

PRAYERS IN THE PEW™ MONTHLY

FAITH IN ACTION CALENDAR / HIGHLIGHTS

FRI JAN 5	St. John Neumann, Bishop
SUN JAN 21	St. Agnes, Virgin and Martyr
SUN JAN 28	St. Thomas Aquinas, Priest, Doctor of the Church

Faith Formation Companion to Prayers in the Pew™

→ MONTHLY SYNOPSIS ←

January 2024 – As we begin our new year, we cannot help but focus on the gift of new life and our commitment to defend the innocent from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. Above all, in the turbulent times we live in, we must always turn to Our Lady for help in all our needs. She is present to us in a special way on the Solemnity of the Mother of God to begin our calendar year.

THE MEMORARE

Catholics are sometimes accused of worshipping Mary, but nothing could be further from the truth – we worship God alone! But there is hardly a deeper sentiment in the heart of a Catholic than love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was defined by the early Church council of Nicea (325 AD) as the “Mother of God”, a privilege given to no other woman on earth.

The *Memorare* (Latin: “Remember”) is a prayer that has been attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux in the 12th century but almost certainly comes from a later period. It models a longer 15th century Latin prayer, *Ad sanctitatis tuae pedes*, where it is said that the faithful present their prayers to God “at the feet of Our Lady’s holiness.”

Christians are confident in Mary’s loving care and in her attentiveness to everything they ask. Here are the words of this beautiful Catholic prayer:

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

The first word of this prayer is actually a command or a deep-seated plea: “Remember! Never forget!” It is almost as if we are small children reminding our mothers of promises they made to us, which we won’t let them forget! The key phrase and the most evocative sentiment of the prayer, however, is “never was it known.”

Our Lady will not turn away or be deaf to the needs of any petitioner because all who come to her are her children. She is the very Mother of God and the Mother of life. No one is better positioned to answer our prayers!

— THE SCHOOL OF SAINTS —



“The great task that has to be faced today for the renewal of society is that of recapturing the ultimate meaning of life and its fundamental values.”

~ Pope St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), 8.

— BIBLE BASICS —



Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

John 10:10 “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

Defending the sanctity of human life in our society is an ongoing challenge, even after the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* last year. The battle is taking place in our states and communities. All Catholics must rise to the challenge of addressing the culture of death in our families and societies but particularly in prayer, which is the only force powerful enough to stop the spiritual evil of abortion and moral degradation.



2041 The precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life. The obligatory character of these positive laws decreed by the pastoral authorities is meant to guarantee to the faithful the very necessary minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor.

FAITH FUNDAMENTALS



The Precepts of the Church

If you're a parent, or if you've ever been a child (all of us!), you will understand implicitly what "precepts" are: they're simply rules given by an authority. Rules maintain order in a community and remind us of what's most important to us. Our Catechism (nn. 2041–2043) delineates five "precepts of the Church," which help us to maintain our spiritual priorities to keep us on the straight and narrow path to heaven.

1. *You shall attend mass on Sundays and holidays of obligation.*
2. *You shall confess your sins at least once a year.*
3. *You shall humbly receive your creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter season.*
4. *You shall keep the holy days of obligation.*
5. *You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.*

Catholics also have a "duty of providing for the material needs of the church, each according to his abilities." We should never forget that these precepts are given as commands by the authority of the Church. They are not optional. That is because they mandate our duty to participate in the Church's essential mission, which is the salvation of our souls.



CALENDAR OF FAITH | January

JAN 1 <i>Mon</i>	SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD
JAN 2 <i>Tue</i>	Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church
JAN 3 <i>Wed</i>	Feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus
JAN 4 <i>Thu</i>	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, first American saint and Founder of Sisters of Charity
JAN 5 <i>Fri</i>	St. John Neumann, Bishop
JAN 6 <i>Sat</i>	St. André Bessete, Religious
JAN 7 <i>Sun</i>	St. Raymond of Peñafort, Priest
JAN 7 <i>Sun</i>	EPIPHANY (Feast of the Three Kings)
JAN 8 <i>Mon</i>	BAPTISM OF THE LORD (NOTE: The Season of Christmas ends with this feast; Ordinary Time begins on Tuesday, 1/9)
JAN 13 <i>Sat</i>	St. Hilary, Bishop and Doctor of the Church
JAN 17 <i>Wed</i>	St. Anthony, Abbot
JAN 21 <i>Sun</i>	St. Agnes, Virgin and Martyr
JAN 22 <i>Mon</i>	Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children
JAN 23 <i>Tue</i>	St. Vincent, Deacon and Martyr
JAN 24 <i>Wed</i>	St. Francis de Sales, Bishop and Doctor of the Church
JAN 25 <i>Thu</i>	Conversion of St. Paul, Apostle
JAN 26 <i>Fri</i>	Sts. Timothy and Titus, Bishops
JAN 28 <i>Sun</i>	St. Thomas Aquinas, Priest and Doctor of the Church
JAN 31 <i>Wed</i>	St. John Bosco, Priest and Founder of the Salesian Order

Praying with the National Eucharistic Revival

Prayer of St. Teresa of Calcutta After Communion

Dear Jesus, help me to spread Your fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with Your Spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly, that my life may only be a radiance of Yours.

Shine through me, and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel Your presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus! Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as You shine, so to shine as to be a light to others. **Amen.**