

**Sunday, Dec 28, 2025**

### Take notice of the poor among us

On the walls of the North American headquarters of the Divine Word Missionaries there is a painting from China that depicts the Holy Family living as Chinese peasants. What's especially interesting is that the painting shows them to be *poor*. In their small hut some paint is peeling from the walls, clothes are patched, and the table has seen better days. While Saint Joseph was probably not desperately poor, he and his family belonged to the vast majority of people who were outside the small elite who controlled most of the wealth and pulled the strings in ancient Palestine. So when Jesus talked about bringing Good News to the poor, he was talking about a whole lot of people, including his own family. What can you do to uplift the poor in your own family and beyond?

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14; Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17; Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 (17). *"Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus."*

**Monday, Dec 29, 2025**

### Boundaries will set us free

The Russian composer Igor Stravinsky once wrote, "The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees one's self." It may sound paradoxical, but boundaries are necessary in life as well as in art. They provide a structure, a space in which we can most fully explore what it means to live and work and create. Far from restricting our freedom, limits actually give us our freedom. How is this so? Recall a time when you gave yourself unlimited time to finish a project. Did you? Our loving creator gave us commandments for this very reason. They are the constraints that allow us to learn fully who we are—and who God is.

FIFTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

1 John 2:3-11; Luke 2:22-35 (202). *"The way we may be sure that we know Jesus is to keep his commandments."*

**Tuesday, Dec 30, 2025**

### A matter of importance

"The world and its enticement are passing away." These words from scripture evoke the dualism so much favored by certain New Testament writers, reflecting a mode of thought in which there continues a never-ending battle between good and evil, the world of darkness and the world of light. Christians believe that the battle is won, the world is redeemed. Yet anyone who has lived long enough knows that redeemed as "the world" may be, it is foolish to expect that worldly things provide us with all we need. This is what Saint Paul means when he speaks of the "things that really matter." We, too, in moments of clarity—after a close call with illness or death—come to recognize what is most important to us. And they are rarely the things that occupy most of our time, energy, or worry. Take time today to reflect on what truly matters in your life.

SIXTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

1 John 2:12-17; Luke 2:36-40 (203). *"Do not love the world or the things of the world. ... the world and its enticement are passing away."*

**Wednesday, Dec 31, 2025**

### In with the new

Just before midnight most people will be awake and anticipating the end of one year and the beginning of a new one. But when

scripture talks about endings and beginnings, it means more than putting up a new calendar. The last hour means a new world is about to begin. God has done something new in Jesus. We are reborn to new life through him. "Consider all the past as nothing," says Saint Francis de Sales, "and say, like David; 'Now I begin to love my God.'" How will you begin to love your God tonight, tomorrow, and every day?

SEVENTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

1 John 2:18-21; John 1:1-18 (204). *"It is the last hour."*

**Thursday, Jan 01, 2026**

### Peace offering

In a world torn by hateful discourse, violence, and war, we have been given the Prince of Peace to show us how to live in harmony. God's peace begins within us and then extends to our families, workplaces, schools, churches, marketplaces, and halls of government. We can begin spreading peace with a simple prayer, like the one found in the Book of Numbers: "The LORD bless you and keep you! The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace!" With our hearts set on God's peace we can begin to take steps to resolve the small and large conflicts in our lives. What a welcome gift that would be at the start of this new year.

OCTAVE DAY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD; SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21 (18). *"When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son,"*

**Friday, Jan 02, 2026**

### Divine revelations

In sin we reject part of our humanity—the humanity of the Garden of Eden, where there is no shame or guilt but an open acceptance of God's love. Fortunately for us, God meets our rejection by continually offering to restore our humanity and share in his divinity. As Saint Basil the Great points out, "It did not suffice God merely to call us back to life, but he has also granted us the dignity of His Godhead." The love God holds for us is so unchangeable it not only brings us back from death and sin but also shows us a path to sharing in God's divinity. That is a truth worth remembering.

MEMORIAL OF BASIL THE GREAT AND GREGORY NAZIANZEN, BISHOPS, DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH

1 John 2:22-28; John 1:19-28 (205). *"Let what you heard from the beginning remain in you."*

**Saturday, Jan 03, 2026**

### What's in a name?

In the gospels the name of Jesus carries lots of weight. God gave Jesus his name, which means "salvation," before Jesus was conceived. People healed in the name of Jesus. Jesus was present to those who gathered in his name. For his disciples their mission was to proclaim his name to all nations and bring the love of Christ to the world. Thus, living in the name said who you were, what you believed, and what you were to do. "Jesus is the way that you must walk, and the truth that you must believe, and the life that you must live," says Saint John Eudes. Consider what you can do each day to live more fully in the name of Jesus.

MEMORIAL OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS

1 John 2:29-3:6; John 1:29-34 (206). *"Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God."*

*Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time*



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