

Calendar / Feast Days

January 2026

Date	Feast Days/Liturgical Occasions	Gospel for Sunday
1 January	Mary, the Holy Mother of God	Luke 2: 16-21
2 January	St. Basil the Great	John 1: 19-28
3 January	The Holy Name of Jesus	Luke 2: 21-24
3 January	St. Munchin	John 1: 29-34
4 January	Second Sunday of Christmas	John 1: 1-18
5 January	St. Charles of St. Andrew	John 1: 43-51
6 January	The Epiphany of the Lord	Matthew 2: 1-12
7 January	St. Raymond of Peñafort	Mt 4: 12-17, 23-25
11 January	The Baptism of the Lord	Matthew 3: 13-17
15 January	St. Ita	Mark 1:40-45
16 January	St. Fursa	Mark 2: 1-12
17 January	St. Anthony, abbot	Mark 2: 13-17
18 January	Second Sunday in Ordinary Time	John 1: 29-34
20 January	St. Fabian	Mark 2: 23-28
20 January	St. Sebastian	Mark 2: 23-28
21 January	St. Agnes, virgin and martyr	Mark 3: 1-6
24 January	St. Francis de Sales	Mark 3: 20-21
25 January	Third Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 4: 12-23
26 January	Ss. Timothy and St. Titus, bishops	Luke 10: 1-9
27 January	St. Angela Merici	Mark 3: 31-55
28 January	St. Thomas Aquinas, priest & doctor of the Church	Mark 4: 1-20
30 January	St. Aidan, bishop	Mark 4: 26-34
30 January	Bl. Margaret Ball and Francis Taylor	Mark 4: 26-34
31 January	St. John Bosco	Mark 4: 35-41

January 1, Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God



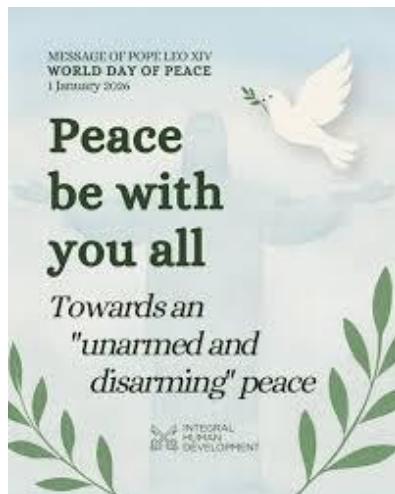
This holiday is a celebration of Mary's motherhood of Jesus. It is a reminder of the role she played in the salvation of humankind.

Today's Feast of Mary, the Mother of God, is a very appropriate way to begin a new year. This celebration reminds us that the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, is also our Heavenly Mother. Therefore, perhaps our ideal motto for the New Year 2023 could be "Through Mary to Jesus!"

This is an occasion to renew our devotion to Mary, who is also Mother of the Church because she is our spiritual mother — and we are the Church. The solemnity shows the relationship of Jesus to Mary. It is a perfect example of how we should venerate Mary under all her titles. The Church puts the feast of this solemnity on the first day of the New Year to emphasize the importance of Mary's role in the life of Christ and of the Church. We commemorate the various saints on different days of the year, but Mary is the most prominent of them all. She has a special role and mission given to her by God. As Mother of our Redeemer and of the redeemed, she reigns as Queen at the side of Christ the King. She is a powerful intercessor for all of our needs here on earth. In celebrating her special feast day, we acknowledge this great gift for the Church and world; we call on her to be actively involved in our daily life; we imitate

her virtuous life as a great inspiration; and we cooperate with all the graces we receive through her.

January 1, World Day of Peace



The Church also observes the 1st of January as the World Day of Peace and invites us to pray specially for peace in the world. Every year on January 1, the Holy Father marks the World Day of Peace with a special message inviting all people to reflect on the important work of building peace.

The theme chosen by Pope Leo XIV for the 2026 World Day of Peace is, "Peace be with you all: Towards an 'unarmed and disarming' peace."

The theme invites humanity to reject the logic of violence and war, and to embrace an authentic peace based on love and justice. On the evening of his election to the papacy on May 8, 2025, and on several other occasions since then, Pope Leo XIV appealed for peace with a characteristic phrase - "unarmed and disarming" - to characterize the type of peace he hopes for the world. He maintains that "This peace must be unarmed, that is, not based on fear, threats or weapons," and "it must be disarming, capable of resolving conflicts, opening hearts and generating mutual trust, empathy and hope." It is not enough to call for peace. We must embody it in a way of life that rejects every form of violence, whether it be visible or systemic.

All humanity is called to seek peace, no matter our religious affiliation or role in society. The greeting of the Risen Christ, 'Peace be with you' (Jn 20:19), is an invitation addressed to everyone - believers, non-believers, political leaders and citizens - to build the Kingdom of God and to work together to build a humane and peaceful future.

The **World Day of Peace** is an annual celebration by the Catholic Church, dedicated to universal peace, held on 1 January, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

January 6, Epiphany of the Lord



The Feast of the Epiphany is celebrated on January 6. This feast commemorates the visit of the wise men to worship the baby Jesus. Tradition tells us that their names were Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar. The men were astrologers who were looking for the star that would lead them to the promised Messiah. This was prophesied in the Book of Micah. According to the Gospel narratives, the wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh with them. These gifts were very meaningful. Gold was a precious and expensive gift and showed how important Jesus was. Frankincense is a sweet perfume which was often burned in the temple to worship God. It was a sign that Jesus should be worshipped. Myrrh was used to keep things fresh, and it was used by the women to anoint Jesus' body when he died. By bringing it as a gift to Jesus, the wise men foretold his suffering and death.

January 11, The Baptism of the Lord



The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is observed annually. It falls on the Sunday after January 6, so this year the date is January 11. It commemorates the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan by John the Baptist. Jesus is anointed with the Holy Spirit and his power. He is proclaimed Messiah.

He now goes about doing good, working the signs that make him known as the Servant of God. He is the one who brings good news to the poor and tells of salvation.

We are invited to not only think about the baptism of the Lord Jesus but also of our own baptism.

- How often do I think of my baptism and what it means in my daily life?
- Do I see myself as God's beloved son or daughter?
- Can I think of a recent example of when I was a light to those around me?

"Baptism is the door of the spiritual life and the gateway to the sacraments."

Thomas Aquinas

Week of January 18 – 25 - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2026 offers an invitation to draw on this shared heritage and to enter more deeply into the faith that unites all Christians.

The theme for the 2026 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18-25) is "**One Body, One Spirit**" (from Ephesians 4:4), with resources prepared by the Armenian Apostolic Church highlighting their ancient traditions, hymns, and experiences, focusing on unity and hope.



Churches and Christian communities worldwide are invited to use the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2026 to pray together for the unity among churches throughout the year.

January 24, St. Francis de Sales



Francis de Sales was born in 1567 and died in 1622. He lived in France and came from a large family. He had twelve brothers and sisters. His father wanted him to be a lawyer, but Francis knew God was calling him to be a priest and serve others. He was ordained in 1593. He is the patron saint of writers because he wrote many letters and books about having faith in God.

Trust in God

He was a kind and caring person who shared God's love with others. Francis de Sales taught people to trust in God. He said, "Have no fear for what tomorrow may bring.

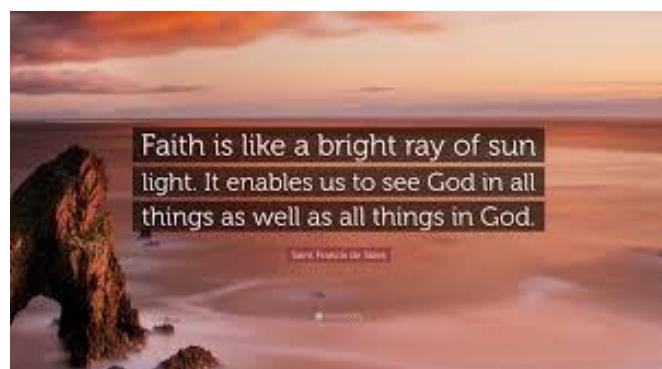
The same loving God who cares for you today will take care of you tomorrow and every day.” We should have peace in our hearts because we know that God is with us.

Pray always

Francis de Sales encouraged people to pray. He said that prayer is a conversation with God. Through prayer, we speak to God and God speaks to us. He knew it was important to be people of prayer. As he said, “Prayer is for everyone.” The life of this saint reminds us to pray always.

Be patient

Francis de Sales said: “Have patience with all things but chiefly have patience with yourself.” He knew that we sometimes worry about mistakes we’ve made and judge ourselves harshly. But God created us and loves us just as we are. These words of St. Francis de Sales speak to our lives today. His meekness and sunny disposition won for him the title of “Gentleman Saint.” He is the patron saint of writers, editors and journalists. Some St. Francis de Sales quotes:



January 27, St. Angela de Merici

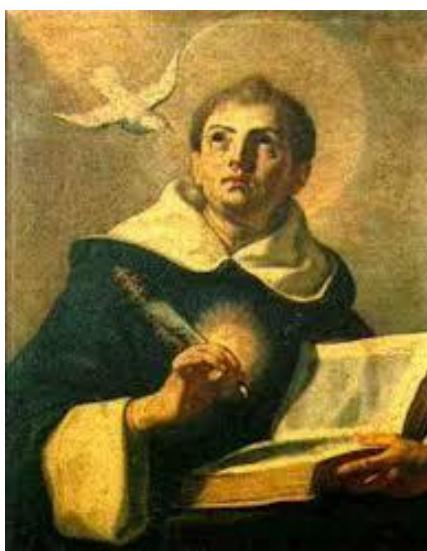


St. Angela de Merici, 1470-1540, founder of the Ursulines, devoted herself to Christian education based on love, kindness and firmness, and concern for the individual.

“You will accomplish more by kind words and a courteous manner than by anger or sharp rebuke . . .”

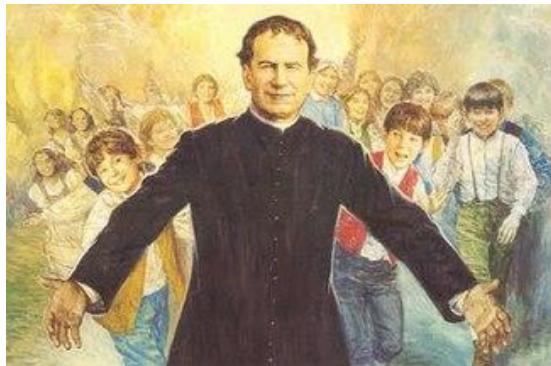
St. Angela de Merici

January 28, St. Thomas Aquinas



St. Thomas Aquinas was born in Italy in 1224 and died in 1274. Thomas was taught that Christian revelation and human knowledge are aspects of a single truth and cannot conflict with one another. One of the greatest theologians, he is patron of schools, universities, students and booksellers.

January 31, St. John Bosco



St. John Bosco 1815 – 1888 born in Piedmont, founded the Salesians to educate boys for life. He also became involved in publishing catechetical material for youth. He is a patron saint of youth and of catholic publishers.

John Bosco (16 August 1815 - 31 January 1888) who was popularly known as Don Bosco was an Italian Roman Catholic priest, educator, and writer. He worked in Turin, where the population suffered from illnesses because of industrialization and urbanization. He dedicated his life to the education of street children, juvenile delinquents, and other youth. He developed teaching methods based on love rather than punishment, a method that became known as the Salesian Preventive System.

He founded the Salesians to educate boys for life. He also became involved in publishing catechetical material for youth. He is a patron saint of youth and of Catholic publishers.



Catholic Schools Week 2026

Catholic Schools: Normal Lives, Called to Holiness

18th – 24th January 2026

This is a week to celebrate and acknowledge the wonderful contribution that our Primary Catholic schools, both primary and post-primary, make to the mission of the Church in our local faith communities and throughout the wider Church.

The theme of Catholic Schools Week is

Normal Lives, Called to Holiness

Which, simply put, means bringing God's love into our actions every day.

Our schools are communities that nurture students, helping them to realise their full potential and to put their gifts and talents at the service of others. In this way, our Catholic schools help students to hear God's call to holiness.

Catholic Schools Week Resources include a flier outlining the structure of the week and the themes for each day and they are available for download at

www.catholicschools.ie



We hope that you have been enjoying the Laudate 2026 repertoire and are looking forward to the celebrations following Catholic Schools Week 2026. The venues and dates for Laudate 2026 are as follows:

Church of Our Lady of Victories, Ballymun Road

Laudate Festival Night on Tuesday 27th January at 7.00-8.15 p.m.
Rehearsal as arranged with individual schools.

Church of St Therese, Mount Merrion

Laudate Festival Night on Wednesday 28th January at 7.00-8.15 p.m.
Rehearsal as arranged with individual schools.

Please continue to promote the **Laudate 2026 Festival** in your local community – the celebrations are ticketless and entry is free for all.

Participating in Laudate is a wonderful way to celebrate our Catholic Schools and faith.



Prayer for January



**Lord, as we begin a new calendar year,
we renew our commitment to offering our students**

the best possible quality education.

**Help us to lead the children to a greater awareness
of your presence in their lives.**

**Give us courage to take on the difficult challenges
and wisdom to make the right decisions along the way,
always listening to your Spirit
and discerning what is best for our students.**

**May Mary, your mother, help us
to lead the children closer to you.**

Amen.