

# Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

December 2025

St. Mary's Church and St. Rita's Church  
Rev. Peter DiTomasso, MSSCC, Pastor

## One Minute Meditations

### St. Lucy

St. Lucy was born into 4th century pagan Syracuse, Sicily, and is one of the most famous martyrs of the early Church. Her family arranged for her to marry a pagan, but since she had consecrated her virginity to Christ, St. Lucy refused him. Offended, he betrayed her to the authorities for her Faith. She was questioned and tortured, but all attempts to discourage her failed. She was finally executed. She is the patron saint against eye problems.

### The three comings of Christ

This season of Advent, we celebrate the three comings of Christ: in glory at the end of time, in time when He was born in Bethlehem, and His coming in our own lives and hearts. Advent is a time of "busy stillness," of preparing and waiting, like Mary certainly did, for the arrival of the Savior. This Christmas, let's renew our "Yes" to God's request to dwell in our hearts and be "born" in the daily living of our lives.

"The King comes as a helpless infant, born of insignificant parents in a small town of a distant outpost of the Roman Empire. He will conquer through the finally irresistible power of love, the same power with which he made the universe." Most Reverend Robert E. Barron

## Find peace before Christmas by slowing down

The busyness leading up to Christmas can be exhausting, but the Advent season holds a better path. It's a time to breathe, reset, and prepare our hearts for the coming of the King. Advent is a built-in gift, a chance to slow the pace and lift our eyes to what matters most.

**Renew a sense of the holy:** Advent is a chance to wake up the soul. When we lean into our Faith with intention, the season stops feeling rushed and starts feeling radiant. Light the Advent Wreath and let its glow steady your heart. Go to Confession and feel the weight lift as mercy takes over. Spend a few quiet minutes before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and let His presence ground you. Pray the Joyful Mysteries, the "Christmas mysteries" that still speak powerfully to our lives today.

**Tune out the noise:** Advent becomes richer when we clear space for God to speak. The world buzzes with distractions, but your soul needs room to breathe. Build small pockets of

silence into your day and let stillness sharpen your awareness of God's presence. Reach for a spiritual book instead of a scroll through your feed. Cut back on the constant stream of news that crowds the mind. When the noise quiets, the Holy Spirit has space

*"Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).*

to guide, steady, and renew you.

**Streamline and prioritize:** Choose what draws you closer to Christ. When your heart is ordered toward what matters, even the cooking, decorating, singing, and gift-giving gain a deeper beauty. You may decide to attend fewer events, keep the décor simple, or choose more modest gifts. Far from taking away joy, this clears space for it. You move through the season with more peace, more purpose, and a heart in step with Jesus.

## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do Catholics believe Jesus is God?

Every Christmas, we remember that Jesus, the Son of God, took on our humanity without losing His divinity. It is a mystery, yet we hold it with confidence because God, who is Truth, has revealed it.

During His earthly life, Jesus spoke and acted with divine authority. He

said, *"The Father and I are one"* (John 10:30). He forgave sins, clarified the Law, and worked miracles. His Resurrection stands as the dearest confirmation of His identity, showing that His claim to be God was real. As man, He could suffer and die. As God, He rose and conquered death.

# The most meaningful gifts of Christmas aren't wrapped

We know that the most valuable gifts are often the ones we cannot wrap. Alongside whatever you give your loved ones this year, do not let Christmas pass without offering these gifts as well:

**Your time:** Being present with the people we love is one of the simplest and strongest ways to show care. A short visit, an unhurried coffee, or an evening without phones can mean more than any item we put under a tree. When we give someone our attention, we affirm their worth.

**Your forgiveness:** Forgiveness does not excuse the hurt. It frees you from the weight of anger and resentment. It

also gives the other person room to grow and seek healing. Letting go is often the first step toward real peace. In many ways, forgiveness is a gift you give yourself.

**Your gratitude:** Giving thanks to God at Christmas is more than a warm sentiment. It is a heartfelt response to the depth of His love.

Look at the Crucifix, the Nativity, or the Eucharist and consider the humility behind such a gift. Our gratitude matters to God (see Luke 17:17-18). So after attending Mass on Christmas Day, take a moment to say, "Thank you." It is a small act that carries real meaning.

## from **S**cripture

### Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23, Obedience is trust in action

By the time Mary gave birth to Jesus, Saint Joseph had already formed a habit of steady obedience to God. So when the angel spoke to him in a dream and instructed him to flee to Egypt, Joseph acted without delay. He trusted that God would care for him and for the family entrusted to him.

This trust is even more striking when we consider the circumstances of Jesus' birth. Mary and Joseph had traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem during the final stages of her pregnancy. Whether by foot or by donkey, the trip would have been long, uncomfortable, and

exhausting. When they finally arrived, they found no suitable place to stay and settled among animals. Soon after, they faced the threat against Jesus' life and fled to Egypt, living for years in a foreign land without the support of relatives or friends. Through every hardship, Joseph relied on God to protect his family.

The Holy Family was perfect in love, yet not spared from difficulty. Mary and Joseph met each challenge with faith and allowed God's Word to guide them. We can follow the same path.



### Why is it said that Mass brings us closer to God than anything else?

At every Mass, Jesus is really and truly present in the Eucharist in His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1374). In this moment, the Sacrifice of Christ is made present to us in a mysterious but real way. His self-giving is the greatest act of love, and our participation at Mass is our strongest response, our way of saying, "I love you, too."

Worshipping together also strengthens our faith in the God who is everywhere yet unseen. Faith grows in community. It grows through the physical actions of the Mass as well. When we sit, stand, bow, and kneel, we express with our bodies what we believe in our hearts.

Finally, the Real Presence of Jesus on the altar draws us into a closeness to God that we cannot find anywhere else in this life. Nowhere do we meet Him more directly than when He feeds us with His very life. In the Eucharist, He is as present to us as He was to Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem and to His apostles in the Upper Room.

## Feasts & Celebrations

**December 6 – St. Nicholas of Myra (4th century).** St. Nicholas had a very generous heart and always gave to the poor. He is credited with saving three girls from being sold to pay their father's debt. St. Nicholas is also the patron saint of children.

**December 8 – Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.** We commemorate that Mary was conceived in St. Anne's womb without original sin, preparing Mary to be the Mother of God. Though given to Mary, this special grace was for our sake. Pope Pius IX declared this doctrine in 1854. This year, it's considered a holy day of obligation.

**December 9 – St. Juan Diego (1548).** St. Juan Diego was visited by Our Lady at Tepeyac Hill, Mexico. She requested a chapel be built and sent him with roses to the bishop as a sign. When St. Juan emptied the roses before the bishop, his cloak retained the image of the Blessed Mother.

**December 29 – St. Thomas Becket (1170).** Thomas enjoyed power and riches as a close friend of England's King Henry II, who appointed him chancellor of England. In 1162, King Henry had St. Thomas named Archbishop of Canterbury. St. Thomas refused to allow the King to regulate Church matters and was exiled. He fled to France for safety. Thomas returned to England and was martyred.

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