

KEEPING Advent & Christmas

FROM CHURCH TO YOUR HOME
ST-IGNATIUS.ORG/ADVENT




**St. IGNATIUS
MARTYR**
CATHOLIC
CHURCH

"The Nativity," by John Singleton Copley

A NOTE FROM OUR PARISH STAFF

“What should we do?... “Teacher, what should we do?”...
“And what it is that we should do?”

On the third Sunday of Advent, John the Baptist is questioned first by the crowds, then by tax collectors, and finally by soldiers with different formulations that get at the same desire of the heart: just tell me what I should do to prepare for the Messiah, and I'll do it! Their question is our question as well: What should we do during Advent to prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas?

If you turn on a TV or watch enough YouTube videos, you'll find an unsatisfactory answer from the world: do whatever it takes to make Christmas morning “perfect” (which, of course, includes a new car with a giant bow for your spouse, all the popular presents for your kids, or even a little treat for yourself). But for us followers of Jesus, the runup to Christmas is not about these exterior elements; it's about preparing our hearts to receive the perfect gift of love and peace that only God can give.

These weeks before Christmas can be easily filled with shopping, socials, and seasonal displays, leaving no room in the inn of our hearts for Jesus. This booklet is meant to help us prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus Christ at Christmas by giving us a few ideas of “what we should do.” Together, let's set aside time during Advent so our celebration of Christmas can manifest God's love in our homes, neighborhood, and parish.

You're invited in these Advent days to both slow down at home and to join us at St. Ignatius Martyr where, together, we can prepare for Christ's coming. May Christmas find us ready to joyfully welcome Jesus into our hearts!

Peace,
Isaac Garcia



Director of Adult Evangelization and Catechesis

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

1. Each week of Advent has its own page in this booklet, with a variety of at-home and at-parish ways to keep the Advent season.
2. Pick a weekly time to pray with the art on the last four pages, one for each week of Advent, using the method on page 11.
3. Visit st-ignatius.org/advent-art to watch a short reflection and to find a high-resolution digital version of the artwork to enhance your prayer.
4. Peek ahead to see what's coming up so you can plan to join your parish community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Keeping Advent at Home Every Day	2
Advent Week 1: December 1-7	3
Blessing of an Advent Wreath at Home	4
Blessing of a Christmas Tree	5
Advent Week 2: December 8-14	6
Advent Week 3: December 15-21	7
Advent Week 4: December 22-24	8
Christmas Eve Blessing of a Nativity Scene	9
Christmas Day: December 25	10
Praying with Art (Adults and Kids)	11
Art for Advent Prayer	12

KEEPING

Advent at Home

THREE IDEAS FOR ALL AGES

1. Pray daily around your home Advent wreath. See below for two ways to pray daily, one for adults and one for families.
2. Incorporate 10 minutes of silence into your day – offer your time to God as a gift.
3. Make a “Cradle for Jesus” during Advent – especially good for children.
 - a. During the Advent season, invite your household to add “straw” to an empty manger bed (or a small box) to help keep Jesus warm on Christmas. Cut up pieces of paper, yarn, twine, or other similar material and each time you love Jesus or others, add to Jesus’ bed to help create a warmer home for him on Christmas. With this activity, we focus on giving, not receiving.
 - b. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/cradle-for-jesus>

DAILY ADVENT WREATH PRAYER METHOD FOR ADULTS

1. In silence, take a few deep breaths. While you breathe, remember that God loves you and that He delights in spending time with you in prayer.
2. Make the Sign of the Cross.
3. Light the Advent wreath candles (the same ones lit that previous Sunday).
4. Read the Gospel of the day (visit <https://bible.usccb.org/> to find the daily readings). Repeat a word or phrase that sticks out to you.
5. Read the Gospel again. In conversation with God, consider: What is God’s message to me today in the context of my real life? What is God inviting me to do, to be, or to change during this Advent?
6. Spend a few moments praying for the needs of the world, of those you know, and for your own needs.
7. Pray an Our Father.
8. End with a verse (or more) of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” and the Sign of the Cross.
9. Blow out the candles.

DAILY ADVENT WREATH EVENING PRAYER METHOD FOR FAMILIES

Older children, teenagers, and adults can take turns leading daily prayer with the following method. If possible, pray by candlelight, with only the Advent wreath lit.

1. Say: “Before we pray, let’s take a moment to breathe. While we breathe, remember that God loves you and that he’s happy when we spend time with Him in prayer.”
2. Make the Sign of the Cross.
3. Take turns lighting the Advent candles daily (the same ones lit the previous Sunday).
4. Sing a verse (or more) of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” or another Advent song.
5. Starting with the youngest, everyone tells God thank you for at least one thing and prays for at least one thing. For the littlest children, use these questions:
 - a. “What’s one good thing from today you want to tell Jesus thank you for?”
 - b. “Who should we pray for?”
6. Pray an Our Father and a Hail Mary.
7. End with a verse (or more) of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” or another Advent song.
8. Take turns blowing out the candles

ADVENT WEEK 1

December 1-7



AT ST. IGNATIUS

Lighting of the Advent Wreath on the First Sunday of Advent

After Mass, come up to the Advent wreath to view it. Note that only one of the four candles

is lit. The wreath “embraces” the Tabernacle - the real presence of Christ contained within. We witness the Real Presence by the décor and by how we reverently genuflect before the Body of Christ. The wreath with its colorful ornaments reflects the everlasting presence of God and our delight as we anticipate Christ’s return and the celebration of his Nativity.

December 2: Praise & Worship Night with Adoration, 7 p.m. – Church

Begin your Advent with a time of music and Adoration on the first Monday of Advent! Join us in the Church at 7 p.m. Praise and Worship music will be led by various musicians from our Youth Ministry + Life Teen Band collective.

For Children and Youth: Help Decorate the Church and the Bulletin with Christmas Artwork

Calling all children and youth of the parish: help us decorate for Christmas! Draw a scene from the Christmas story in the Bible and bring it to the Welcome Desk in the Narthex by December 15. Your artwork may be displayed in the Narthex or on the cover of the bulletin during the Christmas Season. Please use an 8.5 x 11” sheet of paper and write your name and parent contact information on the back. Not all artworks may be displayed. Artwork can be picked from the Welcome Desk up starting Saturday, January 18.



AT HOME

Bless your Advent Wreath

Praying with an Advent wreath is a wonderful tradition to help us visibly mark the passing of time during Advent at church and at home. At

home, it is appropriate for Advent wreaths to be blessed on the First Sunday of Advent, or when we first pray with an Advent wreath during the Advent season. Place your wreath where you want to pray this Advent and use the blessing on page 4.

Set up a Manger or Nativity Scene (Crèche)

Place your Nativity scene in a place of prominence – a prayer space, the dining table, on a coffee table, or elsewhere. To draw yourself deeper into Advent, frequently gaze at the Manger and imagine yourself as one of the characters. What was it like to be a shepherd and hear the angel’s proclamation? What concerns did St. Joseph have during the long trek? What would you offer Jesus as one of the magi? For inspiration, read the Gospel of Luke’s telling of the Nativity (Chapters 1 & 2).

Bless your Christmas Tree

After you hang your last ornament but before you plug in the lights, bless your Christmas tree using the blessing on page 5. By blessing the Christmas tree, we make explicit the connection between God’s generosity and our generosity, the Tree of Life (the Cross) and our own tree and our own crosses, and the Light of the World and the lights on our tree. We offer back to God the gifts He has given us and make holy the space around the tree and the tree itself.

December 6: Memorial of St. Nicholas, Bishop

St. Nicholas is more than the image we have of Santa Claus today, but was a man of great generosity. In some homes, it is the custom for children and adults to place their shoes in front of the fireplace or another prominent place in the house. Before going to sleep, one of the parents places a small token gift (chocolate, apple, orange, ornament, etc.) and/or a short love note symbolizing St. Nicholas’ generous heart.



PRAY WITH ART

Pray with the full-page version of “The Last Judgment,” by Wassily Kandinsky on page 12 using the prayer guide on page 11.



BLESSING OF AN ADVENT WREATH AT HOME

Candles and greenery are arranged in a circle. Traditionally, three of the candles are purple and one candle is rose (a shade of pink). During today's blessing, light the candle directly across from the rose candle. The rose candle is lit on the Third Sunday of Advent.

All make the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Leader: We gather around our Advent wreath during these short days and long nights to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Light of the World, Jesus Christ. Here, together, we shall remember God's promise of salvation. Let us listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah.

Reader: The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom
a light has shone.
You have brought them abundant joy
and great rejoicing.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us now pray for God's blessing upon us and upon this wreath.

After a short period of silence, the leader continues:

Leader: Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ: he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples, he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us, he is the Savior of every nation.

Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath.
May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation. May he come quickly and not delay.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

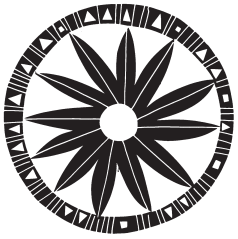
The first candle is then lighted.

The blessing concludes with a verse from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":

O come, desire of nations,
bind in one the hearts of humankind;
bid ev'ry sad division cease
and be thyself our Prince of peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

All make the Sign of the Cross.



BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE

After you finish trimming the tree, but before you plug in the lights, bless your Christmas Tree with this simple blessing, which is appropriate for both real and artificial Christmas Trees.

All make the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All: Now and forever.

Leader: This tree is a blessing to our home. It reminds us of all that is beautiful, all that is filled with the gentleness and the promise of God. It stands in our home as a tree of light that we might promise such beauty and goodness to one another and to our world. It stands like that tree of paradise that God made into the Tree of Life, the Cross of Jesus. Let us now listen to the words of the apostle Paul to Titus.

Reader: But when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God

After a short period of silence, the leader continues:

Leader: Let us now pray for God's blessing upon all who gather around this tree.

After a short period of silence, the leader continues:

Lord our God, we praise you for the light of creation: the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night. We praise you for the light of Israel: the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures. We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son: he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the wonder of your love.

Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The lights of the tree are then illuminated.

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross.

All: Thanks be to God.

The blessing concludes with a verse from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadow put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

ADVENT WEEK 2

December 8-14



AT ST. IGNATIUS

December 9: Solemnity - Immaculate Conception of Mary

From the moment Mary existed, she was preserved from original sin and its effects.

Mary was proactively redeemed by Jesus. In celebrating her Immaculate Conception, we celebrate God's plan for salvation for all humanity. Bishop Joe Vazquez has dispensed us of the obligation to attend Mass, but you are still encouraged to join us for Mass at 7 a.m., 12:05 p.m., or 7 p.m. (bilingual).

December 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration

"Am I not here, I, who am your mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not the source of your joy? Are you not in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Do you need something more? Let nothing else worry you, disturb you."

— Our Lady of Guadalupe to San Juan Diego

All are invited to take part in the celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas. See schedule below:

5:30 p.m.	Rosary in the Church
6 p.m.	Serenade to the Virgin Mary
6:30 p.m.	Traditional Dance
7 p.m.	Bilingual Mass
8 p.m.	Dinner in the Family Center
8:30 p.m.	Traditional Dance in the Family Center



AT HOME

Christmas Artwork

Children and youth are invited to help decorate the Church and bulletin by drawing a scene from the Christmas story in the Bible.

See page 3 for more information.

December 13: Memorial of Saint Lucy

St. Lucy, whose name means "light," is the patron saint of the blind. She was tortured and martyred for her dedication to her faith. St. Lucy is often depicted holding a platter with gouged eyeballs or wearing a crown of candles. Pray for St. Lucy's intercession today, that you may give sight to those who are hopeless and bring light in the darkness of persecution.

In the evening at home, instead of using overhead lights or lamps, try to use only candles (real or electric). Eat by candlelight, get ready for bed by candlelight, and read and pray by candlelight. In this way, we can connect ourselves to the Christians in the past who kept Advent by candlelight.



PRAY WITH ART

Pray with the full-page version of "St. John the Baptist Preaching," by Mattia Preti on page 13 using the prayer guide on page 11.

ADVENT WEEK 3

December 15-21



AT ST. IGNATIUS

December 14/15:

Gaudete (Rejoice!) Sunday

Gaudete is Latin for rejoice. The

color rose (a shade of pink) symbolizes our shared joy that Jesus is almost here! Wear rose (pink) to Mass.

December 15: Christmas Artwork Due (see page 3)

Children and youth are invited to turn in their Christmas scene artwork to the Welcome Center by Sunday,

December 15. See page 3 for more information.

December 15: Advent Lessons, Carols, and Stories, 7 p.m. - Church

Originating in England over 100 years ago, Advent Lessons and Carols is a prayer service that includes Scripture readings and Advent carols led by our Parish Choir.

According to Eric Milner-White, who first adopted the Lessons and Carols service while he was dean at King's College, Cambridge, the purpose of the service is "not to celebrate Christmas, but to expect it." At our service this year, our Parish Choir will present music on the Advent themes of hope, waiting, and three parishioners will share stories on these same major themes. All are welcome to a restful, prayerful, hope-filled evening of music, storytelling, and community.

December 16-21: Posadas at 7 p.m.

In Mexico and other Latin American countries, the nine days leading up to Christmas are celebrated by a nightly reenactment of Mary and Joseph's search for an inn or "posada." Join us at St. Ignatius for an evening of prayer, song, food, and fellowship!

December 16, 20, and 21 – Family Center

December 17, 18, and 19 – Father Payne House



AT HOME

Spread Joy

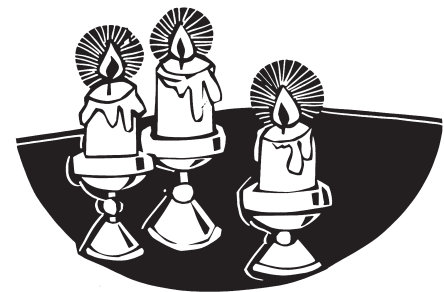
The third Sunday of Advent is *Gaudete* Sunday, which is Latin for

rejoice. Reflect on the joy in your life. Joy can serve as a reminder of God's love for us, and we're given this time of the year to rejoice with our God who loves us so much that He wanted to tell us in person. Take a moment this week to do at least one thing that brings you joy and offer that moment to God with a prayer: "Thank you God for the joy you give me in this moment." To go further, take one action this week (or one action every day this week) to bring joy into the lives of your neighbors, coworkers, friends, family, or even a stranger. Be God's joy and love in the world this week!

Pray with the O Antiphons

You may be familiar with the "O Antiphons" from the hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" – Wisdom, Lord, Root of Jesse, Key of David, Morning Star, King of Nations, and Emmanuel. The antiphons are prayed during the Evening Prayer of the Church (Vespers) from December 17 to 23. Rooted in imagery from the Old Testament, each antiphon is a title for the Messiah, and a petition for him to come and save the people of God by fulfilling the Scripture. Learn more and pray with the O Antiphons this week:

<https://bit.ly/O-Antiphons>.



PRAY WITH ART

Pray with the full-page version of "Preaching of St. John the Baptist," by Domenico Ghirlandaio on page 14 with the prayer guide on page 11.

ADVENT WEEK 4

December 22-24



AT ST. IGNATIUS

December 21-22:

Bring Your Infant Jesus Figurine

Bring the infant Jesus figurine

from your home nativity scene to church for a blessing by the priests or deacons on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. This tradition is popular in Italy and elsewhere in Europe.

December 22-23: Posadas in the Family Center

In Mexico and other Latin American countries, the nine days leading up to Christmas are celebrated by a nightly reenactment of Mary and Joseph's search for an inn or "posada." Join us in the Family Center for prayer, song, food, and fellowship!

December 22 at 2 p.m. – Family Center

December 23 at 7 p.m. – Family Center

December 23: Help Decorate the Church for Christmas, 9:30 a.m.

Kids, high schoolers, and adults of all ages are invited to help decorate our church for Christmas! Help our many visitors and regular parishioners celebrate Christmas well by preparing a festive and inviting space. Our decorating is organized in such a way that people of any age can help, even the smallest of children. Usually, all the work is done within two hours. Come even if you can only help for a small amount of time. Our daily Mass will be at 9 a.m. that day, so come a little earlier to pray.

December 24, Christmas Eve Mass Schedule, see page 10



AT HOME

Bless your Manger or Nativity Scene

The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene may take

place on Christmas Eve or at another suitable time. This blessing can open our family celebration of Christmas at home, as we place the baby Jesus in the manger.

Go to page 9 for the blessing.



PRAY WITH ART

Pray with the full-page version of "The Visitation," by Henry Ossawa Tanner, found on the back cover using the prayer guide on page 11.

BLESSING OF A NATIVITY SCENE

Have your infant Jesus figurine at hand. Clear a space for Jesus in the scene. If children are present, ask one or more to help with this and with placing the infant Jesus after the Gospel reading.

All make the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Leader: Our Nativity scene reminds us that at Christmas, God did not give us some thing, but He gave us Himself in Jesus Christ. As we gaze upon our Nativity scene, may we be inspired to give ourselves in love in our home and beyond. Let us read now the story of Jesus' birth from the Gospel of Luke.

Reader: In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled.... So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Place the Infant Jesus figurine in the Nativity scene.

After a short period of silence, the leader continues with the blessing.

Leader: God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation you have made manifest your love: when our need for a Savior was great you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love.

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns forever and ever.

All: Amen.

The blessing concludes with a verse or more of "Silent Night":

*Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.*

*Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, "Alleluia!"
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born!"*

*Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from Thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!*

*Silent night! Holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing
"Alleluia" to our King:
"Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born."*

All make the Sign of the Cross.

CHRISTMAS DAY

December 25



AT ST. IGNATIUS

Mass schedule for Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

For all Christmas Masses, give yourself plenty of time to park, walk to the church, and find a place to sit. Be welcoming to our

visitors and make sure they know we have “room at the inn” for them at St. Ignatius Martyr!

Tuesday, December 24, Christmas Eve

Both the 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Masses are well-suited for families with young children. Note that the 4 p.m. Mass is very crowded.

4 p.m.	Vigil Mass
6 p.m.	Vigil Mass
8 p.m.	Misa en Español
11:30 p.m.	Carols & anthems before the Midnight Mass

Wednesday, December 25, Christmas Day

A short carol service begins at 11:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve with the Parish Choir leading several Christmas anthems and Christmas Carols. About 15 minutes before the 10 a.m. Christmas morning Mass, festive prelude music will begin.

12:00 a.m.	Midnight Mass, Nativity of the Lord
10 a.m.	Christmas Day Mass

Visit the Crèche and Pray

Before or after Mass, walk to the front of the church, to where the crèche is set. Look at each figure and recall the story of Christmas. Note how all the scene revolves around the Christ Child. All the figurines, including the animals, seem to be in adoration. Join them by kneeling and saying a prayer next to the crèche.



AT HOME

Sing, “Happy Birthday” to Jesus

What do we do when someone we love has a birthday? We celebrate and we sing! Gathering around your Nativity Scene in prayer and end by singing a Happy Birthday song to Jesus.

Say, “Thank You”

Spend a moment to say a personal “thank you” to anyone who gives you a gift. Consider writing a note or spending 30 seconds telling someone how much they mean to you, thanking them for their presence in your life – be specific when possible. Your words of gratitude may be the best gift someone receives this Christmas.



PRAY WITH ART

Pray with the full-page version of “The Nativity,” by John Singleton Copley, found on the front cover using the prayer guide on page 11.

PRAYING with Art



FOR ADULTS & OLDER CHILDREN

1. Gazing: Simply Looking

Look slowly and thoroughly. Note the colors, movement, textures, people, and setting. Describe the scene to yourself in your mind.

Fix your eyes to a particular feature that continues to grab your attention. Notice the details. Remain here for a while.

2. Reflecting: Finding Meaning

Take a second, deeper look. Rest in the presence of the entire image, allowing it to reach beyond your mind and into your heart. Note your feelings, reactions, and thoughts. Reflect and pray. Where are you in the artwork? How does it speak to your faith journey right now? What is God's message to you in the context of your life today, this week?

3. Responding: Integrating with Life

Survey the artwork again. Take in the truth and beauty it presents.

Pray and reflect. Respond to the image by talking with God as you would a friend, asking: "Lord, what are you inviting me to in this image?" Sit and listen.

4. Resting

Pray in silence. End with an Our Father and Amen.

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Praying with Sacred Art with Younger Children

1. Looking

Gather around the artwork and look carefully. Try to be silent and still. Look for small details or something that catches your attention.

Be patient. Everyone notices differently. Give everyone time to see for themselves.

2. Pointing and Sharing

Starting with the youngest, point to the artwork and say what you see. During sharing, we all listen. God speaks through others when we pray together.

After everyone shares, look at the image again. When we hear what others notice, we see differently.

3. Finding Meaning

Close your eyes. Think about this question: What is God saying to you in the artwork?

Starting with the youngest, answer the question. Listen as everyone shares.

4. Ending

Close your eyes and talk to God silently just like you would your best friend. A grown up ends the prayer with an Our Father and Amen.





Mattia Preti, "St. John the Baptist Preaching," circa 1665



Domenico Ghirlandaio, "Preaching of St. John the Baptist," 1490



Henry Ossawa Tanner, "The Visitation," 1909-1910



ST-IGNATIUS.ORG/ADVENT