

# Faith Loops

Faith Loops are PowerPoint presentations with images and information that will help us grow in the understanding of our Catholic faith. They will be projected on the screens during the twenty minutes prior to each weekend mass.

During that time, the slides will loop, or repeat, themselves. Thus, the name: Faith Loops.



# You Asked Us ...

## ***What is the origin of the word ‘Christmas’?***

The name is derived from two Old English words that mean “Mass (festival) of Christ.” The first known celebrations of Christmas took place in Rome and date back to the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.



# Saint of the Week

## St. Juan Diego

Juan Diego, originally called Cuauhtlatoatzin “the Talking Eagle”, was a poor Aztec (Indigenous) man who lived in central Mexico five hundred years ago. He was one of the first Aztecs to be baptized when the Spanish arrived.



On December 9, 1531, Juan Diego met a wonderful woman dressed like an Aztec princess. She asked him to give a message to the bishop. She said that she wanted a church to be built where she stood. When Juan Diego told the bishop, the bishop was reluctant to believe him.

# Saint of the Week

## St. Juan Diego



When he went back to the spot where he had first seen the lady, she met him again, and told Juan to go back to the bishop with the request. This time, the bishop asked Juan Diego to bring back a sign from the woman. Juan Diego relayed the message to the Lady who told him to come back on the next day, and she would fulfill his request.

# Saint of the Week

## St. Juan Diego

The next day, the woman instructed Juan Diego to go to the top of the hill, where he found, in the middle of winter, a garden of roses, not native to the area, all in bloom. He gathered some and then brought them to the Lady, who arranged them in his cloak. She told him to take them to the bishop as the sign he had requested.

When Juan opened the cloak, an image of the woman was imprinted on the coarse fabric of the cloak or tilma.



# Saint of the Week

## St. Juan Diego

A church was built where Mary appeared to Juan Diego. If you visit that church in Mexico City, you will see the very cloak that Juan Diego wore, the cloak which bears the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Juan Diego is the patron saint of Indigenous people in the Americas. His feast day is December 9.



# Did You Know ...?

According to tradition, there was a poor father who lacked the dowry that needed to be paid so his daughters could marry. Witnessing the family's despair, St. Nicholas, the local Catholic bishop, secretly threw bags of gold into the old man's home. The gold landed in an open stocking, so the daughters were saved from being sold into slavery.



# Did You Know ...? (cont.)



On December 6, the Feast of St. Nicholas, it is traditional to fill stockings for children with gifts in the spirit of the generous saint. This wonderful Advent custom reminds us to seek the face of Jesus in the poor and the oppressed as we focus on acts of generosity and kindness.



# Learning About Liturgy

*Why does the priest bow and wash his hands in preparation for the Liturgy of the Eucharist?*



At the end of the Preparation of the Gifts, the altar server or Master of Ceremonies (MC) brings water and a bowl for the priest to wash his hands. This precedes the Liturgy of the Eucharist when, by the power of the Holy Spirit working through the priest, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

# Learning About Liturgy (cont.)

Long ago, it was necessary and practical for the priest to wash his hands because the people brought gifts of eggs and chickens, and his hands may have been dirty. Today it is a symbolic gesture. During the washing of the hands, or *ablution*, the priest prays quietly that God will wash away his sins. Before the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins, Father prays for inner purity using the words from Psalm 51, verse 2: ‘*Lord, wash away my iniquities and cleanse me from my sin.*’

The priest bows as a sign of humility.

# Legend of the Candy Cane

Candy canes appear every year in December. Are they just another Christmas candy or do they have symbolic meaning?

- The hard candy reminds us that God is our rock (see Psalm 18:2): *The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge.*
- The 'J' shape reminds us to prepare for the coming of Jesus and to be filled with JOY, our theme on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent.



# Legend of the Candy Cane

- Turn the 'J' upside down and we see the staff or 'crook' of the shepherds called by the angels to worship the Christ child and the staff of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.
- The red stripes symbolize the blood of Christ and his life given for the forgiveness of our sins.
- The white stripes represent the Virgin birth, Christ's purity, and the promise of salvation.



# Do You Really Know the Story of the First Christmas?

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke include an 'Infancy Narrative'; from these we learn the story of Christ's birth. Christian Tradition has introduced additional details.

Test your knowledge. What's true, and what's not?

**Mary and Joseph traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem on a donkey.**

True or false?

# Do You Really Know the Story of the First Christmas?

**Mary and Joseph traveled from Nazareth to  
Bethlehem on a donkey.**



Not known.

There is no  
mention as to  
how the couple  
traveled to  
Bethlehem.

# Do You Really Know the Story of the First Christmas?

**An ox and a donkey were present at Jesus's birth.**

True or false?

# Do You Really Know the Story of the First Christmas?

**An ox and a donkey  
were present at  
Jesus's birth.**

False.

Neither animal is  
mentioned in the  
gospels.





# Christmas Gift Suggestions

- To your enemy ... forgiveness;
- To a neighbor or stranger in need ... service;
- To every child ... a good example;
- To an opponent ... tolerance;
- To a friend ... your heart;
- To yourself ... respect; and
- To all ... charity.



# Word of the Week

## *Octave*

This word comes from Latin and means ‘the eighth day’. It refers to a period of eight days that are given to the celebration of a major feast such as Christmas or Easter. The Christmas Octave begins on Christmas Day (Dec. 25)

and ends on the Feast of Mary, the Holy Mother of God (Jan. 1).



The Easter Octave begins on Easter Sunday and includes the seven days that follow.

# THE CHRISTMAS OCTAVE

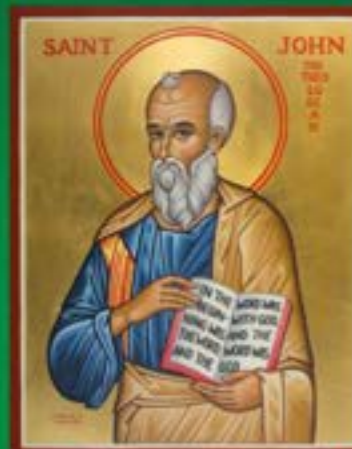
The first eight days of the Nativity according to the Roman rite



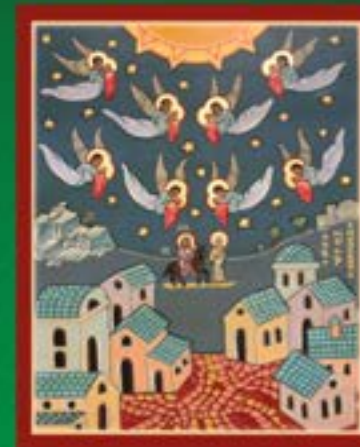
December 25<sup>th</sup>  
The Nativity of the Lord



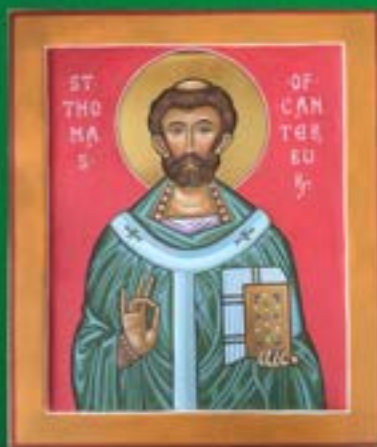
December 26<sup>th</sup>  
St. Stephen, Martyr



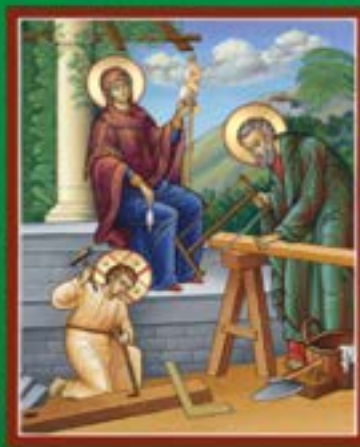
December 27<sup>th</sup>  
St. John, Evangelist



December 28<sup>th</sup>  
The Holy Innocents



December 29<sup>th</sup>  
St. Thomas Becket, Martyr



Sunday after Christmas  
or December 30<sup>th</sup>  
The Holy Family



December 31<sup>st</sup>  
Pope Sylvester I



January 1<sup>st</sup>  
Mary, Mother of God &  
Circumcision of Christ



# Test Your Knowledge

***Incarnation means:***

- a) all nations will bow to Jesus
- b) carnations will be used to celebrate Christmas
- c) God took on human flesh
- d) the Virgin Mary is among us

# Answer

## c. God took on human flesh

Christmas celebrates the mystery of the Incarnation—when God took on human flesh. “The Word became flesh *to be our model of holiness*” and “The Son of God became man so that we might become God” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 459 and 460).



# 'O' Antiphons

*The Roman Church has been singing the 'O' Antiphons since at least the eighth century. The "O Antiphons" are prayed for seven days in preparation for Christmas: December 17–23. They are prayed in the Liturgy of the Hours each day as antiphons with the Magnificat. They are based on Isaiah's*



*prophecies and reveal the different titles given to the Messiah. Their repeated use of the imperative "Come!" embodies the longing of all for the Divine Messiah.*

# 'O' Antiphons

The first six of the 'O' Antiphons were introduced last week. The seventh – and last – antiphon is:

**December 23**  
**(O Emmanuel)**

Come, O Emmanuel,  
our King and Giver of Law:  
save us, Lord our God!



# 'O' Antiphons

Below, the seven titles given to Christ are listed.

The O Antiphons

December 17

O Wisdom

December 18

O Lord

December 19

O Root of Jesse

December 20

O Key of David

December 21

O Radiant Dawn

December 22

O King of the  
Nations

December 23

O Emmanuel



# ‘O’ Antiphons

Sometime before the 12th century, selected verses from the seven antiphons were compiled into the hymn we today call ‘O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.’ In Latin: ‘Veni, Veni, Emmanuel’.

During the Middle Ages this hymn was an important teaching and worship aid to a society that was largely illiterate and had few Bibles.

In the 19th century, the Latin version of the hymn was translated into English by an Anglican priest named John Neale.

# Prayer Before Mass

Dear God, help me to be open to all that you want to give me at Mass today.

My heart is open.

I come empty and unsure and troubled.

I come in hope.

I come in need to be loved by you,  
united with this faith community,  
strengthened by your word,  
and nourished by the Bread of Life.

Cleanse me. Refresh me.

Strengthen me for the journey ahead.

Lead me to heaven.

Thank you, God, for this time together.

Thank you, God, for everything. Amen.



# Questions???

Do you have a question about the Catholic faith or about the celebration of the Mass? If so, write it on a piece of paper and drop it into the marked shoebox on the table at the back of the church. We will try to answer it in a Faith Loop at a later date.

Thank you.

