

MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD



Intercede

Loving God,
you gave us your Son through Mary,
who advocates for all of humanity.
At home, Mary nurtured the Son of God.
In our homes, she protects and cares for us.
Bless all who seek Mary's help.

Through the intercession of
the Blessed Mother,
may we receive the grace to face challenges
and setbacks,
and the wisdom to recognize our blessings.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, January 1, 2023

Rich Blessings



Today's readings: Numbers 6:22–27; Psalm 67:2–3, 5, 6, 8; Galatians 4:4–7; Luke 2:16–21. Today's readings are filled with blessings. In the reading from Numbers, Moses is given a blessing for the Israelites; in the refrain for the responsorial psalm, we ask God to bless us; from Galatians, we hear that we are adopted children of God; and in the Gospel, the shepherds see the infant Jesus, certainly a blessing.

It is up to us to continue to carry the blessings we have received into the world, just as the shepherds "made known the message that had been told them." Not only can you let others know of the good news that has been passed on to

you, but you can bless others. Write down the words of the first reading: "The LORD bless you and keep you! / The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! / The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace!" Use this text to bless children, friends, and relatives during this last week of the Christmas season. Parents could use the blessing in the reading from Numbers to bless a child before bedtime. Teens could use these words to conclude their weekly youth ministry gatherings. Consider other people in your life who would appreciate being blessed.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, January 2 Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzen

The first reading promises eternal life. Note that “antichrist” in the reading means “against Christ.” This week, think of a way that you can be for Christ, perhaps in a conversation, at a meeting, or simply while relaxing after a festive holiday event. Go gently into the new year: begin each day with the Morning Offering prayer. Much is written about the friendship of Sts. Basil and Gregory, as evident from historical manuscripts. Each made strong theological arguments for the orthodoxy of Christianity. In prayer, ask these saints to grant you the courage to persist in your faith. *Today’s readings:* 1 John 2: 22–28; Psalm 98: 1, 2–3ab, 3cd–4; John 1:19–28.

Tuesday, January 3 Holy Name of Jesus

The Christmas season continues with the psalmist’s joyous reminder “All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.” Perhaps as a child, you were taught to bow your head when someone spoke Jesus’ name. You will notice that this pious practice is a habit for many Catholics. Children can be taught to do this out of respect for the name of Jesus. More important to remember is to always speak Jesus’ name with love and kindness. *Today’s readings:* 1 John 2:29–3:6; Psalm 98:1, 3cd–4, 5–6; John 1:29–34.

Wednesday, January 4 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

In 1975, Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton was the first native-born American to become an official saint of the Church. She was born into a wealthy family and married at age twenty. After becoming a widow, she became Catholic in 1805 and established the first free Catholic school in the United States and then founded an order of vowed religious women. *Today’s readings:* 1 John 3:7–10; Psalm 98:1, 7–8, 9; John 1:35–42.

Thursday, January 5 St. John Neumann

St. John Neumann was born in Bohemia, which had an overabundance of priests during the time he expected to be ordained. With ordinations in the country paused, he set his sights on becoming a missionary in the United States. He was ordained in New York soon after his arrival in 1836. Several years later, he joined the Redemptorist congregation of priests and dedicated his life to education and to the poor. As a bishop, he founded the first Catholic diocesan school system in the United States. *Today’s readings:* John 3:11–21; Psalm 100:1b–2, 3, 4, 5; John 1:43–51.

Friday, January 6 Family Tree

The long form of St. Luke’s Gospel today tells the genealogy of Jesus. The challenge for today is to diagram or draw Jesus’ family tree. If possible, work with a younger child on this project, helping with the pronunciation of the biblical names of Jesus’ relatives. Talk about your family and where your relatives were born. *Today’s readings:* 1 John 5:5–13; Psalm 147:12–13, 14–15, 19–20; Mark 1:7–11 or Luke 3:23–28 or Luke 3:23, 31–34, 36, 38.

Saturday, January 7 Festivities

“They have no wine,” Mary comments to Jesus, encouraging him to begin his ministry. This account in the Gospel of John portrays Jesus as reluctant to show God’s glory in this gathering of friends and family. Jesus replies to Mary, “My hour has not yet come.” Still, he instructs the waiters, “Fill the jars with water.” In your prayer today, examine whether you are holding back from doing God’s will. Is there someone trying to encourage you to use your talents for the glory of God? *Today’s readings:* John 5:14–21; Psalm 149:1–2, 3–4, 5, 6a and 9b; John 2:1–11.

