community quickly blossomed into an all-out crusade for justice, resulting in his many

arrests, sentences, and continuing activities to emphasize the Catholic opposition to bloodshed. He was hardly rewarded for his efforts in this life, and in this time of war in our day, we owe him a great debt. We can pay it by walking as he walked, in the path toward peace.

ADVENT WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 25:6-10a; Matthew 15:29-37 (177). "On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, The web that is woven over all nations; he will destroy death forever."

Thursday, Dec 07, 2023

Unite to fight for good

Today is Pearl Harbor Day, when the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor officially thrust the United States into World War II. Americans sacrificed in multiple ways to serve the war effort, from military service to rationing. What if we were to unite in the same way to fight poverty? An emphasis on charity and justice for the poor exists within all the Abrahamic traditions, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Who is fighting poverty in your community? Take a step today to unite with them.

ADVENT WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 26:1-6; Matthew 7:21, 24-27 (178). "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven."

Friday, Dec 08, 2023

A day of grace

Today is all about grace. It was God's grace that provided Mary with the privilege of being born without original sin; it was Mary's grace that said yes to God's plan; and it is our grace to honor Mary's witness and protection. As Pope John Paul II explains, "Grace means love and the gift of God himself, the completely free gift in which God entrusts to [us] his Mystery." In honor of this day, pray the mysteries of the Rosary.

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (PATRONAL FEAST DAY OF THE U.S.A.)

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38 (689). "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you."

Saturday, Dec 09, 2023

Mary mirrors her people

Can you imagine what today's saint, Juan Diego, was going through when he encountered Our Lady of Guadalupe? First of all, she looked nothing like the pictures of the Blessed Virgin he was used to. She wasn't a blue-eyed, white European. She was brownskinned with dark hair and dark eyes. She wasn't wearing a blue veil either. And she didn't even speak to him in Spanish, but in Nahuatl, the ancient language of his ancestral Aztec. Was she for real? When the image of the Virgin appeared on his cloak, he knew she was. Celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe, who acts as a reflection for all the faithful.

MEMORIAL OF JUAN DIEGO CUAUHTLATOATZIN, VISIONARY TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8 (180). "As you go, make this proclamation: The Kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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