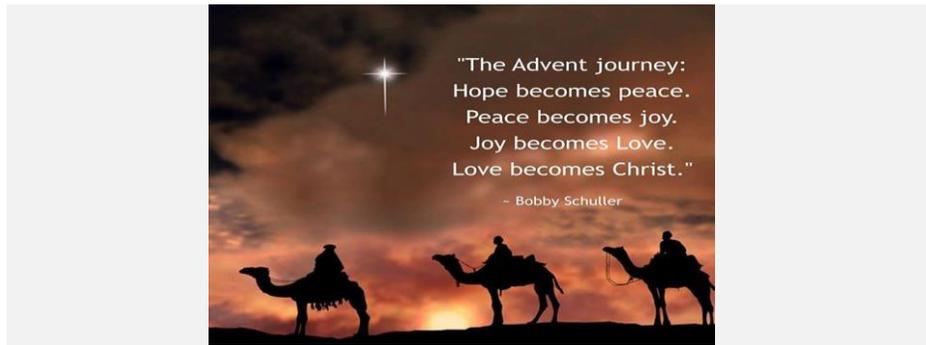




Coloma Catholic Life.



Government Consultation on Faith Engagement – Call For Evidence

Officials of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have asked for individual Catholics to respond to this open consultation on the way that the Government engages with faith communities. Deadline is 11:45pm on 11th December 2020.

The link to the online submission can be [found here](#).

Bishop Patrick Lynch SS.CC



Message on the Archdiocese of Southwark Website:

Following Bishop Patrick Lynch’s submission of his resignation to our Holy Father, Pope Francis, we have received news from Rome that this has now been accepted, allowing Bishop Pat to retire.

We are grateful to the Holy Father for granting this request and for the support of Archbishop Gugerotti, the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain. We thank the Religious Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary for the gift of Bishop Pat to the Archdiocese of Southwark, first as a priest and then as a Bishop. As he now steps back from the formal office of Auxiliary Bishop, we are delighted that he will be retiring in the Archdiocese where he has made his home and has so many friends.

Bishop Pat has served the Archdiocese with distinction and generosity as a true shepherd to clergy, religious,

Pope Francis

Prayer Intention for December:

For a Life of Prayer.

‘We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.’

Video:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-12/pope-s-december-prayer-intention-for-a-life-of-prayer.html>

Tweet:

Liturgical Year

Week: 1st Sunday of advent

Colour: Purple



and laity alike. His pastoral mission here for the past twenty-two years, the last fourteen of those as an Auxiliary Bishop, has been marked by passion for the Gospel, deep sensitivity, and a special care for migrants and ethnic chaplaincies and communities. Along with pastoral responsibility for the parishes of South East London, Bishop Pat has also exercised oversight of Catholic education, working faithfully with four Archbishops. Added to this has been his important collaboration with the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and the Holy See, in working to combat human slavery and trafficking.

Bishop Pat's joy as a disciple and a pastor, always quick to encourage and affirm, has been such a blessing to so many people. We extend to him our immense gratitude for all he has given to our Archdiocese and the Church in England and Wales. As soon as it is practically possible, we will arrange for the celebration of Mass in St George's Cathedral to mark Bishop Pat's retirement.

On hearing the news from Rome, Bishop Pat wrote: *"For the last twenty-two years I have been privileged to have served the Lord here in the Archdiocese of Southwark – in the parishes of Nunhead and South Norwood, as Vicar for Religious and as Auxiliary Bishop. Unfortunately, however, the after effect of surgery nine years ago is now limiting my ability to carry out some pastoral responsibilities. I am, therefore, grateful to our Holy Father and to Archbishop John for their understanding and for accepting my wish to retire from active ministry as an Auxiliary Bishop. As I begin the transition to retirement I give thanks for the many ways the Lord has blessed me over those years: through the kindness and wisdom of Archbishops Michael, Kevin, Peter and John; through the support and dedication of the priests, deacons and religious of the Archdiocese; and through the prayers and witness of so many lay people. Do remember me in your prayers in the weeks and months to come. I extend to you every good wish and blessing."*

We offer Bishop Pat our sincere thanks and love as he moves into a new expression and pace of ministry. We very much look forward to him continuing to be part of the life of the Archdiocese and assure him of our heartfelt prayers and support.

+ John Wilson

Archbishop of Southwark

28 November 2020

Staff Quiet Time During advent

All are welcome to come along to a quiet hour in the Chapel during Advent. Thursdays 3:15 – 4:15pm, stay for as long as you like.

Printed Christmas Card Making

Will be taking place Wednesday 9th December 3:30 – 4:30pm in Room 24B. Places are limited to 8 people. Let Mrs Hannaby know as soon as possible if you would like to participate.

Pre-Christmas On-Line Retreat at Worth Abbey



From 5pm Friday 18 December to Sunday 20 December lunchtime (with online Carol Service at 4pm on Sunday) Join the Worth Abbey community for a pre-Christmas On-Line retreat. A good way and an opportunity to reflect on how this great Christian celebration can bring hope and new meaning into our lives. This invitation is for anyone connected to Worth Abbey to come together and to:

- * Ponder on the meaning of our Advent journey.

- * Reflect on the incarnation and the joy of Christmas.
- * Engage anew in our world facing the challenges we do.

We will do all this in the context of community, prayer and worship. Services will also be on-line over Christmas with full audio-visual streaming. To take part in this retreat, please contact on: TOC@worth.org.uk There will be no charge for the retreat but donations are invited.

Advent Prayers and Christmas Gifts

Cafod have a wonderful selection of prayers to use during the season of Advent. They can be found here: <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Advent-prayers>



Also they have a beautiful Advent prayer card set which can be ordered for free here: <https://shop.cafod.org.uk/collections/frontpage/products/advent-prayer-card>

If you would like to consider giving an alternative Christmas present, giving a World Gift is a wonderful way of doing so. Ideas are to be found here: <https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/>

Religious Festivals This Week

Bodhi Day – Buddhism – 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.

Hanukkah – Judaism – 11th December



Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday, often referred to as the "Festival of Lights." Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days and nights, starting on the 25th of the Jewish month of Kislev, which may fall anywhere between late November and early December on the secular calendar. For eight nights, families say prayers and then light candles in an eight-branched candelabra called a menorah. Most families also serve special holiday foods, sing songs, play games, and give gifts including Hanukkah gelt (chocolate coins).

The Hanukkah story is based on historical events that took place in 165 BCE in Jerusalem. After the Second Temple in Jerusalem was desecrated by the Seleucid Emperor Antiochus IV and his Greco-Syrian troops, Jewish priest Mattathias and his sons rebelled. Retaking Jerusalem and the Temple, they lit the holy lamp (the menorah) but had only enough oil for one night. Miraculously, the lamp stayed lit for eight days until enough holy oil could be procured.

Hanukkah is a minor Jewish holiday as compared to the high holidays of Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur or to Purim and Passover. It became a more significant holiday in the western world because of its proximity to Christmas and the desire among more secular Jews to participate in the cultural build-up to the winter solstice; as a result, gift-giving (in addition to the traditional gift of Hanukkah gelt) is more popular in the west than in other parts of the world. While the traditions of Hanukkah are similar around the world, each country has its own unique twist. In parts of France, for example, families light a double-decker (16-candle) menorah, while in Morocco fried treats are made with fruit juice and orange zest.

Saints of the Week

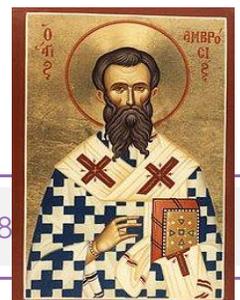
St Nicholas - 6th December



St Nicholas (c270-343AD) was bishop of Myra, in Lycia (now part of Turkey) and died about the middle of the fourth century. He has been venerated throughout the Church, especially since the 10th century. Because of his help to the poor he is the patron saint of pawnbrokers, whose insignia of three golden balls represent the three purses of gold he is said to have given secretly to a poor man who could not afford dowries for his three daughters.

St Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor - 7th December

Saint Ambrose, also known as Aurelius Ambrosius, is one of the four original doctors of the Church. He was the Bishop of Milan and became one of the most important theological figures of the 4th century. Ambrose was born around 340 AD to a Roman



Christian family. He grew up with his siblings, Satyrus and Marcellina, in Trier, Belgic Gaul (present-day Germany). It is believed by many that when Ambrose was just an infant, a swarm of bees landed on his face and left behind a drop of honey. To his father, this was a sign that Ambrose would become someone great with a wonderful sense for speaking.

After Ambrose's father died, he was educated in Rome, where he studied law, literature and rhetoric. Ambrose received a place on the council, like his father, and was made consular prefect, or the Governor, of Liguria and Emilia around 372. Ambrose's headquarters were in Milan, the then second capital of Italy. Ambrose remained Governor until 374 when he became the Bishop of Milan. After the former Bishop of Milan died, Ambrose attended the election to prevent any uproars between the Nicene Church and the Arians. While giving an address, the assembly began calling for him to become the next bishop.

Ambrose was known for his Nicene beliefs, but Arians also favoured him because he had previously shown charity in theological matters. However, being neither baptized nor trained in theology, Ambrose refused to become the next bishop. He ran and attempted to hide, but his colleague gave him up. Within a week Ambrose was baptized, ordained and duly consecrated bishop of Milan on December 7, 374.

As bishop, he donated all of his land and gave his money to the poor. This made him widely popular and often times more politically powerful than even the emperor. He studied theology with Simplician, a presbyter of Rome. Using his new education, along with his knowledge of Greek, he took the time to study the Old Testament and Greek authors. He used all of this while preaching; his abilities impressed Augustine of Hippo, who previously thought poorly of Christian preachers.

In his later years, Ambrose retired in Bologna and assisted in the transferring of saints Vitalis and Agricola's relics. Two years after Theodosius died, after he acquired the possession of the Roman empire, Ambrose died on April 4, 397. He was succeeded as bishop of Milan by Simplician. Ambrose's body remains in the church of St. Ambrogio in Milan, along with the bodies of Saints Gervase and Protase. St. Ambrose was generous to the poor. He considered them not a group of outsiders, but rather those of the united people. To him, giving to the poor was just a repayment of God's resources, which were intended for everyone equally.

Ambrose authored many of the Church's important writings and hymns. He is credited with composing the repertory Ambrosian chant, also known as the Antiphonal Chant. He is also credited with composing the hymn "Te Deum," which is believed to have been written when he baptized Augustine of Hippo. St. Ambrose is the Confessor and Doctor of the Church. He is the patron saint of beekeepers, beggars, learning and Milan.

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – 8th December

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.

St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin - 9th December



Juan Diego was born in 1474 as Cuauhtlatoatzin, a native to Mexico. He became the first Roman Catholic indigenous saint from the Americas. Following the early death of his father, Juan Diego was taken to live with his uncle. From the age of three, he was raised in line with the Aztec pagan religion, but always showed signs of having a mystical sense of life. He was recognized for his religious fervour, his respectful and gracious attitude toward the Virgin Mary and his Bishop Juan de Zumarraga, and his undying love for his ill uncle.

When a group of 12 Franciscan missionaries arrived in Mexico in 1524, he and his wife, Maria Lucia, converted to Catholicism and were among the first to be baptized in the region. Juan Diego was very committed to his new life and would walk long distances to receive religious instruction at the Franciscan mission station at Tlatelolco. On December 9, 1531, Juan Diego was in a hurry to make it to Mass and celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. However, he was stopped by the beautiful sight of a radiant woman who introduced herself, in his native tongue, as the "ever-perfect holy Mary, who has the honour to be the mother of the true God."

Mary told Juan Diego she was the mother of all those who lived in his land and asked him to make a request to the local bishop. She wanted them to build a chapel in her honour there on Tepeyac Hill, which was the site of a former pagan temple. When Juan Diego approached Bishop Juan de Zumarraga telling of what happened, he was presented with doubts and was told to give the Bishop time to reflect on the news. Later, the same day, Juan Diego encountered the Virgin Mary a second time and told her he failed in granting her request. He tried to explain to her he was not an important person, and therefore not the one for the task, but she instead he was the man she wanted. Juan Diego returned to the Bishop the next day and repeated his request, but now the Bishop asked for proof or a sign the apparition was real and truly of heaven.

Juan Diego went straight to Tepeyac and, once again, encountered the Virgin Mary. After explaining to her what the Bishop asked, she agreed and told him she'd provide him with proof on the next day, December 11. However, on the next day, Juan Diego's uncle became very sick and he was obligated to stay and care for him. Juan Diego set out the next to find a priest for his uncle. He was determined to get there quickly and didn't want to face the Virgin Mary with shame for missing the previous day's meeting.

But the Virgin Mary intercepted him and asked what was wrong. He explained his situation and promised to return after he found his uncle a priest. She looked at him and asked "No estoy yo aqui que soy tu madre?" (Am I not here, I who am your mother?) She promised him his uncle would be cured and asked him to climb to the hill and collect the flowers growing there. He obeyed and found many flowers blooming in December on the rocky land. He filled his tilma (cloak) with flowers and returned to Mary. The Virgin Mary arranged the

flowers within his cloak and told him this would be the sign he is to present to the bishop. Once Juan Diego found the bishop, he opened his cloak and the bishop was presented with a miraculous imprinted image of the Virgin Mary on the flower-filled cloak.

The next day, Juan Diego found his uncle fully healed from his illness. His uncle explained he, too, saw the Virgin Mary. She also instructed him on her desires to have a church built on Tepeyac Hill, but she also told him she wanted to be known with the title of Guadalupe. News of Juan Diego's miracle quickly spread, and he became very well-known. However, Juan Diego always remained a humble man.

The bishop first kept Juan Diego's imprinted cloak in his private chapel, but then placed it on public display in the church built on Tepeyac Hill the next year. The first miracle surrounding the cloak occurred during the procession to Tepeyac Hill when a participant was shot in the throat by an arrow shot in celebration. After being placed in front of the miraculous image of Mary, the man was healed.

Juan Diego moved into a little hermitage on Tepeyac Hill and lived a solidarity life of prayer and work. He remained there until his death on December 9, 1548, 17 years after the first apparition. News of Our Lady's apparitions caused a wave of nearly 3,000 Indians a day to convert to the Christian faith. Details of Juan Diego's experience and Mary's words moved them deeply.

During the revolutions in Mexico, at the beginning of the 20th century, nonbelievers attempted to destroy the Image with an explosion. The altar's marble steps, the flower-holders, and the basilica windows were all very damaged, but the pane of glass protecting the Image was not even cracked. Juan Diego's imprinted cloak has remained perfectly preserved from 1531 to present time. The "Basilica of Guadalupe" on Tepeyac Hill has become one of the world's most-visited Catholic shrines.

St. Juan Diego was beatified on May 6, 1990 by Pope John Paul II and canonized on July 31, 2002. His feast day is celebrated on December 9 and he is the patron saint of Indigenous people.

Our Lady of Loreto – 10th December



Tradition holds that a small house in Loreto, Italy originated in Nazareth and is the actual home of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The dimensions are very small, one-room measuring 30 x 13 feet. It is composed simply of stones and mortar found in Palestine and hand-chiseled in a style consistent of the time of Jesus. This was thought to be the home of Saints Anne and Joachim, Mary's parents. The Immaculate Conception occurred in this house. It is here that the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, and with her "Fiat" the Incarnation happened in this very house. This was also the house that the Holy Family lived in Nazareth after returning from their time in Egypt. Jesus

lived here until he was 30 and began his public ministry. Here also is where St. Joseph died.

Since apostolic times this house was a place of pilgrimage and worship. In 313 AD Constantine built a basilica around the Holy House of Nazareth to protect it. The basilica was destroyed by the Saracens in 1090, but the

Holy House was untouched. Another basilica was built during the twelfth century but this was destroyed by Moslems in 1263 during the Crusades. The Holy House was again unharmed. When the Christians were driven completely out of the Holy Land in 1291, the Holy House disappeared from Nazareth and suddenly appeared in modern day Croatia. It is said that angels transported it. The house was again moved (by angels) on December 10, 1294 (hence the date of the new Optional Memorial), due to the Muslim invasion of Albania. The house landed first in Recanti, Italy, but soon after moved for a third time to its present location in Loreto, Italy.

Loreto is the final home for this Holy House. There is a large basilica containing the house. The Holy House is covered by marble on the outside facade, but on the inside is the original humble stone and mortar walls. The east wall contains an altar with the inscription: "*Hic Verbum Caro Factum Est*" (Here the Word was made flesh). Above the altar is a statue of Our Lady of Loreto. The current statue is a replica of an ancient one made from cedar of Lebanon, one of the so-called "Black Madonnas" due to the burning of candles and incense for hundreds of years. The original statue was destroyed by fire and replaced by another similar statue made from cedar from the Vatican in the 1920s.

St Damasus I, Pope – 11th December



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.

Our Lady of Guadalupe – 12th December

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.

