



**St. John Baptiste de LaSalle Catholic Church**

275 C.C. Wright School Road  
North Wilkesboro NC 28659-9103  
336-838-5562  
Email: [Info@StJohnNC.Org](mailto:Info@StJohnNC.Org)  
Website: [www..StJohnNC.Org](http://www..StJohnNC.Org)



**St. Stephen Catholic Church**

101 Hawthorne Road  
Elkin NC 28621-3016  
336-835-3007  
Email: [connect@ststephennc.org](mailto:connect@ststephennc.org)  
Website: [www.ststephennc.org](http://www.ststephennc.org)

**Fr. John D. Hanic** 704-763-2475

**Rev. Mr. Harold Markle** 336-466-4173

**Sister Janis McQuade, S.S.J.** 336-835-4542

**Fr. Jose Rebaque** 203-954-7134

**Mr. Cuauhdemoc (Temoc) Herrejon** 828-773-2353

**St. John**

Mary Buran, Karen Huffman Music Ministry  
Sabrina Caudill Parish Accountant  
336-957-1295  
Laura Yanes Bookeeper, Census  
Ann Stone RCIA

**St. Stephen**

Theresa Martin Music Ministry  
Natalie Lopez Youth Faith Formation  
Peggy Reikowsky Youth Faith Formation  
Phillip Parriah RCIA

**Worship Times**

Saturday Vigil Mass, 4:00p  
Sunday Mass 11:15a; En español, 1:00p  
Daily Mass, Holy Days Consult bulletin  
Sacrament of Reconciliation  
Saturdays, 3:00-4:00p

Sunday Mass 9:00a  
Communion Service Tuesdays, 12:15p  
Holy Days 7:00p  
Sacrament of Reconciliation  
By appointment

**Welcome, New Parishioners**

*We are a Stewardship Community, sharing our time, talent, and treasure, in the most life-giving ways possible. Parishioners are expected to participate in weekly worship, in our community life, and in our service among our dear neighbors.*

**Sacramental Life ~ Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Matrimony**

*For Sacrament preparation, you must be a registered, active member and attend preparation sessions.*

**Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)**

*For those who desire to explore the Catholic Faith, spirituality, customs, and practices.*

**Anointing of the Sick**

*For those with chronic illness or who are pre-surgery, contact Father John or Sister Janis*

**First Sunday of Advent**  
**December 3, 2023**



*Jan's Newsletter (paraphrased):*

Beloved friends,

It is almost Advent again. I know how hopeful that is. And I know how hard it can be.

As we prepare to enter December, I am thinking again about how for so many, the holidays are an intense swirl of sorrow and stress. When people tell me about wanting to hide under the covers until the new year, I understand.

Even as I hold the truth of this, I want also - more than ever this year - to claim the wild and fierce hope that lives so deeply in Advent. This kind of hope is not dependent on "someday." It does not wait for a particular configuration of circumstances to finally come together just right.

It asks us to stay with what is most present to us: to enter this world in its heartrending brokenness and its astonishing beauty, that we might welcome the love that keeps finding its way into this world, and into us, again and again.

As we enter Advent, I want to offer a blessing to accompany you. It is, by design, so very small - just enough to fold into the palm of your hand. I am passing it along with such gratitude for the light you bear.

(Are these holidays a difficult time for you? Do you need a thoughtful space of sanctuary, or do you love the season and are looking for a way to enter more deeply into its gifts...travel through the season in the company of Community, Word and Sacrament?)

In Advent and always, may Christ our Light meet you with many graces and with the love and the hope that live at the heart of it all.

Deep peace to you,  
*Jan Richardson*

## Blessing for Keeping

And everything	quietly nesting
will become bright	in a ceremony
where it was broken	of keeping
and it will gather itself	bearing its light
into your hands	into the day
	that comes.

~ Jan Richardson

## Morning Church!

A recently-coined cultural term is *woke*. It means being aware of and actively attentive to important facts and issues, especially issues of racial and social justice. For some it's just jargon or slang while others use it in weaponized, condemning speech against those who take a stance against inequality and injustice.

Isaiah, a prophet of God's Hope, declares to the Chosen that God will continue to provide for their needs, even though they have been unfaithful to their Covenant with God. Like our ancestors in faith, we fail to express to God any awareness, gratitude, awe, or reverence ~ that God truly deserves.

Mountains *quake in God's presence*. If nature is *that woke*, why are we so unconscious of Divine Presence? Is it our busyness, a lack of faithfulness to personal prayer, an arrogant sense of entitlement, absenteeism from our Sunday Eucharist, etc.? Or something else?

We have undeniable evidence of God's compassionate Presence. God is *Divinely Woke* and hyper-vigilant to our every experience, thought, indecisiveness, fears, hopes, wonderment, and worries. What will it take to rouse our hearts to be *spiritually woke*, to rise to a level of watchfulness that motivates us to be who God dreamed we'd be before time and Creation; and to stand together in solidarity against every injustice and judgment, anti-gospel position in God's Neighborhood?

Each of us is given these Advent days to reflect on our *spiritual wokeness*, on how we respond to the Divine Presence within and among us.

This Advent begins a *New Year of Grace*.

It is definitely an *unrepeatable* time

on our faithjourney.

"Be watchful! Stay alert!"

Become *spiritually woke!*

*Come, Lord Jesus, Come!*

*Jan*

D E C E M B E R	
02	Women Missionaries Martyrs of El Salvador (43 <sup>rd</sup> Anniv)
03	1st Sun Advent Family Faith Formation
05	The Chosen, 10a & 6:45p Communion Service, 12:15p
06	RCIA, 6p; Choir, 7p
08	Feast: Immaculate Conception Mass, 7p
09	Parish Celebration ~ O.L. Guadalupe, 5:15p
10	2nd Sun Advent Retirement Fund for Religious
12	Communion Service, 12:15p O.L. Guadalupe, 4:00-8:00p Quiet prayer & Reflection

All Souls Remembrance	
Jenny & Rudy Arrdizzola: +Deceased family members	
Bill Bresse: +Mary Bresse	
Barb & Bob DeJohn: +Deceased family members	
Cecilia & Richard Jones Gerette Lynne Gilliam, Ralph & Patty Maillaro, Pam D'Amato, Karen, Dennis Jones, Dawn & Cheryl Kisacky, Karen Hicks; our parents	
Peggy Reikowsky: +Deceased family members	
Judy & Frank Simon: +Tina McCaughtry; +Carol Smith	



Please give generously to the upcoming collection.

**Retirement Fund for Religious**  
Fondo para la Jubilación de Religiosos

**You can help.** "Religious are blessed to serve," says Dominican Father Bertrand Ebben, age 90. Please donate to the Retirement Fund for Religious next week. Your gift will provide essential care for nearly 25,000 senior sisters, brothers and religious order priests who have dedicated their lives to serving others. Let us show our gratitude to these selfless individuals by giving generously.

**Ustedes pueden ayudar.** "Los religiosos somos dichosos por poder servir", dice el padre dominico Bertrand Ebben de 90 años. Les rogamos que donen al Fondo para la Jubilación de Religiosos la próxima semana. Su regalo proporcionará cuidados esenciales para casi 25,000 hermanas, hermanos y sacerdotes de órdenes religiosas ancianos que han dedicado su vida al servicio de los demás. Mostremos nuestra gratitud a estas abnegadas personas con un generoso donativo.

Celebración de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe  
Sábado 9 de diciembre, 17:15  
Refrescos  
Martes 12 de diciembre  
Noche de oración silenciosa y recogimiento

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Celebration  
Saturday, December 9, 5:15p  
Refreshments  
Tuesday, December 12, 4:00-8p  
Evening of Quiet Prayer and Recollection



Mass Intentions	
03	+ Marjorie Dana; + Helen Purcell
10	+Ellyn Garwood; Tim Garwood
17	+Tessie Horneck; John L. & Johnathan Hanic

### Birthdays & Anniversaries

01 Jason LaCashio	07 Gabriel Cancel
02 Brylee Ange	09 Eli Davis
Jason McClamrock	12 Rebeckah Treannie
03 Doris Watson	14 Jackie Darcey
04 Jocelyn Espino	15 Melia Orta
John Orta	Gabriel Hernandez
05 Shayla Ange	16 Jesus Nava

14 Arelis & Lee Hadfield

18 Jackie & Bryan Wagoner



### Christmas Flowers



Here is your opportunity to remember a loved one or honor a friend and decorate our sanctuary for the Christmas Season. An envelope for your Christmas Flowers are located in the pew pockets PRINT your info on the envelope's cover, and enclose your monetary gift. Print the names of those you wish to be remembered/honored on the back. Place the envelope in the collection.

### Churchwomen of El Salvador



On 12/02/80, four U.S. Catholic missionaries: Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke & Ita Ford, Cleveland Ursuline S. Dorothy Kazel, and lay missionary Jean Donovan, ministering in El Salvador, were assaulted and murdered by five Salvadoran National Guard. In 1984, the Guardsmen were sentenced to 30 years in prison. In 1998, they confessed to the murders ordered by two generals. The generals were given U.S. residency in FL for 25 years, until their deportation to El Salvador in 2015. These two generals have never admitted ordering the murders.



**...or  
GIFT  
CARDS:  
Sheetz or  
Walmart**



## 2023

### Giving Tree & ECSchool ~ K-12

This year ECS is trying something different for our area Giving Tree.

**128 youth** will be gifted by the area churches. St. Stephen has been asked to donate **gloves/mittens & toboggan sets and colored pencils & sketch books.**

If you wish to participate in the year's Giving Tree, please purchase the item(s)  
**Add a tag with the age and gender of the Youth who will receive your gift.**

Bring your gift(s) to church: **December 10**

## Sister of St. Joseph

*The Sisters of St. Joseph Refugee Housing Project:*

*Location:*

*St. Helena Convent  
6127 North Fifth Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19120-1422*

If you are willing to help your refugee sisters and brothers, both old and young, who are in need, we have several opportunities for you:



### We need volunteers

- ~ to help directly with the refugees
- ~ to help at the Center to provide donations of items that are needed for the residences of the refugees
- ~ gift cards
- ~ monetary donations

*Thank you very much!*

**Sister Eileen McNally, S.S.J.**  
**emcnally@ssjphila.org**  
**(267) 285-6769**



# BLESSING YOUR

# Advent Wreath



**WHEN THE BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH IS CELEBRATED IN THE HOME, IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT IT BE BLESSED BY A PARENT OR ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE FAMILY.**

**All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:**  
Our help is in the name of the Lord.  
Response (R/): Who made heaven and earth.

**Then the Scripture is read.**

Choose from:

- Isaiah 9:1-2, 5-6;
- or Isaiah 63:16-17, 19;
- or Isaiah 64:2-7:

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

R/: Thanks be to God.

**With hands joined, the leader says:**

Lord our God,

we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:

he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,

he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us,

he is the Savior of every nation.

Lord God,

let your blessing come upon us

as we light the candles of this wreath.

May the wreath and its light

be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.

May he come quickly and not delay.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R/: Amen.

**The blessing may conclude with a verse from**

**"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":**

O come, desire of nations, bind

in one the hearts of humankind;

bid ev'ry sad division cease

and be thyself our Prince of peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel

shall come to thee, O Israel. †



If you wish to send Fr. Joe Mulligan  
a card, following his emergency  
heart surgery:

Fr. Joe Mulligan  
7009 Cinnamon Circle  
Mint Hill NC 28227-4377

*Celebrating the Season*

*Ladies Guild  
Christmas Gathering*

Monday, December 11, 12Noon

Family Life Center

**Please bring:**

- 1) a new bed pillow for The Ark,
- 2) a gift (\$10-\$15 value), wrapped for exchange
- 3) a **side dish** to go with a pasta dinner.

BYOB optional

*Wise Ones  
Christmas Gathering*

Thursday, December 14, 1:00p

Main Course: chicken pie or barbeque

Family Life Center

**Please bring:**

- 1) a gift (\$10-\$15 value), wrapped for exchange
- 3) a **side dish** to go with either chicken pie or BBQ  
or a **dessert** BYOB optional

R.S.V.P. Aileen (336) 466-1484

# Retirement Fund for Religious

## Why We Ask

- In 1988, Catholic bishops of the United States launched the Retirement Fund for Religious to address the significant lack of retirement funding for Catholic sisters, brothers and priests in religious orders.
- For most of their lives, elder religious worked for little to no pay. There were no 401(k) plans or pensions.
- Religious communities are financially responsible for the support and care of all members. Income, earnings and expenses are managed separately from the parish and diocesan structures of the Catholic Church.
- Only 6 percent of the religious communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Office are adequately funded for retirement; 42 percent have 25 or fewer members. Many small communities struggle to care for elder members due to a lack of financial resources and personnel.
- Today, religious past age 70 outnumber religious younger than age 70 by nearly three to one.
- There are 24,005 religious past age 70 living in the United States. In 2022, the average annual cost for their care was roughly \$55,500 per person; skilled nursing care averaged \$82,700 per person.
- Since 2009, the annual cost to support senior women and men religious has exceeded \$1 billion.
- In 2022, 71 percent of the religious communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Office had a median age of 70 or higher.
- The average annual Social Security benefit for a religious is \$7,679, whereas the average lay US beneficiary receives \$21,902.

## How Donations Help

- Each year, hundreds of US religious communities receive financial assistance made possible by the Retirement Fund for Religious. Communities can use this funding for immediate retirement expenses or invest it for future needs. Since the first collection, US Catholics have donated more than \$975 million.
- Since the collection began, almost \$842 million has been distributed to support the day-to-day care of elderly sisters, brothers and religious order priests. An additional \$102.6 million has been allocated toward self-help projects initiated by religious communities, including collaborative health-care facilities.
- In addition to direct financial assistance, proceeds from the annual collection underwrite educational programming, services and resources that enable religious communities to evaluate and prepare for long-term retirement needs.
- Support from the Retirement Fund for Religious helps religious communities care for senior members while continuing important ministries to the People of God.



Top row, from left: Brother Charles Douglas, SSI, 88; Sister Marianna Danko, SSMI, 80; Father James Day, OSST, 77. Bottom row, from left: Sister Celeste Burgos, MHSH, 79; Sister Brenda Cherry, OSP, 84.

Statistics on women and men religious were obtained from the NRRO database of participating religious institutes as of December 31, 2022. Visit [usccb.org/nrro](https://usccb.org/nrro) to access a full statistical report.



**National Religious Retirement Office**  
Sponsor of the Retirement Fund for Religious

3211 Fourth Street NE  
Washington DC 20017-1194  
Phone (202) 541-3215  
Fax (202) 541-3053

[retiredreligious.org](https://retiredreligious.org)

# Fondo para la Jubilación de Religiosos

## Por qué pedimos

- En 1988, los obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos lanzaron el Fondo para la Jubilación de Religiosos para responder a la preocupante falta de fondos para la jubilación de hermanas, hermanos y sacerdotes de órdenes religiosas católicas.
- Durante la mayor parte de su vida, los religiosos ancianos trabajaron recibiendo escasos salarios o ninguno. No tenían planes 401(k) ni pensiones.
- Las comunidades religiosas tienen la responsabilidad financiera del sustento y atención de todos los miembros. Los ingresos, las ganancias y los gastos se manejan en forma independiente a la parroquia y demás estructuras diocesanas de la Iglesia Católica.
- Sólo el 6 por ciento de las comunidades religiosas que proporcionan datos a la Oficina Nacional de Jubilación de Religiosos está adecuadamente financiado para la jubilación; el 42 por ciento tiene 25 o menos miembros. Muchas comunidades pequeñas tienen dificultades para cuidar a los miembros ancianos debido a la falta de recursos financieros y de personal.
- Hoy, los religiosos mayores de 70 años superan en número a los religiosos menores de 70 en una proporción de casi tres a uno.
- Hay 24,005 religiosos mayores de 70 que viven en Estados Unidos. En 2022, el costo anual promedio para su atención fue más o menos de \$55,500 por persona; y la atención especializada promedio de enfermería fue de \$82,700 por persona.
- Desde 2009 el costo anual para mantener a las religiosas y religiosos ancianos ha superado \$1 mil millones.
- En 2022, el 71 por ciento de las comunidades religiosas que aportan datos a la Oficina Nacional de Jubilación de Religiosos tenía una edad promedio de 70 o más.
- El beneficio anual promedio del Seguro Social para un religioso es de \$7,679, mientras que el beneficiario estadounidense laico promedio recibe \$21,902.

## Cómo ayudan los donativos

- Cada año, cientos de comunidades de religiosos en EE. UU. reciben ayuda financiera del Fondo para la Jubilación de Religiosos. Las comunidades pueden usar estos fondos para gastos inmediatos de su jubilación o invertirlos para necesidades futuras. Desde la primera colecta, los católicos de EE. UU. han donado más de \$975 millones.
- Desde que comenzó la colecta se han distribuido casi \$842 millones para apoyar el cuidado diario de las hermanas, hermanos y sacerdotes mayores de órdenes religiosas. Unos \$102.6 millones adicionales se han distribuido para proyectos de autoayuda iniciados por comunidades religiosas, incluidas las instalaciones de atención médica colaborativa.
- Además de la asistencia financiera directa, los ingresos de la colecta anual garantizan los programas educativos, los servicios y los recursos que permiten que las comunidades religiosas evalúen y se preparen para las necesidades de jubilación a largo plazo.
- El respaldo del Fondo para la Jubilación de Religiosos ayuda a las comunidades religiosas a cuidar a los miembros ancianos mientras continúan sus importantes ministerios para el Pueblo de Dios.



Arriba, desde la izq.: Hermano Charles Douglas, SSJ, 88; Hermana Marianna Danko, SSMI, 80; Padre James Day, OSST, 77. Abajo, desde la izq.: Hermana Celeste Burgos, MHSH, 79; Hermana Brenda Cherry, OSP, 84.

Las estadísticas sobre los religiosos y religiosas fueron obtenidas de la base de datos de la NRRO de institutos religiosos participantes al 31 de diciembre de 2022. Visite [usccb.org/nrro](https://usccb.org/nrro) para ver nuestro informe estadístico completo.



**National Religious Retirement Office**  
Patrocinadora del Fondo para la Jubilación de Religiosos

3211 Fourth Street NE  
Washington DC 20017-1194  
Teléfono (202) 541-3215  
Fax (202) 541-3053

[retiredreligious.org](https://retiredreligious.org)



# The Kids' Bulletin

First Sunday of Advent  
December 3rd, 2023



## Advent: A New Year of Grace

Advent is the beginning of a new Church Year. Advent means, "Come!" Jesus comes to us all the time in *many ways*: when we are kind and loving; when we help your family without being asked; when we pray and go to Mass and Faith Formation; when we forgive; when you give to the poor; and when we read the Bible..



One Advent custom is the Advent Wreath. Each of week of Advent is represented by a candle. At our church we use three **saran blue candles** and a **rose candle**.

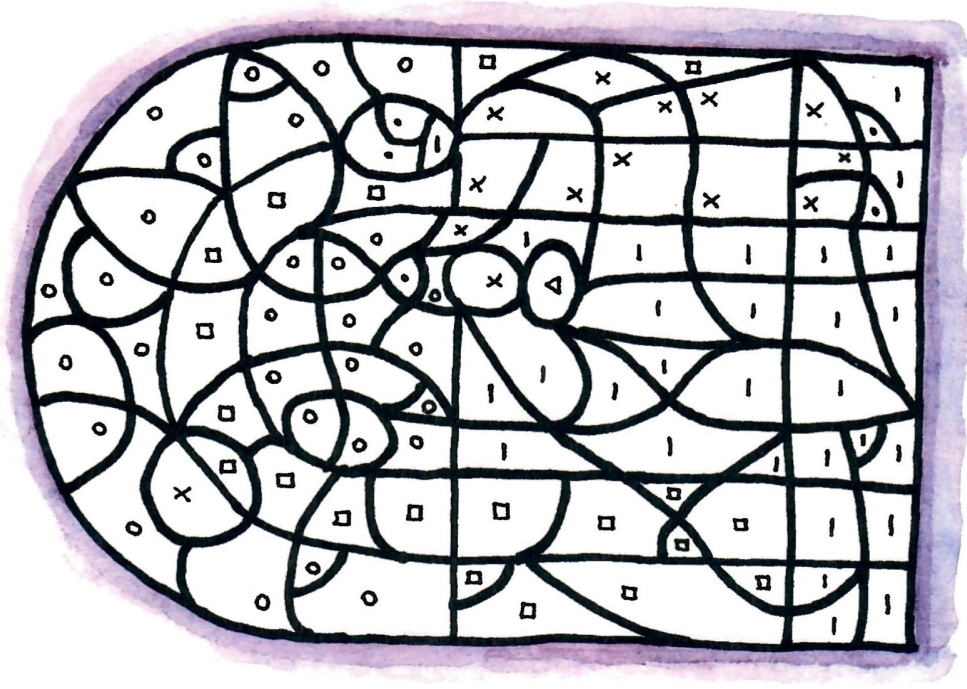
The Advent Wreath is a wonderful prayer for your family. You can say your *Grace Before Meals* and then say:

**Week 1:** Come, Lord Jesus, bring us hope!  
Share an Advent hope you have for your family.

**Week 2:** Come, Lord Jesus, bring us peace!  
Share where you believe your family needs peace.

**Week 3:** Come, Lord Jesus, bring us joy!  
Share an Advent joy with your family.

**Week 4:** Come, Lord Jesus, bring us love!  
Share one way you will show love to your family.



*In the Gospel, Jesus tells us to always be ready.  
Here's someone waiting  
for his master to return...*

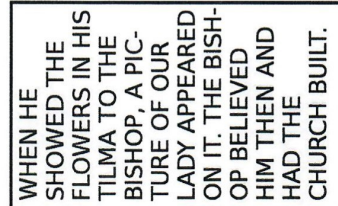
*Use this code to colour the picture in:*

- DARK BLUE      ◻ GREY      - BROWN
- SKIN COLOUR      × WHITE      ▲ RED

Answers to Cross-word: Across: 1.she 5.saw 7.immaculate 10.over 11.preserve 15.pure 17.man 18.lamb 20.ready 22.am 23.original Down: 2.him 3.you 4.hate 5.save 6.were 8.Mary 9.love 12.soul 13.baby 14.Adam 16.Eve 18.laws 19.born 21.Anne

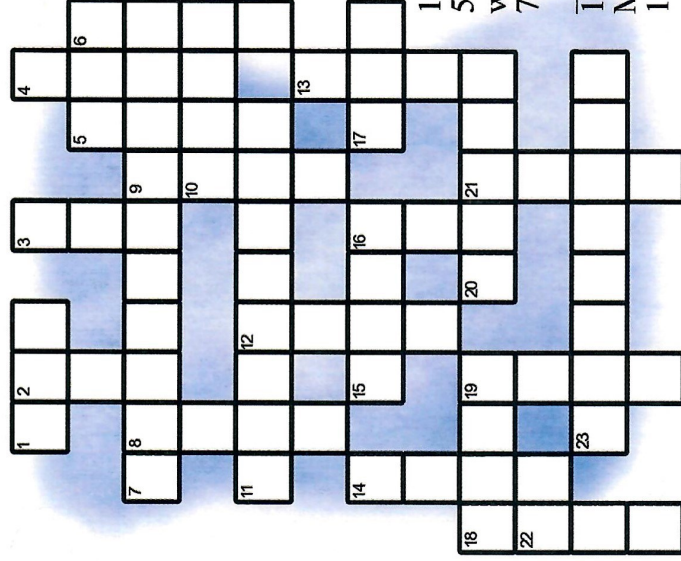
# SAINT JUAN DIEGO

DECEMBER 9



SAINT JUAN DIEGO LIVED A LONG AND SIMPLE LIFE TEACHING THE FAITH. MARY CHOSE HIM, BECAUSE HE WAS HUMBLE, TO BRING HER MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT THAT TIME. WHEN THE NEW CHURCH WAS BUILT, MILLIONS OF THE PAGAN PEOPLE IN MEXICO BECAME CHRISTIANS. JUAN DIEGO DIED AT AGE 74.

# Immaculate Conception Cross-Word



Fill in the blanks to do this puzzle about Our Lady.

ACROSS:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ was without sin.
5. God \_\_\_\_\_ that Mary would do His will.
7. She was the \_\_\_\_\_ Conception.
10. God watched \_\_\_\_\_ Mary.
11. God decided to \_\_\_\_\_ her from sin.
15. Mary's soul was not stained- it was \_\_\_\_\_.

DOWN:

2. Whatever God wanted she would do for \_\_\_\_\_.
3. She brought the Saviour into the world for \_\_\_\_\_ and me.
4. She teaches us to love God and \_\_\_\_\_ sin, which offends Him.
5. God had decided to \_\_\_\_\_ Mary from all sin.
6. If you \_\_\_\_\_ God, how would you make your mother?
8. The name of God's mother is \_\_\_\_\_.
9. She did every single thing out of \_\_\_\_\_ for God.
12. He had preserved her \_\_\_\_\_ from every stain of sin.
13. Before she was even a little \_\_\_\_\_ she was chosen by God.
14. We all have original sin because of \_\_\_\_\_.
16. ... and his wife, \_\_\_\_\_, who committed the first sins.
18. They had chosen to disobey God's \_\_\_\_\_.
19. Since then, every other person\* was \_\_\_\_\_ with original sin.
21. Mary was the daughter of the holy saints, \_\_\_\_\_ and Joachim.

\* Except Saint John the Baptist, who, according to tradition, was freed from original sin.

We pray  
for our sisters and brothers  
in Maui, Morocco,  
Middle East, (Oct. 7, 2023)  
and Libya... and the 32 places  
where war is being raged now.



*Our Lady of Protection*  
Ukrainian Madonna

**FEBRUARY 24, 2022**  
**22 months**

Ukrainian Catholics dedicate their country  
to *Our Lady of Protection*,  
interceding to Mary to wrap their country  
with her mantle of loving protection.

With the fast pace of communications these days, it's easy to become  
overwhelmed and wearied by the barrage of news.  
As Catholic Christians, you realized you are intimately tethered  
to every Dear Neighbor locally and globally.  
When you're feeling overwhelmed and weary, think of and pray for your  
Ukrainian sisters and brothers who are overwhelmed and wearied by the barrage  
~ not of news ~  
but by daily bombings, death, family separation, and the other forms  
of collateral damage of war since February 24, 2022.

**Our Lady of Protection, pray for us!**

Do you know the number  
of U.S. Mass  
shootings and  
gun-related deaths  
so far in 2023?



**WHEN IS  
ENOUGH,  
ENOUGH?**



**Tri-C Almsgiving**

Thank you so much !!

**DEC**

**Dry beans**

**CARE for CREATION**  
**RECYCLE INK CARTRIDGES**  
**LOBBY CONTAINERS**

Thank you!

