

# Faith Loops

Faith Loops are PowerPoint presentations with information and

images that will help us grow in the understanding of our Catholic faith. They are projected on the screens during the twenty minutes prior to each weekend mass.

**To learn more about your faith while waiting for Mass to begin, come a few minutes early.** During that time, the slides will loop, or repeat, themselves. Thus, the name: Faith Loops.



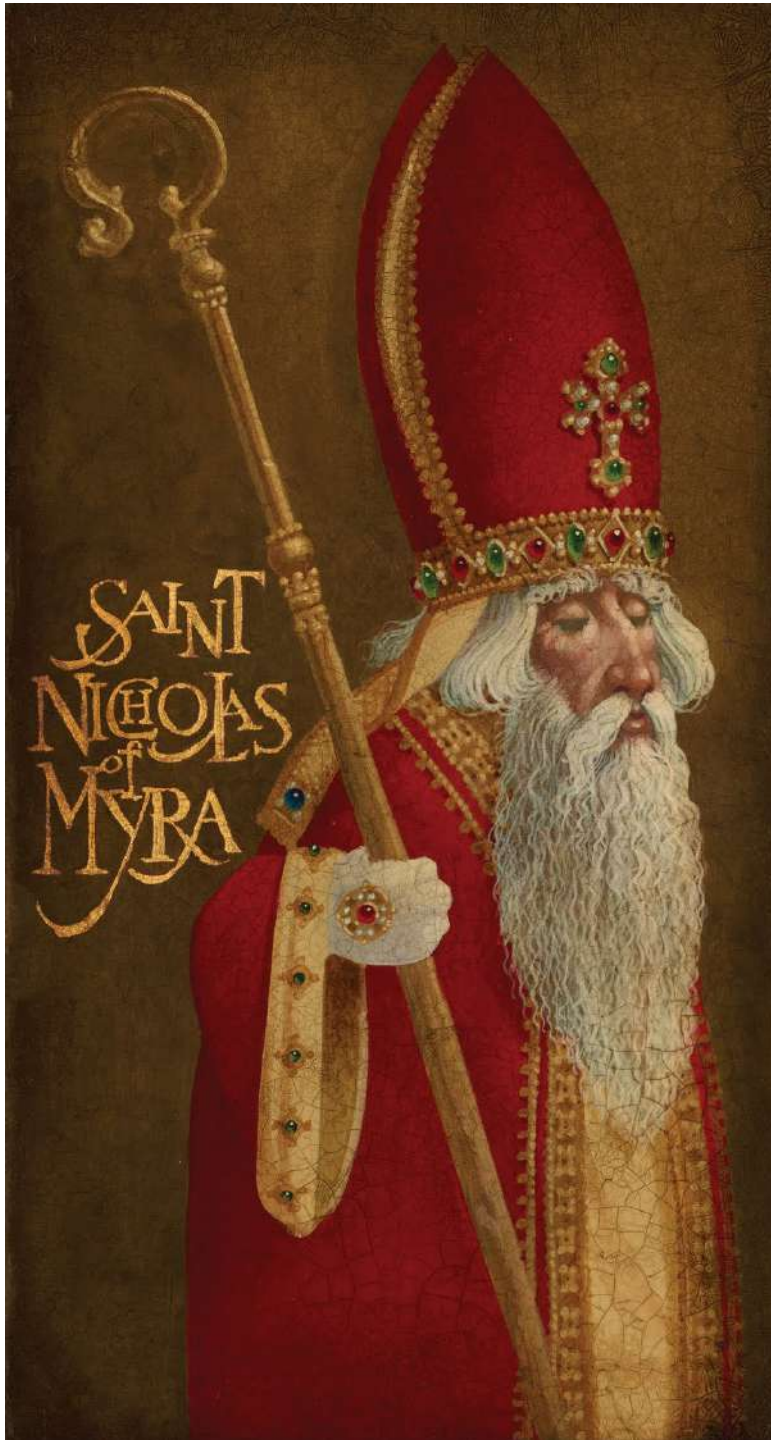
# You Were Wondering ...

## Why don't we sing the Gloria during the Advent season?

Advent is a time of preparation for the wondrous feast of Christmas. The Gloria is a hymn of praise that draws on the message that the angels sang to the shepherds on the night Jesus was born: “Gloria in excelsis Deo. Glory to God in the highest.”

We refrain or ‘fast’ from singing the Gloria during Advent, as a sign that we are not quite ready to celebrate Christ’s birth. There’s still some preparation to be done. So we wait.





**“The giver of every  
good and perfect gift  
has called upon us  
to mimic his giving,  
by grace, through faith,  
and this is not  
of ourselves.”**

St. Nicholas  
Feast day: December 6

# The Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Each year, on December 8, we celebrate a feast day that is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of Mary. (It is sometimes confused with the Virgin Birth of Jesus.)

Of all the Feast Days, a Solemnity is a celebration of the greatest importance. So special is a Solemnity that the Gloria and the Creed, which are not typically recited or sung on a weekday, are included.





# The Feast of the Immaculate Conception



For hundreds of years, theologians like St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bernard debated whether or not the Virgin Mary was born without original sin, the sin that each of us inherits from Adam and Eve. Finally in 1854, Pope Pius IX declared that the Catholic Church believed Mary to be born without original sin!



# The Feast of the Immaculate Conception

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, we remember Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

In the prayer, the Hail Mary, we say that Mary is 'full of grace', echoing the words of the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation.

Indeed, Mary was born without original sin and was very holy from the moment she was conceived in her mother's womb. God chose her to be the mother of Jesus, and God blessed her with holiness.



# Word of the Week



## ***Incarnation***

A basic tenet of our creed is that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine. He is true God and true man.

This mystery is known as the **Incarnation**. The word derives from the Latin verb *incarno*, which means ‘to be made flesh’. At Christmas, we celebrate the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Word Made Flesh. He was born of the Virgin Mary and became man.



# Word of the Week (cont.)

## *Incarnation*

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: “He is truly the Son of God who, without ceasing to be God and Lord, became a man and our brother” (CCC #469).

As a man, Jesus felt deep emotion, experienced temptation, and endured pain, just like any other human being.

Yet Jesus never sinned.





# Origin of the Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath goes all the way back to Germanic sun-worshipping tribes. Every winter, near the winter solstice, their sun-god, Sol Invictus, seemed to grow weak and come close to death. If Sol Invictus died, they too would die, victims to the freezing cold, and their summer crops would never rise.



# Origin of the Advent Wreath

So they took their huge cartwheels, wrapped them in greens, burdened them with hundreds of flaming candles, and hung the wheels from the stone roofs of their meeting halls.

The candles, greens, and wheels were symbolic of their hope that, once again, Sol Invictus would return to shed his life-giving rays on a cold, darkened world.





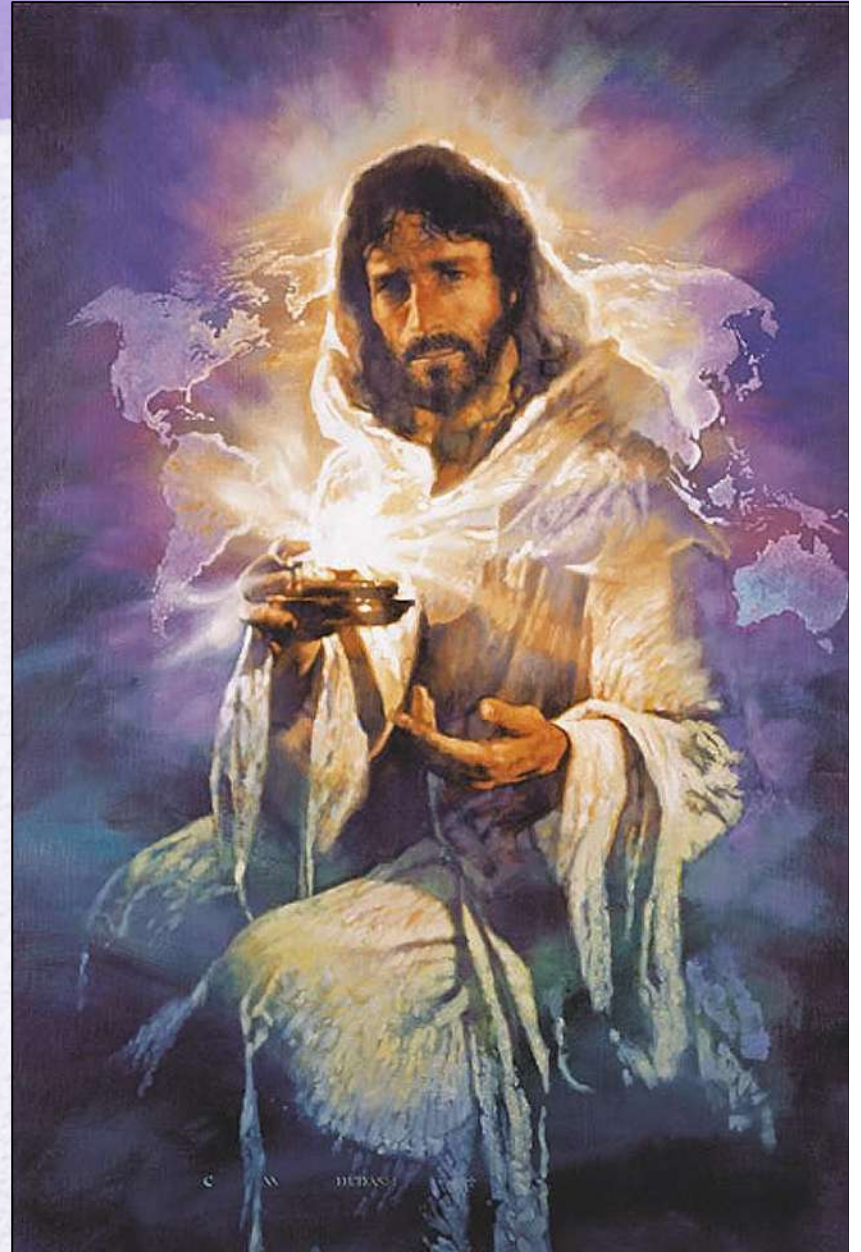
# Origin of the Advent Wreath

A few hundred years ago, Christians saw the remarkable similarity between this pagan festival and Christmas, the feast that celebrates the coming of the Eternal Light into a world sitting “in darkness and the shadow of death” (Luke 1:78).

They knew that Christmas had been placed in late December, not because history records this as the date of Jesus’ birth, but because it was the time of the winter solstice when the sun begins its ‘return’ to the world.

# Origin of the Advent Wreath

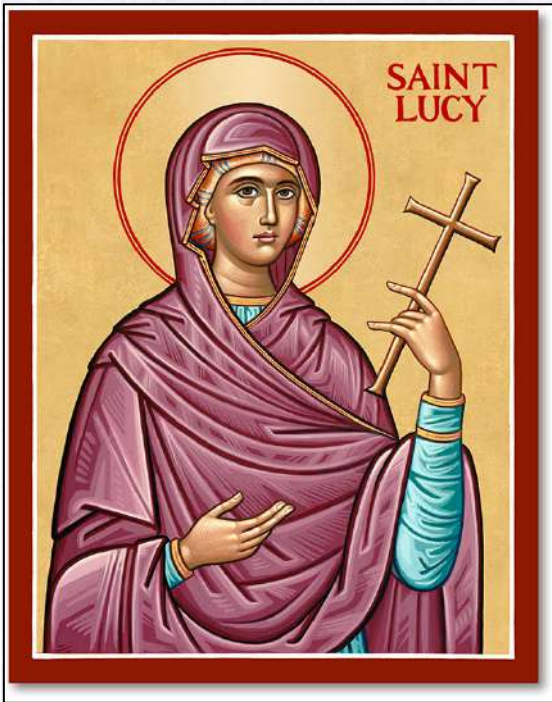
By hanging their own brightly wound candle wheels in their homes and meeting places, they expressed conviction that Christ would always come into the world as its true light.





# Saint of the Week: St. Lucy

In the year 304, a young Christian woman was killed because of her faith in Jesus Christ. We know her today as St. Lucy.



In 283 A.D. Lucy was born into a wealthy noble family on the Italian island of Sicily. While Lucy was still young, her mother had arranged for Lucy to marry a pagan, that is, a non-Christian.

While on pilgrimage, Lucy prayed at the tomb of Saint Agatha, asking the saint to intercede for her mother, who was very ill.



# Saint of the Week: St. Lucy

Amazingly, her mother's chronic illness was cured, and Lucy promised her life to Jesus. Inspired by Lucy's determination and faith, her mother supported Lucy's desire to live for God. Lucy then gave her dowry to the poor.





# Saint of the Week: St. Lucy

When the marriage agreement was broken, Lucy's bridegroom was angry. He turned Lucy over to the Roman authorities, who felt threatened by the growing number of Christians in those days. Lucy was arrested. The governor mocked Lucy for her virginity and threatened to force Lucy into a life of prostitution. Lucy boldly told the judge that her strength in God was far greater than 10 000 men. When guards tried to take her away, they were unable to move her, even with a team of oxen.



# St. Lucy

The governor was furious and ordered her to be tortured and killed.



During her torture, her eyes were gouged out, but she regained use of them before she died. Lucy was sentenced to death by burning at the stake but, amazingly, the fire would not harm her. Finally they were able to kill Lucy by cutting her throat.



# Saint of the Week: St. Lucy



Saint Lucy is the patron saint of people suffering from blindness and diseases of the eyes. She is often depicted with a bowl containing her two eyes.

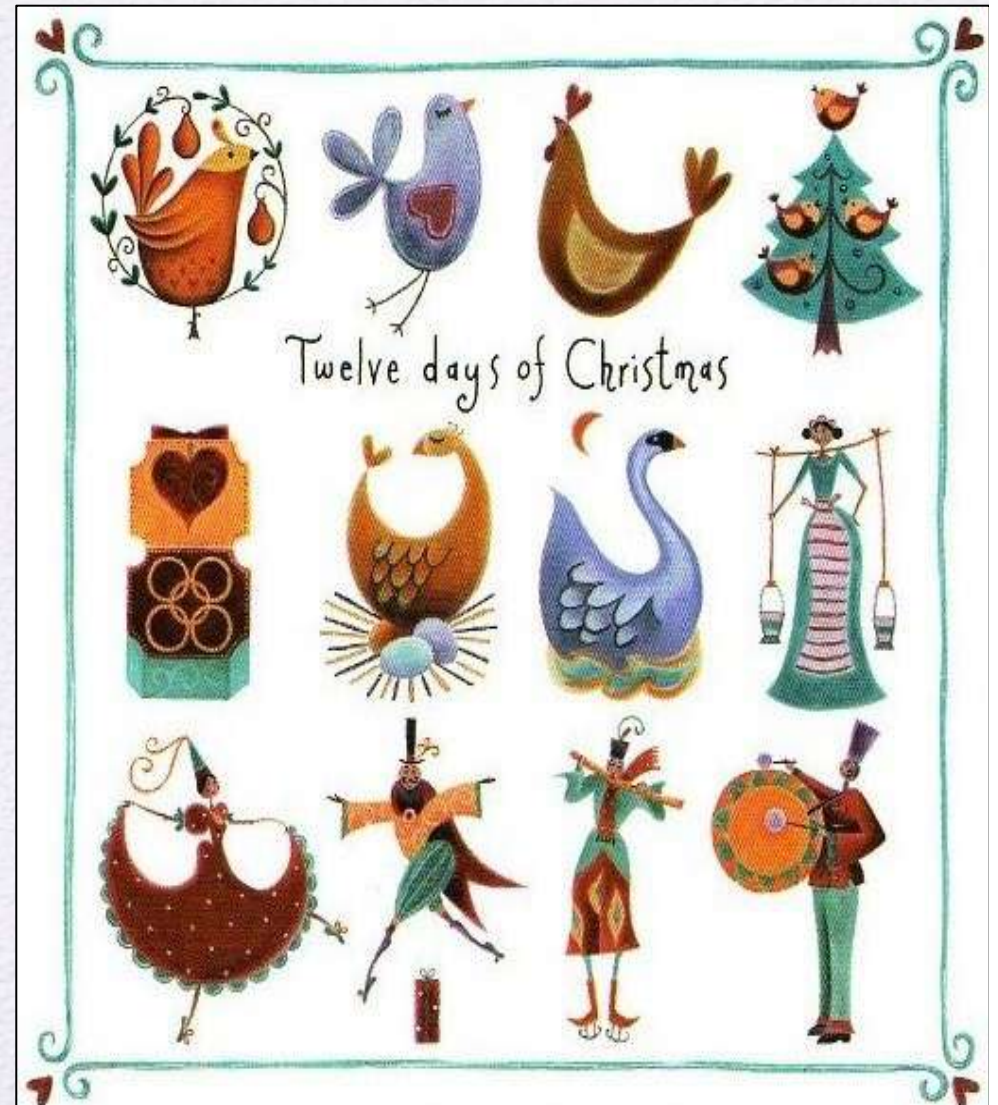
Her feast day is December 13.

The name, Lucy, means "**bringer of light**".

# The 12 Days of Christmas

Do you know the Christmas carol, The Twelve Days of Christmas?

It appears to be a delightful nonsense rhyme set to music, but it can also be used as a catechism song or memory aid to help young Catholics learn the tenets of their faith.



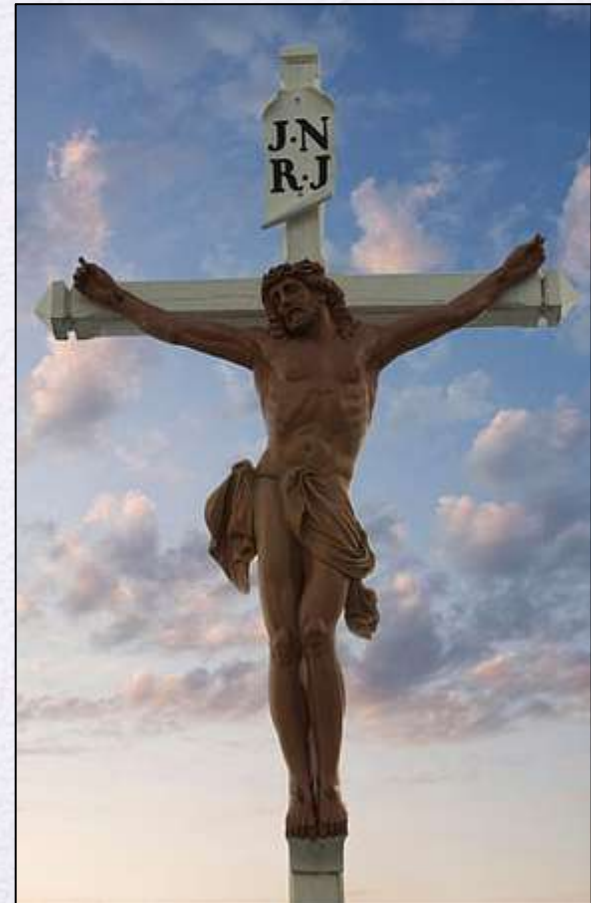


# The 12 Days of Christmas

The song's gifts are hidden meanings to the teachings of the faith. The “true love” mentioned in the song refers, not to an earthly suitor but, to God Himself.

The “me” who receives the gifts refers to every baptized person, including each of us.

The “partridge in a pear tree” is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died on the cross – the Tree of Life.



# The 12 Days of Christmas

The other symbols mean the following:

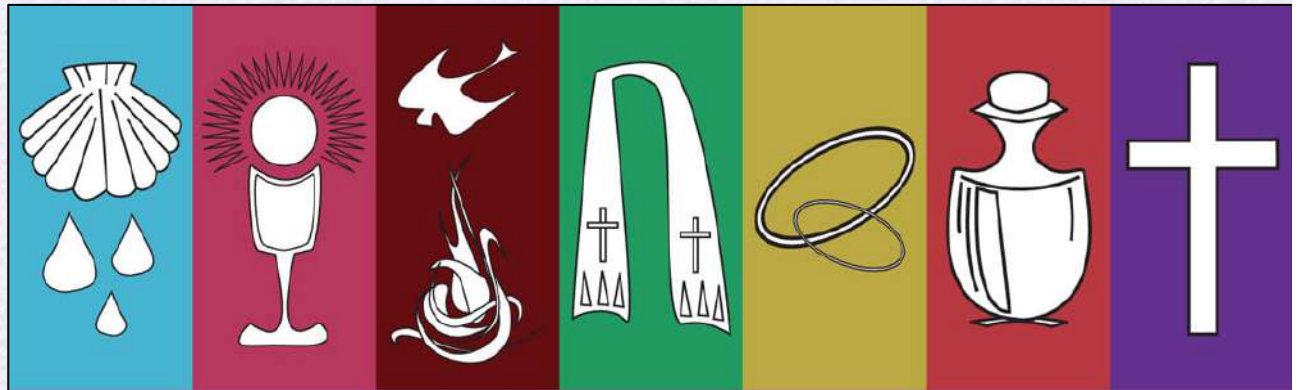
- 2 turtle doves = **Old and New Testaments**
- 3 French hens = the three theological virtues: **faith, hope, and love**
- 4 calling birds = the four gospels and/or four evangelists: **Matthew, Mark, Luke, John**





# The 12 Days of Christmas

- 5 golden rings = **the first five books of the Old Testament**, known as the Pentateuch
- 6 geese a-laying = **the six days of creation**
- 7 swans a-swimming = **the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and the seven sacraments**
- 8 maids a-milking = **the eight beatitudes**



# The 12 Days of Christmas

- 9 ladies dancing = **the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit**
- 10 lords a-leaping = **the ten commandments**
- 11 pipers piping = **the eleven faithful apostles** (excluding Judas)
- 12 drummers drumming = **the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostles Creed**





# Learning About Liturgy



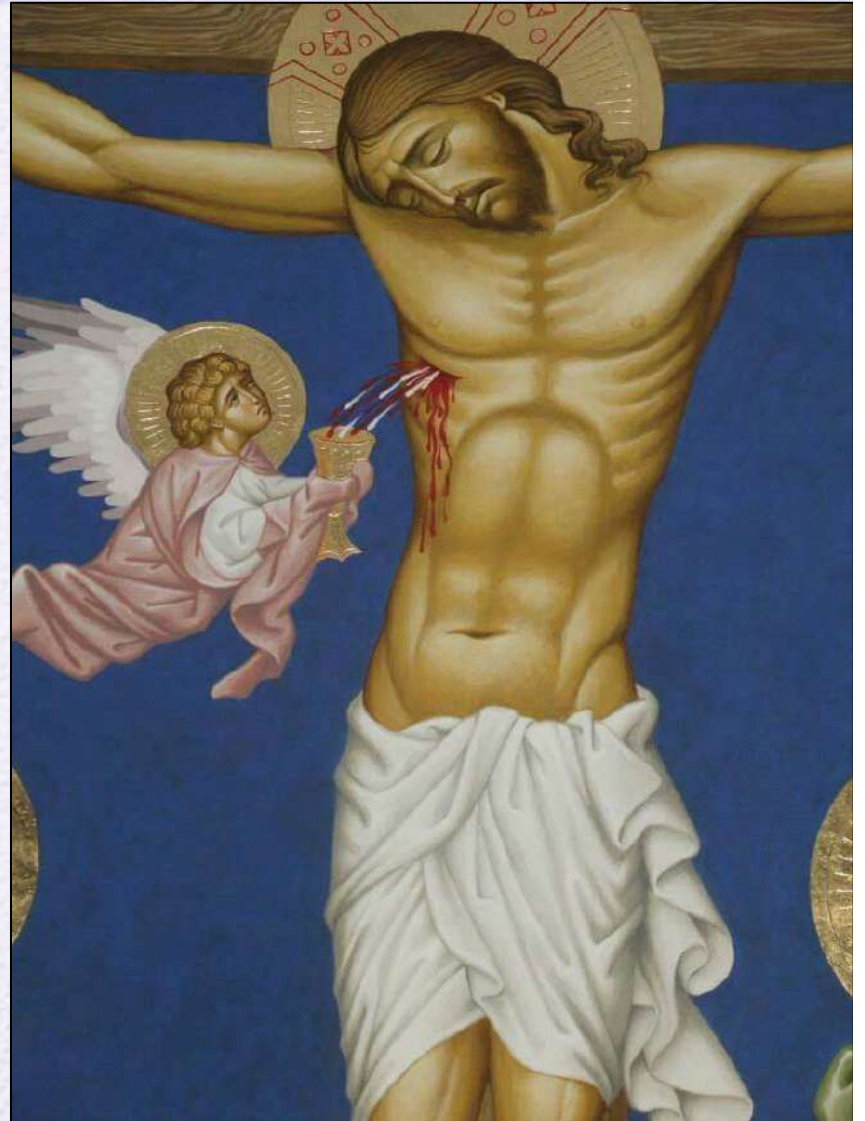
*Why does the priest pour a drop of water into the chalice of wine during the Preparation of the Gifts?*

In ancient times this was necessary because the wine was very thick and heavy; adding water made it easier to drink. Today adding a drop of water to the wine is symbolic. It symbolizes the dual nature of Jesus, Who is fully divine and fully human.

# Learning About Liturgy

*Why does the priest pour a drop of water into the chalice of wine during the Preparation of the Gifts?*

And Sacred Scripture tells us that, when Jesus was on the cross and was pierced in the side, both water and blood flowed from the wound (John 19:34).





# Test Your Knowledge

Christ was unique because his nature was part human and part God.

True

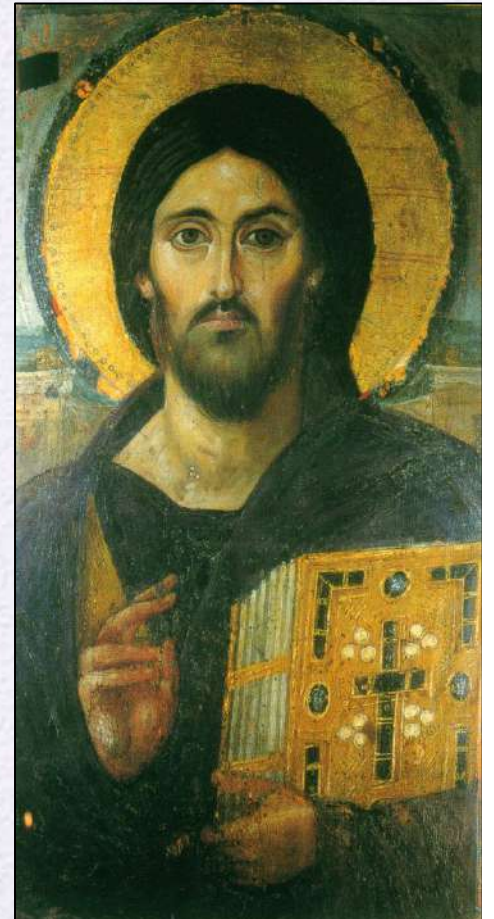
False



# Test Your Knowledge: Answer

**False.**

“The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man” (CCC, n. 464).

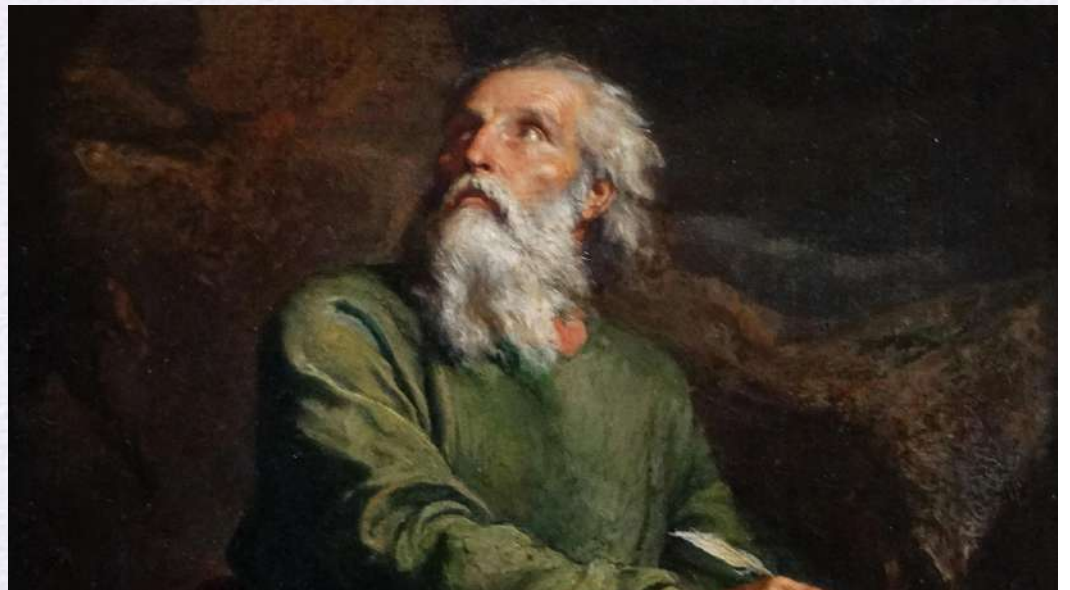




# Test Your Knowledge

Which Old Testament prophet said of Christ's coming: "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

- a. Micah
- b. Ezekiel
- c. Jeremiah
- d. Isaiah



# Answer

## d. Isaiah

The prophet Isaiah's poetic writings (see Isaiah 9:1-7), which are read at the four different Christmas liturgies, were used in Christmas favorites such as



Handel's Messiah and A Charlie Brown Christmas, based on the comic strip "Peanuts" by Charles M. Schulz.



# Test Your Knowledge

**What is a manger?**

- a. a food container for barnyard animals
- b. a crib
- c. a jogging stroller
- d. a Jewish baby bed made out of straw

# Test Your Knowledge: Answer

## a. food container for barnyard animals

Christ's birth alerts us to the fact that this Child, born in a feedbox for animals, will one day feed the world with his Body and Blood in the Eucharist.





# 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.

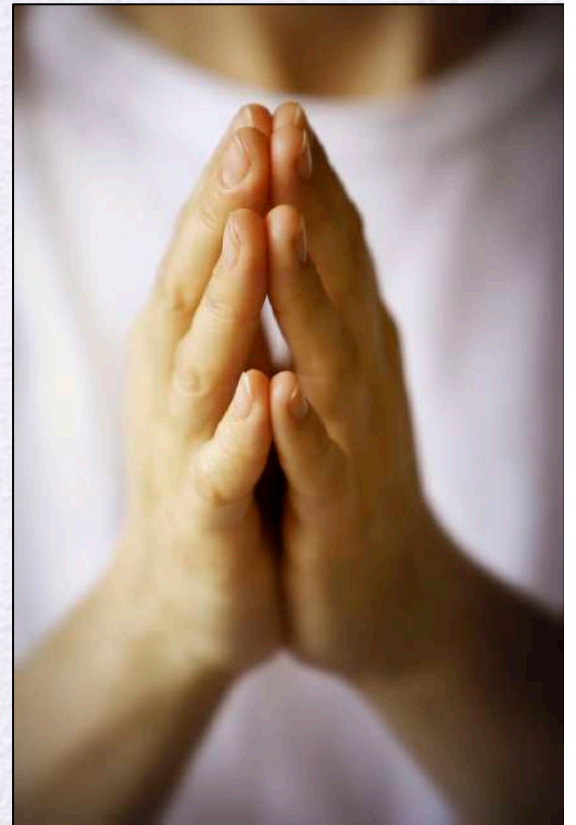
Cleanse me. Refresh me.

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.

