

# Our Lady Queen of Peace Church (since 1930)

## SHRINE TO INFANT JESUS of PRAGUE (since 2003)



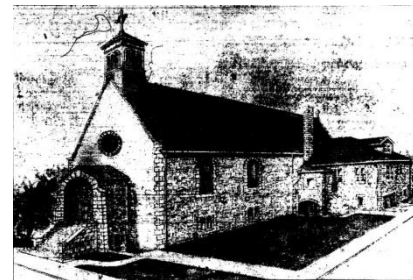
PASTOR Rev. John Domotor  
 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Carol Molloy  
 PARISH MUSIC DIRECTOR: Ryan Narciso

PARISH WEBSITE: [www.QOP.CA](http://www.QOP.CA)

[www.LATINMASSVICTORIA.COM](http://www.LATINMASSVICTORIA.COM)

[www.QOP.CA](http://www.QOP.CA)

[www.VICTORIAORDINARIATE.COM](http://www.VICTORIAORDINARIATE.COM)



TRADITIONAL LATIN Mass: Rev. John Domotor  
 HUNGARIAN Mass: Rev. John Domotor  
 ORDINARIATE Mass: Rev. Lee Kenyon

<p align="center"><b>IMPORTANT: IN THE HOSPITAL?</b></p> <p><i>If you or family member is hospitalize or is going to hospital and would like to be visited by your PARISH PRIEST, Please call the PARISH OFFICE to make this request.</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ONLY!</b></p> <p><i>After office hours including weekends, holidays or during the night, you can call:</i></p> <p align="right"><b>☎250.889.3761</b></p>
---	--

**OUR LADY QUEEN of PEACE, 849 OLD ESQUIMALT Road, VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA V9A 4W9**

**MONDAYS: PARISH OFFICE IS CLOSED** ☎ 250.384.3884  
**Parish Office OPEN TUESDAY - FRIDAY 9.00 - 12.00 & 1.00 - 4.15** **Contact e-mail:office@qop.ca** **Fax:250.384.3664**

<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	<b>12:00</b>	<b>2:00 &amp; 4:30</b> except 1 <sup>st</sup> Sun. monthly <b>3:00 &amp; 5:30</b> only 1 <sup>st</sup> Sun. monthly	<b>2:00</b> on 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month
	<b>HOLY MASS</b>	<b>TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS</b>	<b>ORDINARIATE OF THE CHAIR OF SAINT PETER</b>	<b>HUNGARIAN MASS</b>

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
ORDINARIATE OF THE CHAIR OF SAINT PETER	9:30 am	No Mass	9:30 am	9:30 am	9:30 am	9:30 am & Rosary-10am Adoration-10:30-11:30am
TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS	-	-	-	-	8:30 am	-
ROSARY	-	11:30	11:30	11:30	11:30	-
WEEKDAY MASS *1 <sup>st</sup> SATURDAY of the month <b>HOLY MASS</b>	-	12:10	12:10	12:10	12:10	12:10* 5:00pm
<b>CONFESSION:</b> Please ring the bell, enter when green light is on * 1 <sup>st</sup> SATURDAY of the month	-	11:30	11:30	11:30	11:30	4:00 – 4:45 3:00 -4:00*
Devotion to <b>MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP</b>	-	-	12:45	-	-	-
Devotion to <b>INFANT JESUS OF PRAGUE</b>	-	-	-	12:45	-	-

**IMPORTANT: IN THE HOSPITAL?** *If you or family member is hospitalize or is going to hospital and would like to be visited by your PARISH PRIEST, Contact PARISH OFFICE: 250-384-3884*

**HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ONLY!** *After office hours including weekends, holidays or during the night, you can call: ☎250.889.3761*

**The CWL:** meets monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> WEDNESDAY after the Noon Mass  
 PRESIDENT: ELSIE LAMBTON  
 No meetings in July & August

**KNIGHTS of COLUMBUS:**  
**Contact:** Don Lambton ☎ 250.995.1531  
 e-mail: lambton@shaw.ca

**KEEPING IN CONTACT:** We extend our hands and hearts in Christian fellowship to you here, celebrating with us, whether long time residents or newly arrived in the Parish. We thank God that you are with us. If we may assist you, please fill out the form below and place in the collection basket or mail to the PARISH OFFICE (address on top) . Please mark the proper BOX (below on the left side).

<input type="checkbox"/> New Parishioner <input type="checkbox"/> Have moved here is new address <input type="checkbox"/> I am home-bound and would like someone to visit me <input type="checkbox"/> I am going to be in the hospital, please call on me	<p><b>NAME:</b> _____</p> <p><b>ADDRESS:</b> _____</p> <p>☎ HOME ..... ☎ WORK .....</p> <p><b>e-mail:</b> _____@_____</p>
--	---

## 'Legacies'

Our Lady Queen of Peace acknowledges with gratitude past legacies which we use to maintain the integrity of our Church.

Please include us in your 'LAST WILL', how will we survive without it?

Legacies are a way of providing assurance that the parish has income or savings in the event of unforeseen emergencies.

The monthly 'Building Fund and Collection' pays for maintenance/replacement items.

### Sacramental Information

**Baptism:** at Our Lady Queen of Peace you must call the office at least 3 months in advance to arrange an appointment with the Pastor. It is assumed that the family has Our Lady Queen of Peace parish connection and practices the faith by attending Sunday Mass on a weekly basis. You may meet with the Pastor and take the course even if your child has not yet been born. **Parents are expected to participate in the Baptismal preparation.** At least one Godparent or both must be baptized and confirmed and are practicing Catholics. **Non-parishioners are required to have a Letter of Recommendation from your Pastor to have your child Baptized in our parish.**

**Marriage:** at Our Lady Queen of Peace because the Church is deeply concerned about each marriage, couples are asked to give a minimum of six months' notice prior to the intended date of their wedding. Church policy requires that marriages be performed in your home parish – unless you are registered and attend elsewhere.

**Funeral:** at Our Lady Queen of Peace individual arrangements with a priest. Begin by calling the parish office.

### To Report Sexual Abuse to an Independent Agency

Click the button below

Report Sexual Abuse

### Vancouver Island Crisis-Line

The Vancouver Island Crisis Society is contracted by **Island Health**. We are a registered non-profit agency whose services include:

**24-hour crisis lines: 1-888-494-3888**

**Crisis Text Services: 250-800-3806**

(from your mobile) 6pm - 10pm - 7 days a week

**Crisis Chat Services: 6pm - 10pm - 7 days a week**

We work in partnership with Island Health to provide public access to Mental Health & Substance Use services in the communities administered by Island Health.

### A National Indian Residential School Crisis Line

A national Indian Residential School Crisis Line has been set up by the Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS) to provide support for former students and those affected. **People can access emotional and crisis referral services by calling the 24-hour line at 1-866-925-4419**

## 'Mass Intentions'

Nov 30	TUESDAY	
Dec 1	WEDNESDAY	
Dec 2	THURSDAY	
Dec 3	FRIDAY	
Dec 4	SATURDAY	
Dec 7	TUESDAY	†Lucy Zawrot Marilyn Jarczak
Dec 8	WEDNESDAY	†Reine Berns Alex Berns
Dec 9	THURSDAY	
Dec 10	FRIDAY	
Dec 11	SATURDAY	
Dec 14	TUESDAY	
Dec 15	WEDNESDAY	Val De Vera Lydia De Vera
Dec 16	THURSDAY	
Dec 17	FRIDAY	†Joseph, Raymond Malley Sandra Malley
Dec 18	SATURDAY	†Felipe Espineli Joey Espineli

**Please remember the following persons who are ill in your prayers:** Ann VanNoordt, Marge Haake, Christine Stornebrink, Charles Lennaghan, Connie Lerner,

### Please Note:

If you suffer from Celiac disease, we are able to offer a low-gluten Host. Please come to the sacristy before Mass and inform the priest.

### Respect Life Ministry

If you are expecting a child and are feeling confused; if you are thinking that there is no way out of this situation for you; if you want to talk to someone, call, text 250.812.0087 email: [respectlifem@gmail.com](mailto:respectlifem@gmail.com)

### Online Marriage Preparation Course

Marriage Preparation Course online, and couples can work through the program at their own pace. Cost is \$125 per couple, and the price also includes an online individualized couple assessment as well as a liturgy planning guide. More information <https://bit.ly/3hgzRGW> also on the Diocese website or contact the Diocese of Victoria at: 250-479-1331

### New Collection Envelopes - 2022

Please pickup your "2022 Sunday Collection Boxes" in the Vestibule. If you are new to the parish and would like to have a box of pre-numbered collection envelopes, please contact the parish office at 250-384-3884 or email: [office@gop.ca](mailto:office@gop.ca)

### Diocesan Livestream Mass

Please note the following changes to the schedule in Dec.

**Wed., Dec. 1 to Fri., Dec. 3:** Livestream cancelled

**Sun., Dec. 5:** Livestream at 9 am  
from St. Patrick's, Campbell River

**Sun., Dec. 12:** Livestream at 9 am  
from St. Rose of Lima, Sooke

**Mon., Dec. 13:** Livestream at 6:30 pm  
from St. Rose of Lima, Sooke

**Tues., Dec. 14:** Livestream at 9 am  
from St. Rose of Lima, Sooke

**Wed., Dec. 15:** Livestream at 9 am  
from St. Rose of Lima, Sooke

**Fri., Dec. 17:** Livestream cancelled

**Fri., Dec. 24:** Livestream at 5 pm  
**from Port McNeill**

**Sat., Dec. 25:** Livestream at 11 am  
from St. Andrew's Cathedral

**Fri., Dec. 31:** Livestream at 5 pm  
from St. Andrew's Cathedral

**Sat., Jan. 1:** Livestream at 10 am  
from St. Andrew's Cathedral

**On all other days, the regular schedule is in effect:**

**Monday to Friday: 7:00 pm** Bishop Gary

**Sunday: 9:30 am** Bishop Gary

To access the Bishop's Masses:

<http://www.youtube.com/c/RCDVictoriaLiveOne>

Saturday Masses can be accessed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/standrewscathedral>

### Feast of St. Andrew

On **Tues., Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>**, St. Andrew's Cathedral will celebrate our Patronal Festival with Mass at 12:00 pm and at 7:00 pm and all are welcome. For the evening Mass, entry to the Cathedral is via our View Street door.

### The Arrival of Rachel's Vineyard

Please note that Rachel's Vineyard will be coming to our Diocese in the near future. This ministry is a safe place for people to renew, rebuild and redeem hearts broken by abortion. Weekend retreats offer a supportive, confidential and non-judgmental environment where women and men can express, release and reconcile painful post-abortive emotions to begin the process of restoration, renewal and healing. For information please contact Nicola at: [nicolamgallagher0123@gmail.com](mailto:nicolamgallagher0123@gmail.com)

### Catholic Women's League

**Hello and Welcome to all women of the parish!**

This is an invitation to all of our women parishioners. (16 years and older)

**Next meeting is Wed. Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm**

**Our membership fee is \$30.00 yearly.**

For more information please contact:

**President:** Elsie Lambton – 250.995.1531 or

**Past President:** Bertha Landrie – 250.389.1307 or

**CWL Organization Convenor:** Carol Molloy 250.384.3884  
(parish office)

We will be collecting for flowers **in memory of your loved ones or special Intention the Poinsettia's** that decorate our beautiful Sanctuary yearly.

### Advent Mission -Sacred Heart Parish

The Mission/Retreat:

**Tues., Dec. 14 – 6pm**

Adoration following by Benediction at 8pm

**Wed. Dec. 15 – 6pm**

**Thurs., Dec. 16 - 6 pm**

Reconciliation Service (Confessions) 8pm Mass

### Knights of Columbus 1256 - 60th Annual Appeal

Due to COVID-19, the Charity Appeal Program for this year continues to be online. Funds raised under this program are donated to a variety of Knights of Columbus charitable causes at the provincial and local Victoria levels. Win \$135,000 in prizes including a \$60,000 Grand Prize!

**Sales run to Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022**, main draw that evening at 7:15pm. **To purchase your ticket online, click here:**  
<https://kofcdraw.net/c1256>

### Island Catholic Schools - WE'RE HIRING!

Are you looking for a work environment that makes for a great day? Look no further ~ Island Catholic Schools is recruiting! We are in search of enthusiastic people who are certified, talented, love what they do and wish to work in vibrant school environments! We are currently searching for **teachers on call**, **educational assistants** and **out of school care workers**. Island Catholic Schools consists of five schools: St. John Paul II in Port Alberni, Queen of Angels in Duncan, as well as St. Joseph's, St. Patrick's and St. Andrews Regional High School in Victoria!

Contact us today! - Tel.: 250-727-6893

Please help spread the word! Share this ad with your friends, acquaintances and even post it to your Facebook page! If **you** are interested in joining one of our vibrant teams, please use this link <https://www.cisdv.bc.ca/employment-opportunities.php>

### St. Peter's Parish – Nanaimo,

**Job Opportunity** for a Pastoral Office Coordinator (Office Manager) position for St Peter's parish. It's a full-time position with benefits. All applications and inquiries can be submitted to [hayre@rcdvictoria.org](mailto:hayre@rcdvictoria.org). The competition will remain open until the position is filled.

### Sunday 2022 Missals

The new Sunday Missals have arrived. They will be available in the Vestibule or parish office at \$4.00 each.

### Hospital Chaplain

Hospital chaplain Fr. Sean Flynn celebrates Mass at **6:30am Mass daily**, except Tues. & Sun. **at St. Joseph the Worker parish.** All are welcome

### St. Andrew's High School

A special opportunity has arisen in the *Building on Success* campaign to fundraise for the addition of the Performing Arts Wing at St. Andrew's Regional High School. As we approach the season of giving, please consider supporting this campaign. Links to pledge to the school as well as a link to the various Donor Recognition levels,

[Building-on-Success-Campaign-Pledge-FINALV2.pdf](#)  
[Gift-Recognition---Building-On-Success.pdf](#)

## 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent - Sun. Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>

### **What is Advent?**

The word **Advent** is from the Latin *adventus* for "coming" and is associated with the four weeks of preparation for Christmas. **Advent** always contains four Sundays, beginning on the Sunday nearest the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle, (November 30) and continuing until December 24. It blends together a penitential spirit, very similar to Lent, a liturgical theme of preparation for the Second and Final Coming of the Lord, called the Parousia, and a joyful theme of getting ready for the Bethlehem event. Since the 900s **Advent** has been considered the beginning of the Church year.

This does not mean that **Advent** is the most important time of the year. Easter has always had this honor. The traditional color of **Advent** is purple or violet which symbolizes the penitential spirit. Religious traditions associated with **Advent** express all these themes.

**Advent Wreath** – “Customarily the **Advent Wreath** is constructed of a circle of evergreen branches into which are inserted four candles (**advent candles**). According to tradition, three of the candles are violet and the fourth is rose. However, four violet or white candles (**advent candles**) may also be used”. The rose candle is lit the third Sunday of Advent, for this color anticipates and symbolizes the Christmas joy announced in the first word of the Entrance Antiphon "Rejoice" (Latin, *Gaudete*). For this reason the Third Sunday is also called *Gaudete Sunday*, and rose color vestments are permitted.

The Advent Wreath represents the long time when people lived in spiritual darkness, waiting for the coming of the Messiah, the Light of the world. Each year in Advent people wait once again in darkness for the coming of the Lord, His historical coming in the mystery of Bethlehem, His final coming at the end of time, and His special coming in every moment of grace. During Advent, family and friends can gather around the Advent Wreath lighting the appropriate candle(s), read from the daily Advent meditation and sing songs. (EWTN - Fr. Hal Stockert, Fishnet)



### **Fri. Dec. 24: ‘The Nativity of the Lord’**

**SJHN Ordinariate Mass** 9:30 a.m.  
**Family Mass (English):** 7:00 p.m.  
**SJHN Ordinariate Mass** 10:00 p.m.

### **Sat. Dec. 25: ‘The Nativity of the Lord’**

**SJHN Ordinariate Mass** 8:00 a.m.  
**Mass (English):** 10:00 a.m.  
**Traditional Latin Mass** 12:00 noon  
**Hungarian Mass** 2:00 p.m.

### **Sun. Dec. 26:**

#### **‘The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph’**

**SJHN Ordinariate Mass** 8:00 a.m.  
**Mass (English):** 10:00 a.m.  
**Traditional Latin Mass** 12:00 noon  
**SJHN Ordinariate Mass** 2:00 p.m.  
**SJHN Ordinariate Mass** 4:30 p.m.

**Mon. Dec. 27: NO MASS**

**Tues. Dec. 28: NO MASS**

**Wed: Dec. 29: 12:10 noon**

**Thurs. Dec. 30: 12:10 noon**

### **Fri. Dec. 31: ‘Anticipated Sunday Mass’**

#### **‘The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God’**

**Mass(English): 5:00 p.m.**

**SJHN Ordinariate:**

**Exposition & Benediction - 11:00 a.m. to Midnight**

### **Sat. Jan. 1:**

#### **‘The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God’**

**Mass: (English)** 10:00 a.m.  
**Traditional Latin Mass** 12:00 noon  
**SJHN Ordinariate Mass** 2:00 p.m.

### **Sun. Jan. 2: ‘Epiphany of the Lord’**

**Mass (English):** 10:00 a.m.  
**Traditional Latin Mass** 12:00 noon  
**SJHN Ordinariate Mass** 2:00 p.m.

### **Christmas-Office Hours**

**Closed: Fri. Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> to Fri. Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>**

***“May the Prince of Peace and His Holy Mother  
keep you in their care this Christmas and  
throughout the New Year”***

**See you next year, keep smiling.  
Merry Christmas & a Blessed New Year  
Parish Office - Carol M.**



## DIOCESAN NEWS & EVENTS

### Journey through Advent 2021: Towards Healing & Reconciliation

What are you doing for Advent this year? The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops invites you to join in Journey through Advent 2021 – a series of reflections for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Catholics, as we continue to walk together towards healing and reconciliation.

The Journey series started on the Solemnity of Christ the King and will continue through each of the four Sundays of Advent. Every week, the CCCB will be releasing a reflection on the Gospel Reading for that Sunday. Each reflection is based one of the five essential stages of reconciliation: examen, confession, repentance, making amends, and reconciliation.

The reflections, given by the Most Reverend Donald Bolen, Archbishop of Regina, will be available both as videos and in text form on the CCCB website. So far, the first two have been released: Early Missionaries and the Encounter of Worldviews; and The Spirit of the Treaties.

The CCCB hopes that Journey through Advent 2021 will inform Catholics and encourage discussion and prayerful accompaniment in preparation for the Indigenous Delegation, which will be travelling to Rome to meet with Pope Francis from December 17 to 20, 2021. The CCCB also hopes these reflections will assist the faithful in preparing for Pope Francis' apostolic journey to Canada.

As Archbishop Bolen shares in his second reflection, "the path God invites us to walk on is a path of truth". Be with us, Lord, as we walk this journey together.



#### Advent Reflections

Each week, beginning on Sunday, 21 November 2021, the Solemnity of Christ the King, the CCCB will release a video recording of a

Bishop reflecting on the Gospel Reading for each Sunday of Advent. This year's reflections were inspired by the Indigenous Delegation travelling to Rome to meet with Pope Francis from 17-20 December 2021. Each reflection is based one of the five essential stages of reconciliation: examen, confession, repentance, reparation (making amends), and reconciliation. It is likewise hoped these reflections will assist the faithful, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, in preparing for Pope Francis' eventual apostolic journey to Canada. The videos were developed under the auspices of the Bishops Working Group on Coordinating Indigenous Initiatives.

The videos can be now accessed on the CCCB website at the following links:

In English: <https://www.cccb.ca/evangelization-catechesis-catholic-education/video-resources/journey-through-advent/>

In French: <https://www.cccb.ca/fr/evangelisation-catechese-et-education/ressources-video/cheminer-ensemble-durant-lavent/>

## Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception - Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>

Novena begins on Mon., Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>

<https://www.praymorenovenas.com/immaculate-conception-novena>

What is the Immaculate Conception and how do we celebrate it? December 8th, is the feast of the Immaculate Conception. It celebrates an important point of Catholic teaching. Here are 7 things you need to know about the teaching and the way we celebrate it.

**1. Who does the Immaculate Conception refer to?**

There's a popular idea that it refers to Jesus' conception by the Virgin Mary. It doesn't. Instead, it refers to the special way in which the Virgin Mary herself was conceived. This conception was not virginal. (That is, she had a human father as well as a human mother.) But it was special and unique in another way. . . .

**2. What is the Immaculate Conception?**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains it this way: **490** To become the mother of the Saviour, Mary "was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role." The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as "full of grace". In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give the free assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was necessary that she be wholly borne by God's grace.

**491** Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854: The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.

**3. Does this mean Mary never sinned?**

Yes. Because of the way redemption was applied to Mary at the moment of her conception, she not only was protected from contracting original sin but also personal sin. The Catechism explains:

**493** The Fathers of the Eastern tradition call the Mother of God "the All-Holy" (Panagia), and celebrate her as "free from any stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature". By the grace of God Mary remained free of every personal sin her whole life long. "Let it be done to me according to your word. . ."

**4. Does this mean Mary didn't need Jesus to die on the Cross for her?**

No. What we've already quoted states that Mary was immaculately conceived as part of her being "full of grace" and thus "redeemed from the moment of her conception" by "a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race."

The Catechism goes on to state:

**492** The "splendour of an entirely unique holiness" by which Mary is "enriched from the first instant of her conception" comes wholly from Christ: she is "redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son".

The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person “in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” and chose her “in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love”.

**508** From among the descendants of Eve, God chose the Virgin Mary to be the mother of his Son. “Full of grace”, Mary is “the most excellent fruit of redemption” (SC 103): from the first instant of her conception, she was totally preserved from the stain of original sin and she remained pure from all personal sin throughout her life.

**5. How does this make Mary a parallel of Eve?**

Adam and Eve were both created immaculate—without original sin or its stain. They fell from grace, and through them mankind was bound to sin. Christ and Mary were also conceived immaculate. They remained faithful, and through them mankind was redeemed from sin. Christ is thus the New Adam, and Mary the New Eve.

The Catechism notes:

**494** . . . As St. Irenaeus says, “Being obedient she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race.” Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert. . . : “The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith.” Comparing her with Eve, they call Mary “the Mother of the living” and frequently claim: “Death through Eve, life through Mary.”

**6. How does this make Mary an icon of our own destiny?**  
Those who die in God's friendship and thus go to heaven will be freed from all sin and stain of sin. We will thus all be rendered "immaculate" (Latin, *immaculatus* = "stainless") if we remain faithful to God.

Even in this life, God purifies us and trains us in holiness and, if we die in his friendship but imperfectly purified, he will purify us in purgatory and render us immaculate. By giving Mary this grace from the first moment of her conception, God showed us an image of our own destiny. He shows us that this is possible for humans by his grace.

John Paul II noted:

In contemplating this mystery in a Marian perspective, we can say that "Mary, at the side of her Son, is the most perfect image of freedom and of the liberation of humanity and of the universe. It is to her as Mother and Model that the Church must look in order to understand in its completeness the meaning of her own mission"

(Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Libertatis conscientia*, 22 March, 1986, n. 97; cf. *Redemptoris Mater*, n. 37).

Let us fix our gaze, then, on Mary, the icon of the pilgrim Church in the wilderness of history but on her way to the glorious destination of the heavenly Jerusalem, where she [the Church] will shine as the Bride of the Lamb, Christ the Lord [General Audience, March 14, 2001].

**7. Was it necessary for God to make Mary immaculate at her conception so that she could be Jesus' mother?**

No. The Church only speaks of the Immaculate Conception as something that was "fitting," something that made Mary a "fit habitation" (i.e., suitable dwelling) for the Son of God,

not something that was necessary. Thus in preparing to define the dogma, Pope Pius IX stated:

And hence they [the Church Fathers] affirmed that the Blessed Virgin was, through grace, entirely free from every stain of sin, and from all corruption of body, soul and mind; that she was always united with God and joined to him by an eternal covenant; that she was never in darkness but always in light; and that, therefore, she was entirely a fit habitation for Christ, not because of the state of her body, but because of her original grace. . . .

For it was certainly not fitting that this vessel of election should be wounded by the common injuries, since she, differing so much from the others, had only nature in common with them, not sin. In fact, it was quite fitting that, as the Only-Begotten has a Father in heaven, whom the Seraphim extol as thrice holy, so he should have a Mother on earth who would never be without the splendor of holiness [Ineffabilis Deus].

### St. Nicholas

#### By Joseph Pronechen

St. Nicholas, one of the one endearing saints revered by Western and Eastern rite Catholics and Orthodox, has many fascinating facts connected to his life that we should be aware of to keep Christmas in our heart throughout the year.

The saint's name Nicholas is of Greek origin and means "victor of people."

Nicholas was born in Patara in A.D. 270 and served as Bishop of Myra, both seaport towns off Turkey's southern coast where he lived all his life (and died in 345). His remains ended up in another seaport town — Bari, in the heel of Italy's boot. The Feast of the Translation of the Holy Relics St. Nicholas from Myra to Bari in 1087 is celebrated in Italy to this day on May 9 in the basilica there built as a shrine to him and completed in 1089.

But Venetian sailors who really stole the bones of Nicholas from his tomb in Myra then left behind some fragments, and in 1100 went back to Myra to collect the remaining fragments. Those fragments are enshrined in the church of St. Nicholas on the Lido, Venice, Italy.

A pure liquid known as the Manna of St. Nicholas (or St. Nicholas Manna) has flowed from his bones for 17 centuries. Each May 9th on the Feast of the Translation of the Relics of St. Nicholas, a Dominican priest siphons the manna of St. Nicholas into a glass vial. The manna is traditionally used to bless the Christian faithful.

When Nicholas was born, his parents were serving the needs of the sick. They contracted the same disease as the sick and died. Being the only child, he inherited everything.

St. Nicholas's anonymous gift-giving originated in his hometown of Patara in Turkey. According to ancient tradition, to deliver a destitute family of a widower father and his three daughters, who their father was considering to sell into slavery, out of dire poverty, the young Nicholas secretly threw three bags of gold coins through their window on three consecutive nights. His anonymous nocturnal gift-giving has continued in many countries to today, including being translated into Santa's visits.

Saint Nicholas's compassion for the poor, marginalized and, in particular, children, and especially providing aid

anonymously to those in greatest need, became so legendary that it never faded over the centuries, but inspired others, and was imitated especially around Christmas in many countries.

He got to be Santa Claus thanks to a corruption of the Dutch way of referring to him as “Sinterklaas.” The Dutch brought “Sinterklaas” with them to North America in 1621 when they founded New Amsterdam on the tip of Manhattan. English speaking settlers later corrupted the name, which evolved into “Santa Claus.”

St. Nicholas is sometimes referred to as the “boy bishop” because he was consecrated Bishop of Myra at the tender age of 30.

He was one of the 318 bishops participating in the Council of Nicaea, the First Ecumenical Council of the Church, in A.D. 325. The main purpose was to resolve confusion over the nature of the Son in his relationship to the Father caused by the Arian heresy. The Council of Nicaea formulated the Nicene Creed which outlines basic Christian belief that the Son is “consubstantial” with the Father — the Creed we pray at Sunday Mass to this day.

There were times when Nicholas was not hidden or anonymous in helping the afflicted and those suffering unjustly. There are records of him intervening to save three men falsely condemned to be executed by a corrupt magistrate who accepted a bribe. Fearlessly, Nicholas walked up to the executioner and grabbed the sword from his hand. Hence, he was a protector of the innocent.

12. The inspiration of St. Nicholas led French nuns during the Middle Ages to start the tradition of bringing anonymous gifts under the cover of night to needy families and their children on Dec. 5, St. Nicholas Eve. The next morning, the feast of St. Nicholas, the poor families would wake to discover food, clothing, food treats and some modest money assistance.

When the poor tried to find out who their benefactor was, they got the answer, “It must have been St. Nicholas.”

St. Nicholas’s simple act of anonymously delivering those three bags of gold coins that night long ago became an annual tradition that spread rapidly throughout Christian Europe. Since the beloved bishop Nicholas was the Patron Saint of Children, the gifts weren’t limited to the poor, but included good girls and boys.

Candy canes have been a staple in America and are associated Santa Claus. Why? They really derive from the crozier, the bishop’s staff, of Sinterklaas, or St. Nicholas.

We shouldn’t forget that St. Nicholas spent seven long, hard years, tortured and imprisoned for his faith in Christ under the Diocletian Persecution, until the first Christian emperor, Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313 that gave religious liberty to all Christians.

How did St. Nicholas get to Western Europe in the first place? The Emperor of Constantinople’s niece Princess Theophano is considered by historians to be the person most responsible for bringing St. Nicholas to the heart of the Western Roman Empire. She brought a mosaic icon of St. Nicholas for her future husband, Emperor Otto II, as a wedding gift when they were married by Pope John XIII on Apr. 14, 972, in old Saint Peter’s Basilica, Rome.

The holy icon of St. Nicholas that she brought with her for the gift is now kept at St. Johann Baptist Church in Burtscheid, Aachen, Germany.

While the “Christmas Spirit is commonly associated with St. Nicholas, Christians should recognize that the Spirit of Christmas is actually the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity: the Holy Spirit. Because a humble maiden in Nazareth was open to the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14); a reality that was proclaimed by “a multitude of the heavenly host” (Lk. 2:13) on that first Christmas.”

“Faith-filled ‘St. Nicholases’ and ‘Santa Clauses’ should recognize that we too must be open to the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit in order that God may take on a human nature within each one of us who have been ‘clothed with Christ’ (Galatians 3:27) at Baptism: ‘No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us’ ( 1 John 4:12).

“May the self-same Holy Spirit, Who animated the life of the historic figure of St. Nicholas of Myra, illuminate the hearts of all ‘St. Nicks’ who are also called to reveal the same hope, joy, peace and love to a despairing world: ‘Let your light shine before others that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven’ (Matthew 5:16).