

Tomorrow is Christmas Eve, which according to some sources is the commemoration of our First Parents, Adam and Eve. In certain areas, there is a custom that for the entire day of December 24, that the church bells would toll - symbolic of death - until Christmas Eve Mass began. Then the bells would peal to reflect the joy brought about by the birth of Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer.

Today is the commemoration of Saint John Cantius - a polish priest who taught Scripture at the University of Krakow. He was known as a friend of the poor, and led a very simple life. One story is that he was invited to a dinner by a wealthy family, but was turned away by the servants because his cassock was old and patched.

Saint John admonished his students to "fight false opinions with patience, sweetness and love. Roughness is bad for your own soul and spoils the best cause."

In todays readings we also hear about the birth of John the Baptist.

All these things give us much to reflect on - our own sinfulness ... the tremendous gift of salvation ... how we treat the poor ... how we deal with difficult people ... our preparations for Our Lord in our lives ... many things.

As we approach the great Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ's Nativity, let us reflect on the great gift of our redemption - and how Christ's mission from God the Father was the redemption of humanity and the restoration of all creation. Let us pray to be active participants in that restoration through the outpouring of grace, love, and mercy in this most blessed of seasons.