



# 27 WAYS TO PREPARE FOR *Christmas* — 2020 —

## THESE ARE INTERESTING TIMES.

Preparing for the coming of the Christ child during a global pandemic brings its own set of challenges. Many families will not be able to gather as usual, and many of those who usually serve others in shelters and on the streets might not be able to do so. That means our own preparation must look different this year too. **Here are twenty-seven ways your family can prepare for the Incarnation.**



# 1

### ***Be Reconciled.***

There is no better way to enter the season of waiting than by healing the relationship between ourselves and God. Though our parishes are only open at limited times, all of them will be offering Reconciliation during Advent.

# 2

### ***Get Out the Advent Wreath.***

Even if you do not have new candles or they are not the right colors, light a candle each evening and say a prayer as a family, asking God to open your mind and hearts to the gift of His Son.



# 3

### ***Look in the Pantry.***

What do you have that others could use? Many families are in need this Christmas. What can you give to others from all that you have?

# 4

### ***Think Gift Cards.***

Since so many are unemployed or underemployed and service agencies are having to change how they serve, consider ordering gift cards online and sending them to agencies that can distribute them appropriately.

## 5 **Get Moving.**

It is easy to sit around the house, especially when darkness settles in so early. Exercise releases endorphins and endorphins make you happy. Take a walk as a family. Fill your lungs with fresh air.

## 6 **Make Some Masks.**

Look at some online tutorials and see if you can make masks for those who cannot afford to buy them. But make sure you follow instructions so your masks are effective.



## 7 **Celebrate the Feasts of Advent.**

Today is the feast of St. Nicholas, a third-century bishop, who was known as a miracle worker and secret giver of gifts. Celebrate by sneaking a treat and a note of appreciation and love into your children's shoes or near their at-home study area.



## 8 **Today is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.**

This is a Holy Day of Obligation — attend or watch Mass to celebrate Mary conceived without original sin. In Spain, they burn candles to celebrate — enjoy a candlelit dinner in honor of Our Lady.

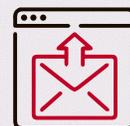
## 9 **Set Up the Crèche.**

Tell the story of the birth of Jesus as you work together to set up the manger scene. For extra fun, keep baby Jesus out of His crib and let the youngest member of the family place Him in the manger on Christmas morning before gifts are opened.



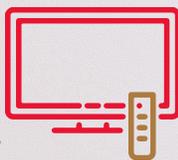
## 10 **Celebrate Teachers.**

Remote school is hard for students, but it can be even more difficult for teachers who have to repeat lessons, follow up with parents, take extra time to grade late assignments. What can you do for your teachers this year? Even a simple email thanking them for their dedication would be a great start.



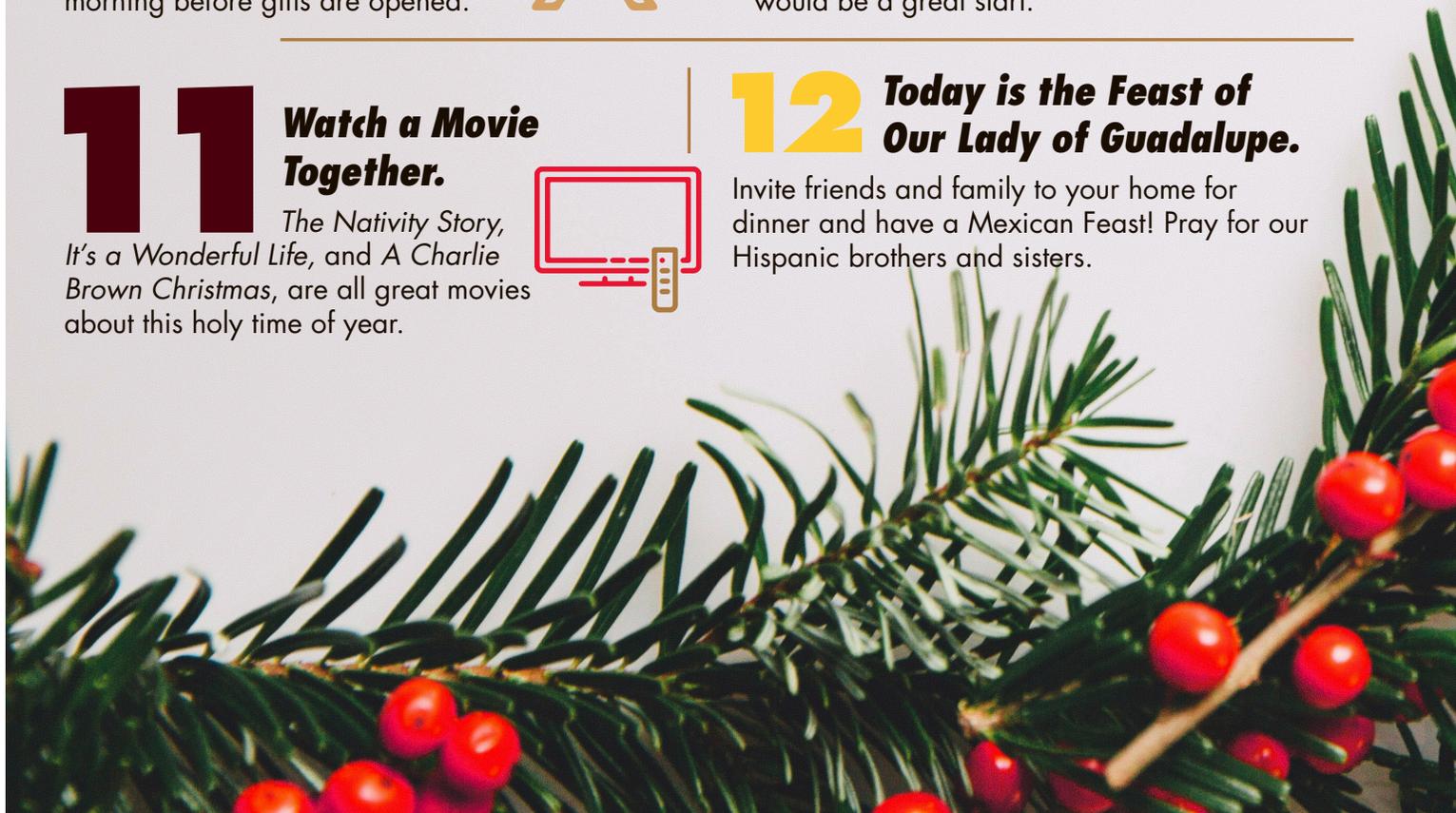
## 11 **Watch a Movie Together.**

*The Nativity Story*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, and *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, are all great movies about this holy time of year.



## 12 **Today is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.**

Invite friends and family to your home for dinner and have a Mexican Feast! Pray for our Hispanic brothers and sisters.





## 13 **Step Back in Time.**

Tell your children the story of your favorite Christmas memory as a child.

## 14 **Today is the Feast of St. Lucy.**

Since this year, her feast falls on a Sunday, it sort of gets lost. But her feast day is associated with light, which makes it a great day to light another candle on the wreath and ask St. Lucy to pray for your special intentions.

## 15 **Today is the Feast of St. John of the Cross.**

Celebrate this great Carmelite saint by simplifying and detaching from items in your home. Look around for items you hardly ever use and donate them to an organization that provides for the less fortunate.

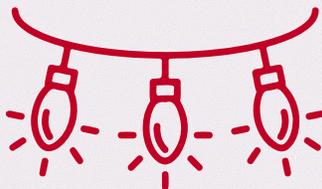
## 16 **Pray Every Day.**

Sign up online for a daily devotion from Bishop Caggiano by texting "pray" to 55778 and joining the Face of Prayer movement.



## 17 **Find Goodness.**

Each day, make a mental note or two about the good things you discover around you and be sure to recognize the goodness of others when you see it.

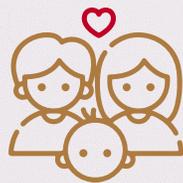


## 18 **Decorate the House.**

Put up the wreaths, decorate the tree, hang the garland — but leave something special for Christmas morning to make this year's celebration extra special (i.e., the star on the tree).

## 19 **Bake Cookies for First Responders.**

The police and fire officials keep us safe and many of them volunteer extra time without pay. Bake some cookies (wash your hands!) and deliver them to the local police or fire station.



## 20 **Spend Time Together.**

After dinner together, sit as a family near your crèche and read aloud the beginning of the Gospel of Luke. You could even have young children act out the Gospel using the figurines!



# 21

## **Carry Coins.**

Did you know there is a nationwide coin shortage? Look around the house and collect coins that you can use to purchase something the next time you go out. Your local grocer will thank you!



# 22

## **Shop Locally.**

Speaking of coins, did you know that many small businesses have closed during the pandemic? Look around your neighborhood or town and consider shopping at businesses owned by those in your community.



# 23

## **Adjust Your Attitude.**

This year has been nuts. It can be overwhelming for all of us and oftentimes, we are often our own worst enemy and our greatest critic. What if you gave yourself a break this year and concentrated on the real reason for the season?

# 24

## **Connect with a Neighbor.**

Is there a neighbor you have not seen in months? Email them, call them, or leave them a note. They may not feel safe coming over for dinner, but that does not mean you cannot make sure they are remembered.

# 25

## **Make a Plan for Mass.**

What will your parish be doing for Christmas Mass this year? For many, space will be limited and reservations will be required. Make your plans now so you can celebrate the Incarnation at church.



# 26

## **Wear a Mask.**

This simple act can show you care about your neighbors and want to keep them safe. It is not a political statement; it is an act of courage and love. So whenever you are out and around others, wear a mask to show you care!



# 27

## **Hallelujah!**

Turn on the music. Prepare a feast. For the Lord has entered into our midst as one of us. Celebrate the birth of Christ with great joy! Come, let us adore Him.

Remember, the Christmas season lasts through the Baptism of the Lord (January 10, 2021). There is no need to be in a rush to throw out the decorations just because your neighbor does. Celebrate this season of love and light in these trying times — for as long as you can!

