



# The Garratt Publishing Annual Advent Calendar

## The Nativity Scene Tradition

St Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first nativity scene in 1223, in the small Italian town of Greccio.

According to St Bonaventure, author of *The Life of St Francis of Assisi*, St Francis gained permission from Pope Honorius III to do something “for the kindling of devotion” to the birth of Christ.

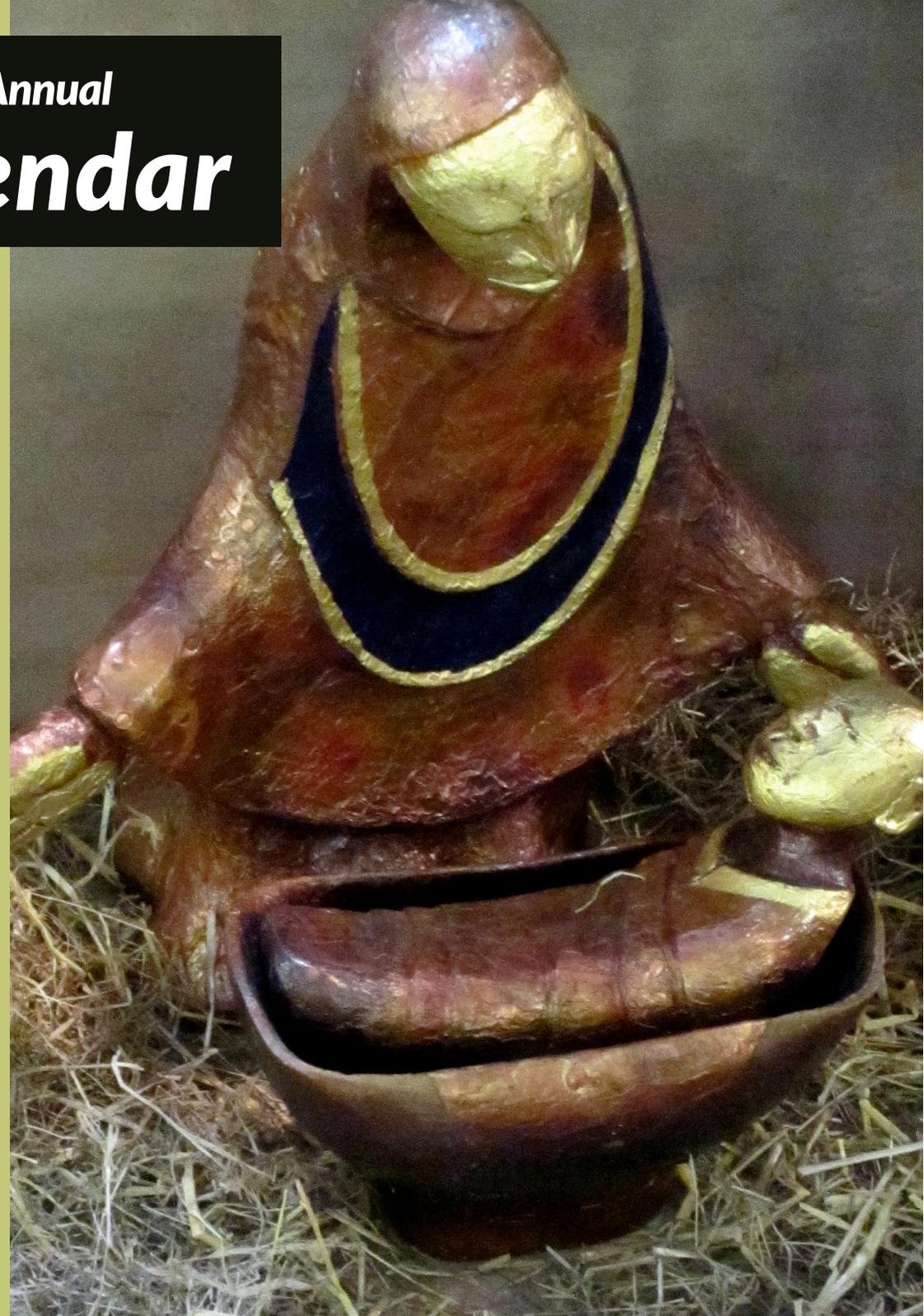
In a cave on the edge of the village, Francis set up a manger, a carved doll, a bale of hay, an ox and an ass. He then invited the villagers to come gaze upon the scene while he preached about “the babe of Bethlehem”. (Francis was supposedly so overcome by emotion that he couldn’t say “Jesus”).

Bonaventure wrote that when the blessed Father Francis embraced the doll in both arms, the doll cried tears of joy, and “seemed to be awakened from sleep”. This miracle of the crying doll moved all who were present. But, another miracle happened – the hay the child lay in, healed sick animals, and protected people from disease.

The nativity scene’s popularity took off from there. Within a couple of centuries, nativity scenes had spread throughout Europe, and then across the world.

ST MARTINS IN THE FIELD, LONDON, UK

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NOVEMBER

29



Loving God, we step out into the world this day  
As we do every day.  
Sometimes it is easy to leave the comfort of home,  
sometimes it isn't,  
but mostly we rush out on autopilot because we are running late.  
Beyond this door there are many things we can't control,  
situations we can't predict and events whose pace frustrates us.  
Give us the peace of heart and strength of purpose  
That allow us to step out and find our home with you  
Wherever your grace leads us today.  
Help us this day to be the answer to somebody else's prayer.  
Amen.

FRANCE

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DOORWAYS INTO HOPE AND JOY  
AT ADVENT & CHRISTMAS  
Michael McGirr





NOVEMBER  
30

# AUSTRALIA

by Wilson Fernandez  
Designer, Creator & Artist of the Australian Nativity Scene (ANS)  
St Elizabeth's Parish, Dandenong North  
[www.australiannativityscene.org](http://www.australiannativityscene.org)

*Lord God, we look for you during Advent with hope.  
Give us some light each day to find you.  
Help us walk in your light, and shine it for others. Amen*

**A NEW LIGHT SHINES**, Connie Clark





DECEMBER

1



AUSTRIA

by Daderot

*God of Dreamers, enlarge my dreams so they are your visions of peace.  
Guide my actions so they bring about the peacable kingdom. Amen*

MIRACLES ABOUND

Janet Schaeffler





*Dear Lord, help me to remember that you gave me life. Teach me to slow down, to be still and enjoy the pleasures created for me. To be aware of the beauty that surrounds me: the marvel of mountains, the calmness of lakes, the fragility of a flower petal. I need to remember that all these things come from you.*

# IRELAND

by Infomatique  
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**SACRED SPACE PRAYER BOOK 2021**

The Irish Jesuits



DECEMBER

3

MEXICO

by Prayitno  
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*Lord, I believe you promise to make me blessed and a blessing to others.  
Please help my unbelief. Amen*

**A WORLD FULL OF PROMISE**  
David M Knight



DECEMBER

4



# CZECH REPUBLIC

by František Suchomel (Power)  
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*Try to spend a few moments each day thinking and praying for your family. Christmas is often the time when families get together and often the time when they fall apart. Think through what your family is facing, and pour some good will into them.*

**LET IS SLOW, An Advent Calendar with a Difference**  
Stephen Cottrell





*Dear God,  
We will be very busy again this Christmastime, and we know that we will be tempted to forget the true meaning of this festival. Please help us to conquer these temptations, so that we may share with families the true joy of our Saviour's birth. Lord, we have sung our Christmas carols and heard the Nativity story so many times before; help us, in our acts of worship, to recapture the wonder of this glad season. Please make each heart a manger and each home a Bethlehem. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.*

*- Edith Williams*

DECEMBER  
6



# GERMANY

by Dietmar Rabich  
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*Jesus, come and dwell in every part of my life.  
Make me into your glorious dwelling place.*

**JESUS 365**  
The Word Among Us





DECEMBER

7

SCOTLAND

by cyocum  
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“Be Strong, fear not! Here is your God... he comes to save you.” Isaiah 35:4  
*I do not think there is any other season when the prophecy of Isaiah so lovingly pierces our hearts. God has made us a promise... Our dear and loving God, Jesus the Christ has come to save us. – Phyllis Zagano*

**LIGHT OF THE WORLD – Daily Meditations for Advent and Christmas**  
Phyllis Zagano



DECEMBER

8



# GREECE

by Ανώνυμος Βικιπαιδιστής  
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*God is our ever faithful, reliable, wise guide; when obstacles or by-paths cloud our thoughts, we are reminded to refocus ourselves on God as our light.*

**PRAYERS AND REFLECTIONS FOR AUSTRALASIAN TEACHERS 2021**

Ann Rennie, Gemma Thomson



DECEMBER

9



PERU

by KClvey  
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*Listen to a piece of music, or read a poem, or dare just to be silent, listening to your own breathing. Peel back the layers of your subterfuge and denial and look back again at what your heart longs for and what it believes. Treat yourself to a few minutes of stillness today. See what a difference it makes.*

**LET IS SLOW, An Advent Calendar with a Difference**

Stephen Cottrell



DECEMBER  
10



# HONDURAS

by gurdonark  
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*God who created each life as precious, remind me of ways to care  
that will make a difference for someone in their need.*

**MIRACLES ABOUND**

Janet Schaeffler





DECEMBER  
11

# VIETNAM

by The Bible Reading Fellowship  
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*Lord, let me hear your word in my heart, and let it transform me.*

**JESUS 365**  
The Word Among Us





DECEMBER  
12

# POLAND

by Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic of Poland  
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*Nothing is impossible to God!  
In difficult times, it is good to remember that God is fully in charge of our world.  
Everything happens according to his plan. There is always hope.*

**SACRED SPACE PRAYER BOOK 2021**

The Irish Jesuits





DECEMBER  
13



*Holy Lord, our true Teacher, our wants and desires make it hard to see the goodness you offer us.  
Direct our gaze to the path you would have us walk. Keep us striding down the right path,  
confident that we will come fully into your presence in the end.*

**DAILY PRAYER 2021**

Edrienne Ezell, Kurt Heinrich, Mary Heinrich & Timothy A. Johnston

**ITALY**

by Posti8

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DECEMBER  
14

CANADA

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*Son of David, yet born of the Father before all ages, remember us and  
all those who have gone before us who showed us the way to faith.*

*May we find each other at the altars on high,  
praising you together with the communion of saints.*

**WAITING IN JOYFUL HOPE, Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas 2020-2021**

Michelle Francl-Donnay



DECEMBER  
15



# COLOMBIA

by Chiot's Run  
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*Jesus, we trust in you, on good days and bad days.  
When we are frightened, and when we are glad...  
When the future is uncertain, and the past is troubling...  
We trust in you, for you are our God, and there is no other.*

**A NEW LIGHT SHINES**, Connie Clark





DECEMBER  
16

SPAIN

by Free the Image  
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*God of connection, the reality that you desire an intimate relationship with me is overwhelming. Because of your love for me, deepen my love for you, letting it shine forth in compassion, kindness, and gratitude.*

**MIRACLES ABOUND**  
Janet Schaeffler



DECEMBER  
17



*God Most High, All power and glory belong to you alone, Yet you force no one to worship you.  
As we celebrate the birth of your Son, may we and all people be inspired  
to humble ourselves before you and embrace the way of mercy and peace.*

**HUNGARY**

by Andras Fulop  
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**DAILY PRAYER 2021**

Edriane Ezell, Kurt Heinrich, Mary Heinrich & Timothy A. Johnston





DECEMBER  
18

ENGLAND

by Philocrites  
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*Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,  
that we may be made worthy of the promises of God.*

**A WORLD FULL OF PROMISE**  
David M Knight





DECEMBER  
19

*God of outlandish ideas, we thank you for the  
gift of community,  
for people of faith who gather around your table.  
May we be people of humble hospitality  
Who share all we have  
in both its beauty and brokenness.  
When we gather for the Eucharist  
we always begin by saying, Lord Have Mercy.  
We say it over again because we need to.  
We are all of us desperate.  
May those words plant seeds of hope deep within us.  
That you throw open your heart to those in need  
And welcome us to a place of light and truth,  
Laughter and honesty,  
Acceptance and mission.  
Amen.*



NETHERLANDS

by iStock

DOORWAYS INTO HOPE AND JOY  
AT ADVENT & CHRISTMAS  
Michael McGirr



DECEMBER  
20



USA

by Joe Shlabotnik  
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“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13  
*How will you bring joy, peace and hope to others during the Advent season?*

**PRAYERS AND REFLECTIONS FOR AUSTRALASIAN TEACHERS 2021**

Ann Rennie, Gemma Thomson





DECEMBER  
21

INDIA

by iStock

*Lord God, we thank you for this joyful time. We know that many people do not feel like rejoicing right now. Comfort those that are sad, lonely, or afraid. Show them that they are not alone. Help us know what to say and do to help.*

**A NEW LIGHT SHINES**  
Connie Clark





DECEMBER  
22

*Jesus, come and dwell in every part of my life.  
Make me into your glorious dwelling place.*

**JESUS 365**

The Word Among Us



**WEST BANK**

by iStock

DECEMBER  
23



**KENYA**

by Bennilover  
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*What small miracles have you noticed around you? How do they draw you closer into God's embrace?*

**WAITING IN JOYFUL HOPE, Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas 2020-2021**

Michelle Francl-Donnay





*Lord as I move into Christmas Eve, remind me again of how mercy is the dominant theme of how you walk with us. You are forever tender towards me. Help me to grow daily in the awareness of your mercy and tenderness, constantly at work in my life.*

**AUSTRALIA**

by Kgbo  
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**SACRED SPACE PRAYER BOOK 2021**  
The Irish Jesuits





DECEMBER  
25

Merry Christmas!

*The Christmas season is just getting under way and will last until the Baptism of the Lord on January 10. In fact, there is a holiday coming up just for you and your family – the feast of the Holy Family on Dec 27. Whatever the New Year looks like for you, Remember that Christ will be with you, just as he always has. God bless you.*

**A NEW LIGHT SHINES**, Connie Clark

**VATICAN CITY**

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