

Happy Saint Nicholas Day! Yes, even though we find ourselves on the First Friday of Advent, the calendar of saints calls us today to remember the patron of children, St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas was an early bishop, a humble man, who cared for all around him. The wisdom of the readings calls us to reflect, **“And out of gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see. The lowly will ever find joy in the Lord!”** The Lord is described as one who takes care of his orchard. We are truly part of that orchard. As people of faith in the Saint X community who serve with our knowledge and example, we are called daily to reach out to all around us: our students, our colleagues, as well as those closest to us in our personal life. We help tend the orchard. As many have already stated this week, this fast-paced time of year can bring impatience, discouragement, and prevent us from truly opening our hearts to true joy and hope. We need to look no further than the joy of wonder and children.

This weekend, our family celebrates the third birthday of my great nephew, FRANKIE, named for me and my late Dad, Frank Knoop Sr. Two weeks, as I prepared to lead Christian Awakening Retreat, I asked Frankie what I should talk about with “our guys”. He said, “Tell them about Thomas and Baby Jesus”. He was not referring to Thomas the apostle, but to Thomas the Train and Baby Jesus. For him, THOMAS and BABY JESUS are truly models of Hope and Happiness. May we all continue to find JOY in the moment, as we move through this hopeful season. I hope today, St. Nicholas Day, we all find ways to experience the Master of the orchard’s voice in some act of kindness. May we receive the message and also extend the message. Maybe we do so in simple sharing of chocolate or a peppermint candy cane. The act of sharing and caring, and as a young boy named Frankie said, “Think about Thomas and Baby Jesus” Have a nice day!

