



*St. John the Evangelist  
2102 Ave. J  
Hondo, Texas 78861*



Fourth Sunday of Advent  
December 22, 2019  
They shall name him Emmanuel,  
which means "God is with us."  
— Matthew 1:23

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Parish Administrator	Fr. Anthony Bonela
Parochial Vicar	Fr. Babychan
Office Manager	Vangie Pimentel
Parish Secretary	Patti Graff
Maint. Supervisor	James Schoellman
Custodian	Tony Ortiz

**EDUCATION**

Phone	830-741-2284
DRE	Sylvia Fernandez
Office Clerk	Kristopher Cardenaz
RCIA Director	Laura Leyendecker
RE Office Hours: M,W,Th,F - 9:30am - 4 pm / Tues.10am - 4pm	

**PASTORAL COUNCIL**

Charlotte Aaron	210-859-9050
Brett Hutto	830-931-4833
Melinda Martinez	830-426-1983
Eva Cortez	210-275-1133
Efrain "Fry" Rodriguez	830-931-5692
Jennifer Halbardier	210-844-7951
Michele Hartung	210-260-1943
Mark Urby	830-444-8630

Meetings Quarterly (Feb., May, Aug., Nov.)  
3rd Tuesday 6 pm at the R.E. Bldg. 105/106

**FINANCE COUNCIL**

Clarence McNiel	210-414-5160
Kenneth Bendele	830-426-4682
Rose Mary Mares	830-426-1542
Charlie Arcos	830-741-2764
Karl Theis	830-931-4452
Connie Shullanberger	830-741-2397

Meetings Quarterly (March, June, Sept., Dec.)  
3rd Thursday 5:30 pm Conference Room

**PARISH MINISTRIES**

Altar Society	Rose Scholtz
Guadalupe Society	Diane Ybarra
St. John's Hist. Assn.	Cathy Mechler
Society of St. Vincent de Paul	Connie Muniz
Youth Director	Christine Ortega
Church Environment	Linda Fohn
ACTS Core	Charlotte Aaron
Bereavement ("Mourning Glories")	Rose Scholtz
Knights of Columbus	Tony Ortiz
Ministry for Homebound and Nursing Home:	Diane Mann,
Elaine Melton, Ellen Schueling and (Spanish) Lydia Villarreal,	
Norma Gutierrez, Diane Ybarra	

**Parish Office Hours:  
Mon.-Fri. 9 am - 4 pm**

Address : 2102 Ave. J • Hondo, TX 78861  
Phone : 830-741-2236 & 830-741-7138  
Fax: 830-426-3339  
Church Website: [www.stjohnshondo.com](http://www.stjohnshondo.com).

**Masses**

Saturday	6:00 pm
Sunday (Spanish Mass)	7:45 am
Sunday	10:00 am
Monday	No Mass
Tuesday	8:00 am
Wednesday	8:00 am
Wednesday (Spanish Mass)	6:00 pm
Thursday	8:00 am
Friday	8:00 am

**Rosary is prayed 1/2 hr. before each Mass.**

**Adoration :** Every Thursday after the 8 AM Mass,  
Divine Mercy Chaplet is at 12:15 pm,  
concludes with Benediction at 12:50 pm.

**Confession:** Saturday at 5:00 pm or by appointment

**PRE-BAPTISM Classes:**

Third Monday of the Month  
5:30 pm Religious Education Building  
**Must pre-register for class**  
Contact Parish Office to schedule Baptism.

**MARRIAGES:** Contact Pastor six months in advance.

**QUINCEAÑERAS:** Student must be enrolled and attending RE classes and meet with Pastor.

**FUNERALS:** Contact Parish Office.

\*\*\*\*\*

**CONTRIBUTIONS**  
**Parish weekly goal: \$6,000**

**Due to early publishing deadline,  
this will be reported next week.**

# MASS Intentions

December 23 - 29, 2019

## MONDAY - No Mass

### TUESDAY - 5 PM - December 24:

- 1) † Refugio Rios by Rios & Mares Family
- 2) † Lillian Rios by Rios & Mares Family
- 3) † Chilo & Lupe Mares by Rios & Mares Family
- 4) † Margie Yanta by Yanta Family

### TUESDAY - 12 Midnight - December 24:

- 1) † Deacon John Schoellman by Wife
- 2) For All St. John's Parish

### WEDNESDAY - 10 AM - December 25:

- 1) † John "Doc" Zerr by Mary Zerr Barden
- 2) For All St. John's Parish

### THURSDAY - 8 AM - December 26:

- 1) † Alfonso Guedea by Family
- 2) † Agadita Reyes by Family

### FRIDAY - 8 AM - December 27:

- 1) † Milo Quintanilla & Gene Mireles by Avila Family

### SATURDAY - 6 PM - December 28:

- 1) † Jimmy Palacios by Janie Bosques & Family
- 2) † Roy Long by Catholic Life Branch 80
- 3) † Olivia Y & Ruben H. Reyes by Daughters

### SUNDAY - 7:45 AM - December 29:

- 1) † Celso Gonzales, Jr. by Brother Rey
- 2) † Frank Alvarez by Wife & Family
- 3) † Guadalupe Ibarra by sister, Rosa Galvan

### SUNDAY - 10 AM - December 29:

- 1) † Robert Flores by George & Karen Koch
- 2) † Tim Gilles by Olin & Theresa Gilliam
- 3) † Eva Morin by Lita Garcia
- 4) For St. John's Parish

## Schedule of Mass Ministries



December 28 - 29, 2019

### Ministers of Hospitality/Ushers:

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Sat. 6 pm    | Bobby Bader, Leonard Zinsmeyer,<br>Richard Moos |
| Sun. 7:45 am | Henry Torres, Jerry Lopez<br>Indalecio Gonzales |
| Sun. 10 am   | Glenn Sturm, Stephen Wilson<br>John Wheaton     |

### Lectors/Commentators:

- |              |                       |                    |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Sat. 6 pm    | L-Russ Renaud         | C-Ostalia Martinez |
| Sun. 7:45 am | L-Alfredo Mora        | C-Frances Cordova  |
| Sun. 10 am   | L-Youth               | C-Youth            |
|              | Cantor - Celina Solis |                    |

### Eucharistic Ministers:

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Sat. 6 pm    | Karen Moos, Rose Scholtz, Yvonne Stein,<br>Mark & Julie Urby, Cindy Bader,<br>Anise Adamietz      |
| Sun. 7:45 am | Mary Ann Garcia, Eva Cortez,<br>Nora Escamilla, Hope Valenzuela,<br>Janie Hernandez, Martha Garza |
| Sun. 10 am   | Linda Fillinger, Youth  |

### Servers:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Sat. 6 pm    | Ann Gonzales, Skyla Mendoz,<br>Jamie Zinsmeyer |
| Sun. 7:45 am | Aaron Ledesma, Kayley Ledesma                  |
| Sun. 10 am   | Molly Lessing, Madison Camacho,<br>Sky Naputi  |

### Sacristan:

- |              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Sat. 6 pm    | Mark Urby       |
| Sun. 7:45 am | Nora Escamilla  |
| Sun. 10 am   | Linda Fillinger |

### Greeters:

- |           |                     |
|-----------|---------------------|
| Sat. 6 pm | Carlos & Dora Ojeda |
|-----------|---------------------|

*A quien pondrán  
el nombre  
de Emmanuel,  
que quiere decir  
Dios-con-nosotros.  
— Mateo 1:23*



### ADORATION with the BLESSED SACRAMENT

Every Thursday in Church at  
8:30 am

Divine Mercy Chaplet at  
12:15 pm

Concludes with Benediction at  
12:50 pm

Everyone is invited to come and  
spend some quiet time with our  
Lord Jesus.



# St. John's Calendar

## MONDAY, December 23:

1) Bingo - 7 pm - Parish Hall

## TUESDAY, December 24:

Christmas Eve - Parish Office Closed

## WEDNESDAY, December 25:

*Merry Christmas ~ Feliz Navidad*

Parish Office Closed

## SATURDAY, December 28:

1) "Saturday Night Choir" practice - 8:30 am - Church

**Second Collection  
at Christmas Masses  
Assumption Seminary**

## **Holiday Bulletin Schedule**

Due to our publisher's holiday schedule, we will have early bulletin deadlines throughout December. If you need anything to be printed in our bulletin, please observe the following deadlines:

For ~ Submit to Parish Office by ~  
January 5th December 26th

## **Woman's ACTS Retreat**

There will be a St. John's/Holy Cross Woman's ACTS Retreat held at the Moye Center in Castroville February 6-9, 2020. It is a 3 day, 3 night retreat. Check-in for the retreat will be at 6:00 PM on February 6, 2020 and we will return for the 10:00 am Holy Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church on February 9, 2020 with a homecoming meal for retreatants, team and families following the Holy Mass. The fee for the retreat is \$165.00 which includes a non-refundable \$50.00 deposit.

Applications are available in the entrance of both St. John's and Holy Cross Churches as well as at both church offices.

For questions or more information call:  
Theresa Gilliam 830 426-1414 or  
Jennifer Halbardier at 210 844-7951

Fröhliche Weihnachten  
**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

*Feliz Navidad*



## Monday Night Bingo ~ Dec. 23, 2019

St. John's Parish Hall

*Great fun that supports our  
Religious Ed. Program! Join the fun!*

Luis Ramos Patti Graff  
Linda Miranda

## Altar Care for December 2019

Altar Care:	Surplices/Small Linens:
Bonnie Moos	Rose Scholtz
Mary Bendele	Alleen Koch

January - Diane Ybarra Marcelyn Botello

## **Mass Ministry Schedules**

New schedules for all Mass Ministries for January through March are available in the church entrance.

## St. Vincent de Paul



In today's Gospel, we hear that Jesus will be named Emmanuel, which means "God is with us". The mystery of the birth of Jesus is supremely a mystery of love. May each Christmas find us more and more like him: More humble, more holy, more happy, and more full of God.

*Do we listen to Jesus when he asks us to take care of our brothers and sisters who are suffering? Is there a family you know who needs assistance? Please call the Society of St. Vincent de Paul so that together we can help the suffering and poor.*

### REGULAR HOURS of SERVICE to PEOPLE IN NEED:

- ♦ Every Tuesday & Thursday, 10 am -12 noon (RE Bldg.)
- ♦ SVDP meets each month on 2nd Thursday.
- ♦ Next meeting: January 9, 2020 - 2 PM at R.E. Building.
- ♦ Group Mass: 4th FRIDAY, December 27, 2019 - 8 AM.



## PARISH CATECHESIS

### Catholic Faith

◆Adults who have never been Baptized or Baptized into another Faith and are thinking of joining the Catholic Church .....

◆Never celebrated First Communion or Confirmation... Come and Inquire! Join us on a journey of Faith leading to transformation of your mind and Spirit.

If interested contact Laura Leyendecker (Coordinator) at 830-460-1698 or Sylvia Fernandez at 830-741-2284 in the CCE office.

●Children from the ages 7 thru 17 needing Sacraments of Initiation may contact Sylvia Fernandez at 830-741-2284.

*St. Michael, the Archangel, defend us in the battle, battle, battle !*

**Next Youth Gathering will be January 8, 2020.**

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



*Please sign up on the ACTS prayer wheel located at the entrance of the church, to pray for and with our Youth while on retreat.*

LOVE AND BLESSINGS TO ALL WHO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUR YOUTH THROUGH PURCHASE OF HEB CARDS

**Ovase....** Not one person, not even one Archdiocese, can protect all children / vulnerable adults. Abuse is an epidemic problem in our entire society but we intend to do everything we can to stop it. We are offering *Child/ Adult Safety* instruction to protect children, youth, vulnerable adults. We will also educate parents who have a responsibility to safeguard the children in their care. *Children / Vulnerable Adults cannot protect themselves from a predator.* We know they need trusted and loving adults in whom they can confide any concern or fear. You are that person and we want to work with you for the good of all children/ vulnerable adults in this Archdiocese. Spanish and English classes will be offered. This is a responsibility we cannot push off on someone else. This is our responsibility. You may call the Office of Victim Assistance and Safe Environment at 210-734-7786 or toll free 1-877-700-1888, Denise McWilliams at 830-426-2841 or call Fr. Anthony at the parish office at 830-741-2236.

### HEB GIFT CARDS support the Youth

HEB cards are for sale after the weekend Masses and in the Religious Education office during the week. The Church earns 5% of the sales to be used for the youth. This is "free" money and it does not cost you or the Church anything. Please help support our youth by purchasing HEB cards, which may be used for food, gas, prescriptions, etc.

*Thank you for your support!*



**Children's Mass**  
of the Nativity of Our Lord  
Christmas Eve Dec. 24th  
5 pm

### New Pictorial Church Directory



Make plans for you and your family to participate in a photo session for our new church pictorial directory and a special free family portrait for you.

Sessions: Dec. 26, 27 from 2 pm - 9 pm  
Dec. 28 from 9 am - 4 pm  
Jan. 2, 3 from 2 pm - 9 pm  
Jan. 4 from 9 am - 4 pm  
Call Karen Moos to schedule a time: 830-426-4696



### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

*PLEASE REMEMBER* that all proceeds from the Monday Night Bingo and the Bingo concession stand are to help fund the Religious Education Program. (St. John's does not charge a fee for the children enrolled.)

**To keep the Bingo operating every Monday night, we truly need volunteers. Please think about this and pray about it, and if at all possible, help by volunteering on ONE Monday per month.**

IF YOU APPLIED TO BE A BINGO WORKER AND HAVE RECEIVED YOUR CARD, PLEASE LET JAMES SCHOELLMAN OR TONY ORTIZ KNOW SO THEY CAN GET YOU ON THE SCHEDULE. *Thank you!*

# Advent & Christmas 2019



**Angel Tree**  
**Angel Tree Gift Pick-Up Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>**  
 Parents please pick up gifts at the Parish Office  
 between 9am and 4pm.

## Mass Schedule

- Dec.9 The Immaculate Conception of the  
 Blessed Virgin Mary  
 8:00am Mass
- Dec.12 Our Lady of Guadalupe  
 5:30am Mañanitas  
 6:00pm Mass w/Matachines and  
 Virgen de Guadalupe & Juan Diego Re-enactment  
 Dinner afterward in the Hall
- Dec.18 Reconciliation Service  
 Immediately following 6 pm Mass
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve  
 5pm Children's Mass 12am Midnight Mass
- Dec. 25 The Nativity of the Lord  
 10 am Mass
- Dec. 31 Daily Mass 8:00 am  
 Solemnity of Mary Holy Mother of God  
 6 pm Vigil Mass
- Jan. 1 Solemnity of Mary Holy Mother of God  
 10 am Mass

## Las Posadas

Las Posadas will begin on Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>. Each evening we will meet at  
 6 pm at the following locations:

- Dec.16<sup>th</sup> Meeting place TBA - Hosted by Dalia Schulle  
 Dec.17<sup>th</sup> RE Bldg. Hosted by Guadalupanas  
 Dec.18<sup>th</sup> RE Bldg  
 Dec.19<sup>th</sup> Meet at 707 20th - Hosted by Rick & Lucy Leyva  
 Dec.20<sup>th</sup> Meeting place TBA - Hosted by Inez Morales  
 Dec.21<sup>st</sup>  
 Dec.22<sup>nd</sup>  
 Dec.23<sup>rd</sup>  
 Dec.24<sup>th</sup> on the church grounds \*\*10pm

Additional locations will be posted by the church doors and on  
 our website: [www.stjohnshondo.com](http://www.stjohnshondo.com)



## Thank you to all who supported the On the Way ~ Andale Tamale Dinner!

A special thanks to those who shared  
 their cooking talents for the delicious  
 meal: Charlie and Delia Martinez (tamales),  
 Melda Hoffman (rice) and Jerry Ibarra  
 (beans). Thank you to Mercy Hernandez (Hondo  
 Café) for her donation. Many blessings to those  
 who helped with the event: Charlotte Aaron,  
 Noah and Rey Bernal, Katie Haby, Mary Jo  
 Peters, Ysidro Mares, Jr., and confirmation stu-  
 dents Luis Castillo, Garrett Muller, Erin and Erika  
 Rogers, Amber Van Damme, and Sierra  
 Ybarra. ~ Holiday blessings to all!

## St. John's Parish Christmas Party TODAY!!

December 22, 2019  
 6 pm in the Parish Hall  
 Everyone is invited!



It's "pot luck" so bring a side dish or  
 dessert and come enjoy fellowship  
 with your parish family.

Singers needed for  
 Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve....  
 We want YOU to come join us!



Carols will begin at 11 pm, followed by beautiful  
 songs during Mass. Please Call the Parish Office if  
 you'd like to be a part of this special Mass.



**ON the WAY**  
**¡ÁNDALE!**  
 A CAMPAIGN OF THE  
 ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO

In the weeks leading up to Christmas,  
 it seems everywhere we turn, we are  
 pushed to spend more, do more,  
 entertain more, and generally rush  
 around at a frantic pace — all to  
 create a "perfect" Christmas day.  
 (Catholic Stewardship Consultants)  
 But as Paul says in his letter to the

Romans, **"Grace to you and peace from God our  
 Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."** Romans 1:7

We must remember that this is the time of Peace and Joy.  
 Spend time with Jesus this Christmas and prayerfully con-  
 sider making a pledge to the **On the Way - ¡Ándale!**  
**Campaign** – it will give you peace and joy.

Merry Christmas and Have a wonderful New Year!

Make a Gift at [www.ontheway-andale.org](http://www.ontheway-andale.org)

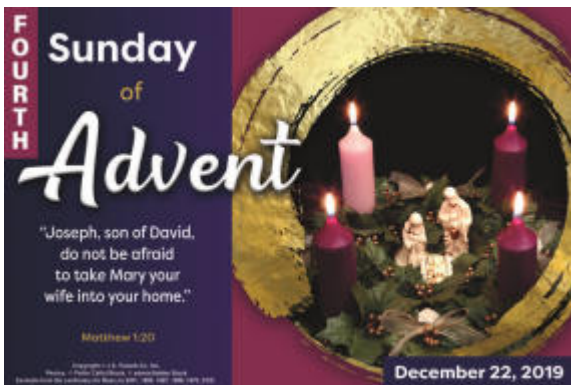


*Patrick Adamietz	*Lisa Arcos	*Ruby Cantu
*Reggie Winters	*Addison Barrios	*Guillermo Mora
Dorothy Favor	Darlene Wiemers	Steven Avila
Jerry Carroll	Johnny Adamietz	Marie Davila
Kathy Carlson	Frank Escamilla	*Anna Reyes
Eric Escobar	Becky Shannon	Joey Luna
Arturo Resendez	Jessica Gauna	Ismael Del Toro
Delia G. Benavides	Cindy Cuellar	Rose Mary Ybarra
Edna Mendoza	Edwin Lilie	Maria Saldaña
John Benavides		

Call 741-2236 to add or remove someone from the list. Names will be kept on the list for 3 weeks. Call office if additional time is needed (for serious problems, etc.).

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

12/23 Eliana Gauna, Hillary Guerrero, Heather Kirk, Sylvan Lutz, Garrett Van Damme  
 12/24 Theresa Aelvoey, Rosa Barrios, Anessa Garcia, Jaevon Lopez, Eva Rivera  
 12/25 Zachary Brooks, Mary Escamilla, Noel Medina, Lionel Rodriguez, Rebecca Sanchez, Donna Soliz  
 12/26 Jesse Alvarado, Arnulfa De Leon, Miranda Hernandez, Albriana Navarro  
 12/27 Cassandra Frausto, David Frausto, Novarie Hernandez, Hunter Melton, Eric Torres, Javier Torres  
 12/28 Maria Alaniz, David Bendele, Heidi Boehme, Gilbert Costello, Matthew Diaz, AJ Garza, Ariana Hernandez, Carson Oefinger, Shawn O'Neill, Vivian Reed, Jose Requena  
 12/29 Vicente Arcos, Sarah Benites, Sarah Bernal, Tomas Cabrera, Gloria Campos, Yvette Castillo, Benjamin Cuellar, Dominic Garcia, Ramon Govea, Jade Robinson, Stephanie Rodriguez



## TRUST IN GOD

On this final Sunday of Advent our scriptures focus on the historical birth of Jesus, who is son of David and Son of God, child and king, Jesus and Emmanuel.

Isaiah the prophet begs Ahaz to ask for a sign, to allow God to offer him reassurance of the survival of the Davidic dynasty. The king hypocritically refuses to "tempt the LORD" in that way (Isaiah 7:12), but the prophet foretells the birth of a son, an heir to the throne, who will prove the Lord's enduring protection of God's chosen lineage on the throne of David. The child will be called Emmanuel.

Matthew's reference to this history in his description of the birth of Jesus highlights the contrast between the faithless refusal of trust shown by Ahaz, and the complete trust in God shown by Mary and Joseph in bringing about the birth of Jesus Christ.

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## CONFIANZA EN DIOS

En este último domingo de Adviento las lecturas se enfocan en el nacimiento histórico de Jesús: el hijo de David e Hijo de Dios, niño y rey, Jesús y Emmanuel.

El profeta Isaías le suplica a Ajaz que pida una señal, para permitir a Dios que le asegure la sobrevivencia de la dinastía de David. El rey hipócrita rehúsa "tentar al SEÑOR" de esa manera (Isaías 7:12), pero el profeta predice el nacimiento de un hijo, un heredero al trono, quien probará la duradera protección divina del linaje elegido del trono de David. El niño será llamado Emmanuel.

Mateo se refiere a esta historia en su descripción de los puntos principales del nacimiento de Jesús que contrasta a Ajaz quien rehúsa confiar por falta de fe, y la completa confianza en Dios que María y José demostraron al cooperar con el nacimiento de Jesucristo.

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**READINGS FOR THE WEEK of Dec. 23, 2019****Monday:**

Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14; Lk 1:57-66

**Tuesday:**

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79

**Wednesday:**

Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]

Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14

Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20

Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]

**Thursday:**

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22

**Friday:**

1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8

**Saturday:**

1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7cd-8; Mt 2:13-18

**Sunday:**

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Ps 128:1-5; Col 3:12-21 [12-17]; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

**LECTURAS DE LA SEMANA 23 de diciembre de 2019****Lunes:**

Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Sal 25 (24):4-5ab, 8-10, 14; Lc 1:57-66

**Martes:**

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Sal 89 (88):2-5, 27, 29; Lc 1:67-79

**Miércoles:**

Vigilia: Is 62:1-5; Sal 89 (88):4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Hch 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]

Noche: Is 9:1-6; Sal 96 (95):1-3, 11-13; Tit 2:11-14; Lc 2:1-14

Aurora: Is 62:11-12; Sal 97 (96):1, 6, 11-12; Tit 3:4-7; Lc 2:15-20

Día: Is 52:7-10; Sal 98 (97):1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]

**Jueves:**

Hch 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Sal 31 (30):3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22

**Viernes:**

1 Jn 1:1-4; Sal 97 (96):1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8

**Sábado:**

1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Sal 124 (123):2-5, 7cd-8; Mt 2:13-18

**Domingo:**

Eclo 3:2-6, 12-14; Sal 128 (127):1-5; Col 3:12-21 [12-17]; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

**SAINT STEPHEN (first century)  
December 26**

"A man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5): thus Luke introduces Stephen, first of seven deacons chosen by the community for its ministry of charity, first to lay down his life in witness to Christ. As the church's first martyr, Stephen's life and death mirror the preaching and passion of Jesus, "the faithful witness" (Greek, martyr) (Revelation 1:5). Like Jesus, Stephen works "great signs and wonders among the people" (Acts 6:8). Like Jesus, when falsely accused, Stephen's face radiates angelic serenity (Acts 6:15), though his tongue, like Jesus', is a two-edged sword. As the dying Jesus forgave his executioners, even making excuses for them, then commended his spirit into his Father's hands (Luke 23:34, 46), so Stephen intercedes for his murderers and begs Jesus to receive his spirit (Acts 7:60, 59). How fruitful both passions! The penitent thief inherits Paradise; Saul, who consented to Stephen's killing, is transformed into the fearless preacher Paul. Thus Stephen challenges us to bear witness not in words only, but by Christ-like forgiveness toward all.

—Peter Scagnelli, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

**SAN ESTEBAN (Siglo I)  
26 de diciembre**

El libro de los Hechos de los Apóstoles describe a Esteban, uno de los primeros siete diáconos de la Iglesia naciente, como un hombre "lleno de fe y del Espíritu Santo". Como diácono, según lo pedido por la comunidad, se dedicó al cuidado de los huérfanos y de las viudas. Además de eso, se dedicó a predicar la salvación por medio de Jesucristo. Su predicación incomodó a algunos líderes religiosos quienes sobornaron a otras personas para que declararan que Esteban había blasfemado contra Moisés, pero no fue así. Sin embargo, Esteban les recordó que Dios no sólo estaba en el Templo de Jerusalén y además les reprochó su incumplimiento de la ley y el rechazo al mensaje de Jesús. Esto les molestó mucho y "Esteban les dijo que veía los cielos abiertos y al Hijo del hombre de pie a la derecha de Dios". Llenos de rabia se lanzaron contra él, lo sacaron de la ciudad y lo apedrearon hasta matarlo. Mientras agonizaba, oraba así: "Señor Jesús, recibe mi espíritu". San Esteban es el protomártir de la Iglesia.

—Miguel Arias, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

**SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES  
Week of December 22, 2019**

Sunday: Fourth Sunday of Advent

Monday: St. John of Kanty; Hanukkah begins

Tuesday: Vigil of Christmas

Wednesday: The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Thursday: St. Stephen; Kwanzaa begins;

Boxing Day (Canada)

Friday: St. John

Saturday: The Holy Innocents

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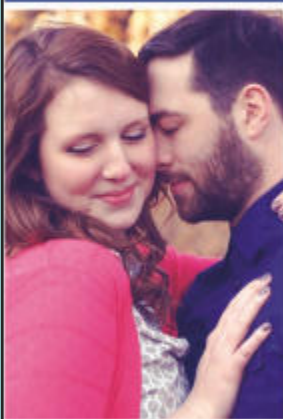
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