

Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

December 2023

St. Philomena Parish

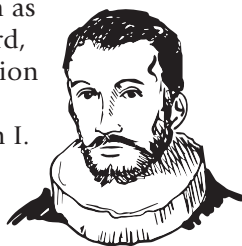
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Thoughtful Moments

St. Edmund Campion

St. Edmund Campion had a coveted position as lecturer at Oxford, and the admiration of his peers and Queen Elizabeth I. He renounced everything to become a Jesuit missionary. He traveled England secretly to administer the Sacraments to persecuted Catholics. He was betrayed by an informer pretending to be Catholic, and was taken to the Tower of London. He was martyred for refusing to deny his faith.



Our Lady of Guadalupe

At a time of great upheaval in Mexico (1531), Jesus' Mother appeared to St. Juan Diego with messages of hope, and conversions began occurring at an astounding rate. By 1539, almost nine million had converted. Mary is Jesus' first and best disciple to bring the message of hope and salvation.

"Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ"
(2 Corinthians 4:6).



Add peace to Advent this year

There is no denying that it may be more challenging to find peace and joy during Advent this year, given all that's happening around the world. Still, we know that the world isn't where we find our joy. Instead, try modeling your family celebration after the first Christmas to find more peace and joy this year.

Sweep the inn. Jesus chose lowly circumstances for His birth to encourage detachment from worldly goods. Together, choose clothing, gifts, and toys in good condition that you don't truly need and donate them to people who do. Then limit the number and value of gifts you give. This will free up attention and affection for

what really matters.

Select shepherds. Although the people watching the sheep in the fields that night weren't the most successful nor the most popular in town, God chose them to greet His newborn Son. Children benefit from healthy, loving company. Accept and extend only those holiday invitations that will provide precious, loving time together.

Ponder in your heart. When her remarkable Son was born, *"Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart"* (Luke 2:19) so she could savor the joy of each moment. Don't forget to savor time with your own remarkable family so that you can ponder every wonderful moment in your own heart.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

"... And his name shall be called Emman'u-el' (which means, God with us)" (Matthew 1:23). Jesus is God and He came, not just to save us, but also to be with us. In fact, He promised, *"I am with you always"* (Matthew 28:20).

Why do Catholics call Jesus "Emmanuel"?



Jesus is invisibly but powerfully present with us now in the Church, the Scriptures, the souls of the faithful, the priest celebrating the Sacraments, prayer, and, most especially, in the Eucharist. God is truly with us.

Make Christmas last ...

Christmas ends for some people when the stores are empty and the presents are unwrapped. For Catholics, the Christmas Season starts Christmas Day and ends January 8, The Baptism of the Lord. Let your Christmas joy last through the entire Season.

Stay decorated. Rejoice in the great mystery of the Incarnation. Displaying your manger scene until the end of the Season reminds your family of the deeper meaning of Christmas. Keep your Christmas lights up as a reminder that Jesus brought light to the darkness.



Host an Epiphany party. The Feast of Epiphany celebrates the visit of the Magi and their gifts to the Christ Child. Host a party featuring candlelight, wonderful food, Christmas carols and hymns, and people who are a blessing to your family.

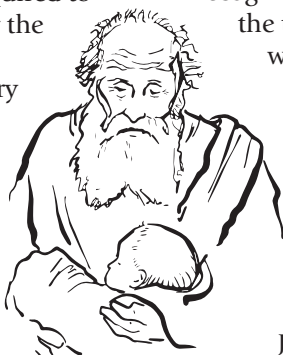
Make a visit. On that first Christmas, Jesus came to us and remains in the Eucharist. If you have days off from work and school, consider attending daily Mass or Adoration. Keeping company with the Christ Child is the gift that He desires from us.

Scripture LESSON

Luke 2:22-40, God fulfills His promises

Mary and Joseph were faithful Jews who did what their faith required to celebrate and thank God for the birth of their son. They couldn't afford the customary offering of a lamb, instead presenting two doves or pigeons. To the uninformed observer, Jesus' birth was unremarkable and His family quite ordinary.

Yet, Simeon immediately recognized Jesus as the Messiah. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he prophesied that Jesus would be *"a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel"* (Luke 2:32).



Simeon was not alone in recognizing the Lord's presence in the temple. Anna was also filled with the Holy Spirit and gave thanks to God. Her faith in God's promises gave her hope. The hope God places in our hearts gives us a desire for the kingdom of heaven.

What can a parent do?
Teach children to look for Jesus in the world and to pray to Him often. Tell them the Holy Spirit will reveal the presence of the Lord to those who want to know Him, receive Him, and to be with Him forever.

Parent TALK

I lost my job during the pandemic and fortunately got another one, but at a much lower pay rate. I am grateful that my new job allows us to pay the important bills and even save some, but it doesn't allow for extras. As Christmas



approached last year, we explained to the children that there were going to be fewer gifts under the tree and why, and asked them to pare down their Christmas lists.

The girls spent a lot of time going over their requests, but they didn't seem to be upset. One night at dinner, they handed their lists to me and each one had just three gift requests. Chris explained that if three gifts were good enough for Jesus, three gifts were good enough for us. What they really wanted was family time. We agreed. And Christmas turned out to be a joyful, blessed celebration of Love.

Feasts & Celebrations

December 3 - First Sunday in Advent. We anticipate Christ's birth and His second coming on the last day. Catholics everywhere light candles in an Advent wreath to signal the coming of the light of Christ.

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 (tilma) retained the miraculous image of the Blessed Mother.

December 17 - St. Olympias (408). Born to a wealthy family in Constantinople, this holy widow devoted her large fortune to caring for the poor and supporting her friend, St. John Chrysostom, in his work.

December 31 - The Holy Family (1st century). We celebrate the family life of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph - three people who lived for God. By their love and support of one another the Holy Family is a model for all Christian families.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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