

Good morning, and welcome to the December First Saturday Mass ... sponsored by the Saginaw Division of the World Apostolate of Fatima. We would like to extend our gratitude to Deacon Roger and Holy Family parish for their generosity in allowing us to use this, the most beautiful church in all of mid-Michigan.

The First Saturday devotions, as put forward by Our Lady to Sister Lucia on December 10, 1925, are for five consecutive months, go to confession, worthily receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and meditate on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation to Her Immaculate Heart.

Today is the optional memorial of Saint Nicholas of Myra, a saint who lived at the end of the third century through the beginning of the fourth century.

He was known for his generosity - giving bags of gold to three poor sisters so that they would have a dowry and so get married. He is also credited with saving three children from a vicious butcher who wanted to sell them for meat. As well as miraculously multiplying a shipment of wheat to alleviate a famine.

There is also, in some hagiographies, the story that during the Council of Nicaea, when the Church was combatting the Arian heresy – which stated that Jesus wasn't -really- God, but was just kind of god-like – that Arius, the heretical bishop, so angered Saint Nicholas, that the saint punched the heretic in the face.

In our own day, Saint Nicholas has been tamed down and is the figure of Santa Claus. A tamed, secular figure ... not so much a saint ... and not so much a defender of Christ.

Our own day sees many heresies – crazed attempts at updating the Faith to make it more relevant end up making a mockery of Christ ... twisted attempts to justify perversions end up distorting the relationship of Christ to His Church. Would that we had even one Saint Nicholas in our time to punch a few heretical noses.

And of course, as the Faith becomes more and more watered down, we see a growing lack of generosity and compassion.

Thus, Our Lady's prophetic call for the First Saturdays of Reparation surely foresaw the corruptions of society in which we live ... or perhaps there is worse to come.

Yet, Our Lady's powerful intercession can and will protect us ... so long as we submit ourselves to the Holy Will of God – just as she did.

This month, we celebrate on Monday, the Solemnity of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception ... and on Friday, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Immaculate Conception is the patroness of the United States, and Our Lady of Guadalupe is the patroness of the Americas – that is, the Western Hemisphere.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ – let us pray for a deeper docility to the Holy Spirit ... so that we might persevere in the Faith that has been handed down to us over the centuries, and in a spirit of reparation and through our prayers ... bring about the Triumph of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart ... in our own hearts, in our families, in our nation, and in the world.

O, Mary, conceived without sin ... pray for us who have recourse to Thee.

Our Lady of Guadalupe ... pray for us.

Our Lady of Fatima ... pray for us.