



## ***Remembering Vocations in Your 2021 Advent Devotions. . .***

Advent marks the start of our liturgical year. It is the season of preparation for our celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Advent is also the season to pray for the faithful to be called to follow in the life of Christ as shepherds of his flock just as He was born to lead us to salvation.

“God looks on the heart; and, in Saint Joseph, he recognized the heart of a father, able to give and generate life in the midst of daily routines. Vocations have this same goal: to beget and renew lives every day. The Lord desires to shape the hearts of fathers and mothers: hearts that are open, capable of great initiatives, generous in self-giving, compassionate in comforting anxieties and steadfast in strengthening hopes. The priesthood and the consecrated life greatly need these qualities nowadays, in times marked by fragility but also by the sufferings due to the pandemic, which has spawned uncertainties and fears about the future and the very meaning of life.” *Francis I.*

### **The Advent Wreath**

The advent wreath is a circle representing the promise of eternal life to those who follow Jesus. It is made of evergreens to symbolize that God always loves us. There are four candles—one for each week of advent; they symbolize Christ, the “Light of the World.” The first, second and fourth Sundays’ candles are purple to signify penance. The candle for the third Sunday is rose colored, a reminder that the joy of Christmas is almost at hand.

The following devotions focus on each week of advent and the need for vocations to be “born” into the Church so that Christ’s life can continue through his followers.

### **Prayer at the start of each Devotion**

Heavenly Father, Lord of the harvest, call forth vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life from our diocese and our families. Inspire men to imitate Christ, the Eternal High Priest, in sacrificial service to your Church. Move the hearts of men and women to offer themselves wholly to You in poverty, chastity and obedience. Send them as laborers for Your harvest. Inspire the faithful to support them with prayers and sacrifice. Raise up holy families who foster openness to your call. We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

**November 28, First Sunday of Advent** [One purple candle]

**December 3, Feast of St. Francis Xavier**

### **Meditation**

With the example of St. Francis Xavier, let us examine our vocation with a true missionary spirit. “Vocations grow within the Church. In the course of formation, candidates for various vocations need to grow in their knowledge of the ecclesial community, overcoming the limited perspectives that we all have at the beginning.” *Francis I*



*St Nicholas  
Patron of Children*



*St Francis Xavier Baptizing  
Queen Neachile of India*

**December 5, Second Sunday in Advent** [Two purple Candles]

**December 6, Feast of St. Nicholas**

**December 8, Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

**December 11, Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe** [Solemnity Observed]



*The Immaculate Conception*

### **Meditation**

“Who can consider himself worthy to approach the priestly ministry? Who can embrace the consecrated life relying only on his or her own human powers?” “An emblematic human response, full of trust in God’s initiative, is the generous and unmitigated “Amen” of the Virgin of Nazareth, uttered with humble and decisive adherence to the plan of the Most High announced to her by God’s messenger (cf. *Lk* 1:38). Her prompt “Yes” allowed Her to become the Mother of God, the Mother of our Savior.”

*Benedict XVI*



*Our Lady of Guadalupe*

**December 12, Third Sunday of Advent** [Two purple candles and the rose candle]



*The Visitation*

### **Meditation**

“Another aspect of the consecration belonging to the priesthood and the religious life is the complete gift of oneself to God. The Apostle John writes: “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and therefore we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn 3:16). With these words, he invites the disciples to enter into the very mind of Jesus who in his entire life did the will of the Father, even to the ultimate gift of himself on the Cross.” *Benedict XVI*

**December 19, Fourth Sunday of Advent** [All four candles]

### **Meditation**

“The Gospels tell us of [Joseph’s] four dreams. They were calls from God...” “Joseph’s dreams led him into experiences he would never have imagined. The first of these upended his betrothal, but made him the father of the Messiah; the second caused him to flee to Egypt, but saved the life of his family. After the third, which foretold his return to his native land, a fourth dream made him change plans once again, bringing him to Nazareth, the place where Jesus would begin his preaching of the Kingdom of God. Amid all these upheavals, he found the courage to follow God’s will. So too in a vocation: God’s call always urges us to take a first step, to give ourselves, to press forward.” *Francis I*



*The Nativity*

**For information on vocations, Call Father Michael Isenberg (703) 841-2514, write: [michael.isenberg@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:michael.isenberg@arlingtondiocese.org), or visit <http://www.vocations.com>**

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