

Coloma Catholic Life

Liturgical Year

2nd Week of Advent – Liturgical colour – Purple



Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for December Entrusted to the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

The Future of the Very Young

That every country take the measures necessary to prioritize the future of the very young, especially those who are suffering

Pope Francis Tweet

"May the feast of our Mother Mary Immaculate help us to make our whole life s "yes" to God, a "yes" composed of adoration of Him and of daily gestures of love and service."



Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for December

In his prayer intention for the month of December 2019, Pope Francis calls us to pray that every country decides to take necessary measures to make the future of children a priority, especially the future of children who are suffering today. It has become the custom of Pope Francis to release a video message detailing his prayer intention for each month.

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-12/pope-francis-prayer-intention-december-2019.html>

The full text of his intention is below:

Every child who is marginalized, abused, abandoned, without schooling, or without medical care, is a cry that rises up to God.

In each of them is Christ, who came to our world as a defenceless child; it is Christ who looks at us through the eyes of each of these children.

Upcoming Events

18th December

Coloma Carol Service
6:30pm Croydon Minister

20th December – End of term

Masses in the school hall.

Prayer of the Month:

Advent Prayer:

4,3,2,1...count the weeks till
Jesus comes.

Each week we add another
light, our hope for Jesus
growing bright.

We pray, we share, we do
our part to welcome Jesus
into our hearts.

Amen

Let us prayer that every country decides to take necessary measures to make the future of children a priority, especially the future of children who are suffering today.

The Pope's [Worldwide Prayer Network of the Apostleship of Prayer](#) developed "The Pope Video" initiative to assist in the worldwide dissemination of monthly intentions of the Holy Father in relation to the challenges facing humanity.

Advent Services

The Coloma Carol Service is being held at Croydon Minster on Wednesday 18th December at **6:30pm, doors open 6:15pm**. Please note this is a change to the previously published details. All are welcome.

Charity Collections

The recent pyjamas collection resulted in over 90 garments being donated. A huge thank you for your generosity.

Charities Week

Our annual Charities Week was last week. Well done and congratulations to Year 13, under the guidance of Mrs. Unwin, who put in so much time and effort to raise money for The Rainbow Trust Children's Charity. More detail to follow.

The God Who Speaks – Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Scripture is at the centre of everything the Church does. The word of God shapes our prayer and worship. The Bible shows us how to understand the world, how we are called to live and relate to each other.

2020 is the 10th anniversary of Verbum Domini – Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Exhortation on 'The Word of the Lord' and the 1,600 anniversary of St Jerome's death. These dates have inspired the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to dedicate 2020 as a year of focus on the Bible and 'The God Who Speaks'.

During the year, the Church will be celebrating, living and sharing God's word with an exciting new Scripture initiative. It's an opportunity to enrich current practice and to develop and explore new ways of responding to 'The God who Speaks'.

Throughout 2020 there will be a range of events, activities and resources to participate in all around the country. To help achieve transformation in our hearts and in our communities there will be three themes of [celebrating](#), [living](#) and [sharing](#) God's word.

There is lots of information and ideas at this web address, including a course focusing on Advent.

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/the-god-who-speaks/>

Advent

What does advent mean? Fr. Mike Schmitz explains.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SA-gx-PWB0A>

Advent Wreath



The lights of the candles on the Advent Wreath break through the darkness, reminding us of the Light of Christ that we anticipate during this holy season. Where did this tradition come from, of lighting four candles in an evergreen wreath to mark the weeks preceding Christmas? Like many of our Church traditions, the use of candles in the midst of late autumn and winter was originally a pagan tradition. Rev. William Saunders, who wrote an article in the "Arlington Catholic Herald" on this topic, states that "pre-Germanic peoples used wreaths with lit candles during the dark and cold December days as a sign of hope in the future warm and extended sunlight days of spring." In a similar vein, Scandinavians "lighted candles [that] were placed around a wheel, and prayers were offered to the god of light to turn the 'wheel of the earth' back toward the sun to lengthen the days and restore warmth." In the middle ages, the Germanic peoples began incorporating a lighted wreath into the Christian season of Advent. It did not gain widespread popularity until the 1800s.

The Advent Wreath is very symbolic. The evergreens used for the wreath itself are a reminder of continuous life. The shaping of them into a circle reinforces that meaning. The circle is also a sign of everlasting life as well as the eternity of God.

The four candles used, three purple and one pink, mark the Sundays of Advent before Christmas. The purple candles are reminders that this should be a time of prayer and sacrifice to prepare us for the second coming of Christ. On the third Sunday, the pink candle is lit to announce *Gaudete* Sunday, a Sunday of rejoicing for Christ is coming near. With the lighting of that candle, the light has won out over the darkness (three candles lit vs. the one that remains unlit). Various meanings have been assigned to the four candles. One interpretation has each candle representing 4000 years, the Biblical time between Adam and Eve and the coming of Christ. In another interpretation, the first candle represents the patriarchs, the second the prophets, the third reminds us of John the Baptist, and the fourth of Mary, the mother of Jesus. They have also been described as the prophets' candle, the Bethlehem Candle, the shepherds' candle, and the angels' candle. A fifth white candle in the centre representing Christ can also be used. It is lit on Christmas Eve as a remembrance of Christ coming into the world. Sometimes, all the other candles of the wreath are removed and replaced with white candles on Christmas.

The Advent Wreath serves as a powerful visual reminder of the holiness of the season. The light of the candles invites us to quiet ourselves during this busy time and reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. Whether at home or at Church, it provides an invitation to wait and pray in hopeful anticipation for the coming of Christ. We are called to welcome the light of Christ into our lives.

Bodhi Day Sunday 8th December



Bodhi Day is a holiday which falls on December 8th and celebrates the day in which Siddhartha Gautama sat underneath the Bodhi tree and attained enlightenment. This one defining moment would become the central foundation upon which Buddhism has been built upon for the last 2,500 years. It is a day on which followers can renew their dedication to Buddhism; reaffirm themselves to enlightenment, compassion, and kindness to other living creatures; and also understand the relevance of this religion as it applies to the modern world.

The Enlightenment of Buddha

2500 years ago, a young Indian prince named Siddhartha Gautama abandoned his ascetic lifestyle – which he had previously adopted when he abandoned his life of luxury – sat underneath a Bodhi tree with the one goal of seeking true enlightenment. This young prince then faced an amazing inner journey that tested him to his very core and had him face off against demons – both literal and figurative ones. Following intense meditation, he was able to see how everyone, and everything was connected and therefore, reached a state of enlightenment. Enlightenment that would lead him to create the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold Path. It is this enlightenment that Bodhi Day celebrates.

The Bodhi Tree

A Bodhi tree is a very old sacred fig tree that belongs to the family *Ficus religiosa* and can be found in Bodh Gaya. In religious iconography, the leaves of this tree are almost always represented as being heart-shaped. And while the tree in Bodh Gaya is the one that is most often referred to when speaking about Buddha's enlightenment, there are other trees in other places which have a significance in Buddhism. For example, there is also a Bodhi tree in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.

The Four Truths and the Eightfold Path

The four truths are at Buddhism's central core and can be explained in the following way: Humans cling to impermanent states of being and material objects and this is called dukkha – which means non-satisfying. By trying to hold on to these things, humans end up getting caught in samsara – the cycle of life, dukkha, death, and rebirth. However, this can be stopped by following the Eightfold Path. If this path is followed, then true nirvana is possible.

Below are the Four Truths:

- **Dukkha:** The material and non-satisfying world in which we live and the things that we cling to.
- **Samudaya:** This is the origin of our dukkha which keeps us trapped in the cycle of life, death, and rebirth.
- **Nirodha:** The end of dukkha. By ending dukkha, we can escape the cycle of life, death, and rebirth.
- **Magga:** The liberation from dukkha.

The Eightfold Path are eight Buddhist practices. These are:

- **Right View:** Our actions have consequences and produce karma.
- **Right Resolve:** Adopting the Buddhist life in order to follow the path.
- **Right Speech:** Abandoning rude and hateful speech and lying.
- **Right Conduct:** Killing, injuring and stealing is prohibited.
- **Right Livelihood:** Only own what is essential to sustain life
- **Right Effort:** Beware of disharmonious and sensual thoughts.
- **Right Mindfulness:** Always be conscious of what one is doing.
- **Right Samadhi:** Practice the four stages of meditation and strive for a unification of the mind.

Celebrating Bodhi Day

Bodhi Day can be celebrated in a number of different ways. Often, Buddhist homes will have ficus religiosa tree that they decorate with beads and multi-colored lights – much in the same way that Christians decorate their Christmas trees. They will also put on reflective ornaments that represent the Three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Some people will spend the day meditate on the life of Buddha. Other people will visit stupas (shrines). In some homes, Buddhists will serve special cookies shaped like Bodhi trees or their heart-shaped leaves.

Saints of the Week

9th December – The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary *(Transferred from Sunday)*

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is the doctrine that the Virgin Mary was conceived without Original Sin, that twist in our nature that makes our will tend not to follow what it knows to be right. It was this grace that enabled Mary to give a true and considered “Yes” to the request, conveyed by the Angel Gabriel, that she would be the Mother of the Incarnate God.



The doctrine was almost universally believed over the centuries but was only formally defined as a doctrine of the Church by Pope Pius IX in 1854. Because it is so old, it is one of the Marian doctrines that Islam shares with the Catholic Church, though the theological details are very different. It was this doctrine of the Church which Our Lady revealed to St Bernadette in Lourdes in 1858 when St Bernadette asked the Lady her name. ‘Que soy era Immaculada Counceptiou’ which means, ‘I am the Immaculate Conception.’ Was the Lady’s reply.

11th December – St Damasus I, Pope



A Spaniard, St Damasus was born about 305. Joining the Roman clergy, he was elected Pope in 366, in calamitous times. He held many synods against heretics and schismatics. He promoted the cult of the martyrs. He died in 384.

12th December – Our Lady of Guadalupe

The shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, near Mexico City, is one of the most celebrated places of pilgrimage in North America. On December 9, 1531, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to an Indian convert, Juan Diego, and left with him a picture of herself impressed upon his cloak. Devotion to Mary under this title has continually increased, and today she is the Patroness of the Americas.



13th December – St Lucy, Virgin and Martyr



She was martyred in Syracuse, probably during the persecution of Diocletian (which started in 303). Devotion to her spread rapidly across practically the whole Church and her name is included in the Roman Canon of the Mass.

14th December – St John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor

St John of the Cross (1542 - 1591) was born in Fontiveros, in Spain, in about 1542. He spent some time as a Carmelite friar before, in 1568, Saint Teresa of Ávila persuaded him to pioneer the reform of the Carmelite order. This was a difficult task and a dangerous one: he suffered imprisonment and severe punishment at the hands of the Church authorities. He died at the monastery of Ubeda in Andalusia on 14 December 1591: the monks there had initially treated him as the worst of sinners, but by the time he died they had recognised his sanctity and his funeral was the occasion of a great outburst of enthusiasm.



His works include two major mystical poems – he is considered one of the great poets of the Spanish language – and detailed commentaries on them and the spiritual truths they convey. He was canonized in 1726 and declared a Doctor of the Church in 1926.

