

Some Thoughts for December, 2023

Marge Loenser

As soon as we think of December, we think of Christmas. It's such a natural reaction. The stores remind us of Christmas in November, and Lord help us, we start to get tons of mail from all the charities sending us packs of Christmas cards. It's really hard to stay focused on what most of December really is--Advent; preparation for the coming of the Lord--the Sweet Baby Jesus.

To name a few of the saints in December, on the 6th we celebrate St. Nicholas. Born in 280 AD in an area which is now Turkey, he is one of the few early saints not martyred for the faith. Because of so many miracles attributed to him he was known as Nicholas the "Wonder Worker." All his work for the poor and the sick and his great generosity probably began the legend of "Jolly Old St. Nicholas" or "Santa Claus."

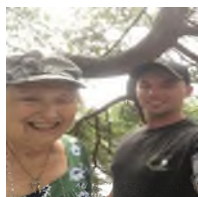
On the 8th we celebrate the great feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On the 9th, St. Juan Diego; he was a native Mexican, who in the 1500's was blessed to behold the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe (on Tepeyac Hill). On his "tilma" or cloak, there appeared a miraculous image of our Lady as a young native woman, with child. This cloak with the beautiful image is still on display in Mexico City. Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Juan Diego pray for us.

On the 13th we celebrate St. Lucy of Sicily. She was martyred by order of the Roman Emperor, Diocletian. She is a patron saint of the blind. St. Lucy pray for us. Our biggest celebration, of course, is Christmas Day--the day our Savior, Jesus Christ was born; and the angels sang "Glory to God in the highest and peace to men of good will."

St. Stephen whose feast is the 26th was the first Christian martyr. He was stoned to death for preaching that Jesus Christ was the Messiah and had risen from the dead. On the 27th we celebrate St. John, beloved Apostle, and brother of St. James. He is author of the 4th gospel, as well as three epistles and the Book of Revelation. The feast of the Holy Innocents is on the 28th. Herod had these babies killed in an attempt to kill baby Jesus who was saved by St. Joseph who was told in a dream to take Mary and Baby Jesus and escape to Egypt. I leave you with this Christmas Poem:

'Twas the evening of Christmas and all through the night
Dwelt this sweet gentle silence and the brightness of light!
Shepherds were startled by angels on high,
And were told of a Babe born in Bethlehem nigh.
Hosanna! Come see the Messiah promised from old,
All wrapped up in cloth to keep out the cold.
See Mary and Joseph who dwelt at His side,
While shepherds looked on with their eyes opened wide!
We adore You, we adore You, sweet Baby King,
For to our hearts peace and salvation You Bring!

Love,
Marge



Marge Loenser is a member of Saint Mark's Church in Sea Girt where she is a Lector and a Eucharistic Minister. She has retired from teaching CCD at Saint Mark's. She has been a member of Catholic Women of Zion for about 30 years and is also a member of Mary Queen of Peace Prayer Community for about the same length of time. She writes for a monthly column for Saint Mark's Church Bulletin.