

*Third Sunday of Advent
December 17, 2023*



*Growing
in Spirit,
Community,
and Service*

Bonnie News

Franciscan Church of St. Bonaventure



As we celebrate "Gaudete Sunday": An Illuminated letter G from the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. Milan: Philippus de Lavagnia, 1475 (Sp Coll Hunterian Ds.2.6-7).

Mass Times

Sunday Eucharist

*Saturday Vigil: 5 pm
Sunday: 8:30 am, 10 am
and 12 noon*

Weekday Eucharist

9 am: Monday to Friday

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday: 9 to 10 am

Ministry Centre

Hours

10 AM– 4 PM

*Monday, Wednesday,
Friday*

*and by appointment on
Tuesday & Thursday*

*1300 Leslie Street,
Toronto, ON M3C 2K9
Tel: 416.447.5571
Fax: 416.447.4082*

www.st-bonaventure.ca

www.franciscans.org

For a New Beginning by John O'Donohue

In out-of-the-way places of the heart,
Where your thoughts never think to wander,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire,
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,
Noticing how you willed yourself on,
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.

It watched you play with the seduction of safety
And the gray promises that sameness whispered,
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,
Wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight, when your courage kindled,
And out you stepped onto new ground,
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,
A path of plenitude opening before you

Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

LITURGY & SACRAMENTS

THIS WEEK'S MASS SCHEDULE

Monday, December 18	9 AM	† Hugh Canning, Sr. and Jr.
Tuesday, December 19	9 AM	† Peter Cronin
Wednesday, December 20	9 AM	† David Sullivan
Thursday, December 21	9 AM	† Josef Sitar
Friday, December 22	9 AM	† Jacinta Osuji † Cesar Ortuoste In Thanksgiving from the Gabriel Family For Vocations
Saturday, December 23	5 PM	The Parishioners
Sunday, December 24	8:30 AM	† Doris Mary Tanter
	10 AM	† Felicidad Nogra
	4 PM	The Parishioners
	7 PM	The Parishioners
	10 PM	The Parishioners
Monday, December 25	10 AM	The Parishioners
	12 PM	The Parishioners
Sanctuary Lamps Bl. Sac. Bl. Sac. O.L. Chapel		† Sofronio Bautista
		† Carolina Bautista
		† Deanna Andrew

CHANGES THIS COMING 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ DEC. 23/24

Please note that there will be no 12 noon Mass on Sunday, Dec. 24th. Also, there will be no bulletin for the 4th Sunday of Advent.

HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION

In Canada, the Solemnities of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas ~ Dec. 25) and Mary, Mother of God (New Year's Day ~ Jan. 1) are Holy Days of Obligation. We are obligated to celebrate the Eucharist on these great feasts. This year, they fall on the heels of the 4th Sunday of Advent and the Feast of the Holy Family (we are also obligated to worship God every Sunday); we can be grateful for the anticipated Mass of Sunday (Saturday "vigil" Mass) and the anticipated Masses of these two Solemnities. Please be sure to consult the parish's Christmas Schedule for precise times noting both additional Masses and some suppressions. To understand the meaning of obligation, here is a fine explanation in the context of our weekly Sunday worship:

"Much obliged" is an old-fashioned phrase first noted in the Old Oxford English Dictionary in the sixteenth century. Over the centuries, the phrase has lost some of its richness. Originally, it meant to be bound to a person by ties of gratitude. Today, the phrase is more often used as an automatic response to someone who has performed a perfunctory service. Unfortunately, this practice does not convey the sense of truly being bound to each other by gratitude. What a loss! Because of that loss, many people understand the word *obligation* as a burden rather than a commitment and duty that flows from a relationship. Obligation is a form of indebtedness that comes from within the heart of a relationship.

Think of the obligations that make for a rich family life. A parent does not say, "I wonder if I have to feed my children this week?" Husbands and wives carry out a myriad of obligatory tasks in service to each other during the course of a week and never ask, "Do I have to?" In loving relationships, we are grateful for the gift of each other and we express that gratitude by doing right actions because we want to do so. Obligatory behaviors grow

GROWING IN *Spirit, Community, and Service*

out of communication, intimacy, and personal and communal relationships. These examples can help us reflect on our “obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2041)

The heart of Sunday obligation is gratitude. The word Eucharist means “to give thanks.” We gather each week because we are “much obliged” to God—for everything. This obligation is not an automatic response to someone who has performed a perfunctory service. We come together to “give thanks” to God, our Father who is the source of all life and creation, and to Jesus, God’s Son who gave us eternal life through his death on the Cross that is made present in every Mass as we participate again in Christ’s death and Resurrection through the Eucharist.

Each time we “attend Mass,” we bring our lives, our very selves, to the *Eucharist*. We gather together as a community, grateful to have each other as fellow pilgrims in faith and grateful to be nourished by the body and blood of Christ. Just as the relationships and obligations in families are nurtured and strengthened by intimacy and communion, so too does our participation in the Eucharist nurture and strengthen our relationship with the Trinity. Food nourishes our body in the same way that our participation in Holy Communion nourishes our spirit and unites us together as individuals and as a community in Christ. Acting on our Sunday obligation of being “much obliged” gives us reason to be “more obliged” in the most authentic sense of obligation.

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THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Confessions are heard on a weekly basis on Saturdays from 9 to 10 am in the Mary Chapel. In addition, confessions are heard on the first Monday of the month from 1 to 2 pm. Finally, you can always make an appointment with Fr. Peter or Fr. Tom to celebrate this Sacrament in which we encounter our merciful God.

USHERS NEEDED

The ministry of usher/greeter extends the hospitality of Christ by welcoming parishioners as we gather for Mass. Ushers also take up the collection and ensure the flow of the Communion procession. They are attentive toward people who may need assistance. We especially need ushers to assist at the 12 noon Mass. If you worship regularly at the 12 noon Mass, please consider becoming an usher.

PRAYER



In our charity we remember those who are ill and all who have requested a remembrance in our prayers.

We commend to the Lord the members of our parish who died recently:

+ *Jim Meyer*, + *Marjorie McGinty*, + *Gerry Devlin*, + *Alice Eaglen*, + *Deanna Andrew* and + *Norman Bell*

PRAYER NETWORK REQUESTS

Network members pray daily for your prayer intentions which are held in confidence. New members are welcome! Please call Teresa Krijgsman at 416-444-4719 with your prayer intentions or if you would like to join the prayer network.

ONLINE ADVENT RETREAT

Pray-As-You-Go presents its 2023 Advent retreat weekly podcast titled: “The Cry from the Manger”.

You may access it at <https://pray-as-you-go.org/series/67-thecryfromthemanger>

A PRAYER FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Providential God, we await the celebration of the birth of your Son. Like the people of long ago, we, too, are in need of light, in need of direction, in need of your Word to show us the way. Our busy lives and the consumerism that surrounds us make it difficult to recognize your kingdom and to hear your voice. Help us Lord, to focus on you and fill our hearts with joy and peace. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ EVENING OF DEC. 23RD/ MORNING OF DEC. 24

Lord, today is the last day of Advent this year. Today, we hear Gabriel's joyful greeting and the Virgin Mary's "let it be done to me"; tomorrow we celebrate the Birth of the Messiah. On those days when I seem to be flying from one thing to another, help me to remain centred in you. Renew your Holy Spirit within me that I may respond generously when I am surprised by your invitations to love selflessly. Amen.

HELPING OTHERS

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS CHRISTMAS 2023 SOCK DRIVE AND WINNER OF NATIVITY SET



The Knights of Columbus continue to ask for donations to its annual Sock Drive, collecting at all the weekend Masses. Two large boxes with labels are at the back of the church; parishioners are asked to drop off socks in the boxes. All donations will be given to homeless shelters.

The winner of this year's Nativity Set raffle is: 1062

CASSEROLES FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD REFUGE



The Casserole Cooks sent 51 assorted casseroles to the Good Shepherd in November. This donation contributes to feeding the hungry who come to The Good Shepherd in need of a meal. As always a BIG thank you to those who took the time to prepare a casserole. Not always easy as everyone has lots to do.

If you would like to be a part of this mission of mercy you are most welcome.

Recipes and pans are available for this purpose and found in the cupboard at the back of the church. Kindly remember to sign for pans needed.

Matthew 25: 35-37 - Here, Jesus links feeding the hungry to ministering to himself, I

was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. Caring for the vulnerable, hungry people is not only following Jesus' lead, it is akin to caring for Jesus.

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



Sharing God's love with others through acts of service

"May the Lord always be with you and may you always be with Him. We are to become vessels of God's compassionate love for others." -*Saint Clare of Assisi*

"The poor are valuable in the eyes of God because they remind us how we should live the Gospel, like beggars reaching out to God. The Church encourages us to open wide our hands to our brothers and sisters in need." -Magisterium AI

Our confidential helpline is: **416-447-5571 Ext. 570** for those who need assistance. In addition to donating through our poor boxes located at our three main exits, online donations can be made securely through our QR code or the following link:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/society-of-st-vincent-de-paul-st-bonaventure-conference/>



CHRISTMAS FOOD DRIVE FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD CENTRE

Please drop items off at the back of the church. Items most in need are:

mayonnaise & ketchup	jams & peanut butter	granola bars
mustard	tea bags & coffee	bagged rice
tuna & canned meat	canned tomatoes	tomato sauce
beans & chickpeas	soup & stews	canned vegetables

GRECCIO 800

FROM ST. FRANCIS TO MODERN HOMES: THE 800-YEAR LEGACY OF THE CRÈCHE



Site of the first reenactment of the Nativity, in 1223 A.D., Greccio, Italy,

This year, when festive lights twinkle in homes worldwide, we will find ourselves at a significant milestone. It is the 800th anniversary of a tradition that has, for centuries, symbolized the true essence of Christmas – the crèche. The word “crèche” originates from the Old French term for a crib or manger. This iconic scene, which reenacts the birth of Jesus Christ, finds its roots in the 13th century with St. Francis of Assisi. But who would have thought that a simple representation in a cave in Greccio, Italy, would leave such a lasting legacy?

In 1223, desiring to make the experience of the Christmas story more tangible and accessible, St. Francis sought permission from Pope Honorius III to set up a live nativity. His intention? To eschew the rising materialism of the time and bring focus back to the simple and divine nature of the Christmas story. By using real animals and a manger in a cave setting, he created a physical representation of the events of that holy night.

From its Italian origins, the crèche rapidly gained traction across Europe. Artisans in different countries began to depict the nativity using materials and styles that reflected their own cultures. The Polish “szopka,” Spanish “Belénes” and French “santons” are just a few regional iterations. In Latin America, entire towns partake in live reenactments. In the Philippines, the “Panunuluyan” pageant is performed: actors go from house to house, seeking shelter, culminating in a display of the manger scene.

The crèche, in all its forms, is more than just an ornamental display. It stands as a visual sermon reflecting the core of Christian belief that God became man to walk among us. This simple scene – one of a child born in humble circumstances surrounded by adoring shepherds and wise men – speaks to the universal themes of love, humility and hope. It serves as a poignant reminder of a god who chose a simple manger in which to make entrance into the world. To many, this underscores the idea that divinity can be found in simplicity and that every individual holds intrinsic value, no matter their circumstances.

Celebrating the 800th anniversary of the crèche is about recognizing the enduring appeal and significance of a tradition that transcends cultural and geographical boundaries. The crèche’s ability to continue inspiring and uniting people across generations is truly remarkable. The octocentenary is a testament to the enduring power of the story it represents. Despite rapidly changing times, the story of a child in a manger continues to captivate and inspire. It presents an opportunity to reflect on the shared human experience. In a world that sometimes feels more divided than united, the crèche remains a symbol of universal compassion and faith. Whether displayed in a cathedral in Europe or a home in Africa, its essence remains unchanged. It is a call back to simplicity, love and hope.

~By Annette Mikat, from *Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration*

800TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIVITY SCENE AT GRECCIO ~ PLENARY INDULGENCE

On the occasion of the 800th anniversary of "Christmas at Greccio" as experienced by St. Francis of Assisi, the Apostolic Penitentiary grants a plenary (full) indulgence to all the faithful who, from December 8, 2023 (Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary) to February 2, 2024 (Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord) visit and pray before a Nativity scene in a church entrusted to the Franciscan friars. The Franciscan Family had forwarded a request for this plenary indulgence to the Holy Father "in order to promote the spiritual renewal of the faithful and increase the life of grace...".

By pausing in devout prayer before a nativity scene in a church served by Franciscans, the faithful may obtain the plenary indulgence for themselves or the souls of the deceased under the following usual conditions:

The faithful must, in addition to being in the state of grace:

- have the interior disposition of complete detachment from sin, even venial sin;
- have sacramentally confessed their sins;
- receive Holy Communion;
- pray for the intentions of the Holy Father.

It is appropriate, but not necessary, that sacramental Confession, reception of Holy Communion and the prayer for the Pope's intentions take place on the same day that one visits the Nativity scene; but it is sufficient that these sacred rites and prayers be carried out within several days before or after prayerfully visiting a crèche in a church served by the Franciscans. One sacramental confession is sufficient for several plenary indulgences. However, for each plenary indulgence one wishes to receive, a separate reception of the Eucharist and a separate prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father are required. A plenary indulgence can be gained only once a day. Those who are sick or unable to participate physically can obtain the indulgence by offering their sufferings to the Lord or by carrying out practices of piety.

800TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST NATIVITY CRECHE ~ FILL A STABLE FOR CHRISTMAS



St. Bonaventure's Secular Franciscans & the Parish would like you to help us "**Fill a Stable for Christmas this year**" in honour of the 800th anniversary of St. Francis & the first Christmas at Greccio. This event became the origin of the custom of the Christmas Creche.

All funds collected will be donated to CHALICE CANADA to "Fill a Stable" (\$1,000) &/or provide animals for families & communities in need.

Poultry & Livestock are the Gifts that Keep on Giving by providing eggs, milk, wool, meat, cheese & financial security for the future. Parent farmers give back by providing milk, meat & eggs for school meal programs.

CHALICE CANADA is a Catholic international aid charity focused on child, family & community development with 52 sponsor sites in impoverished areas throughout the world. There will be **collection boxes** at the entrance to the church. If a receipt is needed for Income Tax purposes, please put your donation in an envelope marked 'Fill a Stable' and provide your name, full address & envelope number (if applicable) & the amount of your donation. **Cheques** should be payable to **St. Bonaventure's Parish** with the **Memo - Fill a Stable**. Tax receipts will be provided by the parish. This will be included in your official receipt for 2023. For more information visit chalice.ca

2024 OFFERTORY ENVELOPES AVAILABLE FOR PICK-UP

The 2024 offertory envelopes are available for pick-up in the back of the church. We are no longer mailing out the offertory envelopes. If you are currently not using envelopes, please consider doing so. You will receive a tax receipt for your donations. Please contact the ministry centre for more information, 416-447-55714.

The last day for contributions for 2023 is December 31. Thank you for your continued support of the parish!

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE



Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 23rd - 5 pm

Sunday, December 24th - 8:30 am and 10 am only (*Please note: no 12 noon Mass*)

Solemnity of The Nativity of the Lord (Holy Day of Obligation)

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24th - 4 pm (Children's Mass with live animals), 7 pm (carols begin at 6:40 pm), and 10 pm (carols begin at 9:40 pm)

Christmas Day

Monday, December 25th - 10 am and 12 noon only

Weekday Masses within the Octave of the Nativity

Tuesday, December 26th to Friday, December 29th - 9 am

Feast of The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Saturday, December 30th - 5 pm

Sunday, December 31st - 8:30 am, 10 am and 12 noon

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God (Holy Day of Obligation)

New Year's Eve

Sunday, December 31st - 5 pm

New Year's Day

Monday, January 1st - 10 am and 12 noon only

Weekday Masses of the Christmas Season

Tuesday, January 2nd to Friday, January 5th - 9 am

Solemnity of The Epiphany of the Lord

Saturday, January 6th - 5 pm

Sunday, January 7th - 8:30 am, 10 am and 12 noon

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Monday, January 8th - 9 am

“Memories are our strength. When night attempts to return, we must light up the great dates, as we would light torches.”

~Victor Hugo

CONTACT US

Ministry Centre (Office)
1300 Leslie Street
Toronto, ON M3C 2K9
Office: 416-447-5571

Pastor
Fr. Thomas Reist, OFM Conv.
Ext. 234
frtom@st-bonaventure.ca

Associate Pastor
Fr. Peter Knaapen, OFM Conv
Ext. 233
FrPeter@st-bonaventure.ca

Lay Pastoral Associate
Gregory Beath
Ext. 258
gregb@st-bonaventure.ca

Parish Manager
Connie Durante
Ext. 224
connie@st-bonaventure.ca

ARE YOU REGISTERED? IF NOT, ASK AN USHER
FOR A PARISH REGISTRATION FORM TO COMPLETE

St. Anthony of Padua Mission Aid
1320 Leslie Street, Suite 100
Toronto, ON M3C 2K9
416-690-9904
www.saintanthonyofpadua.net

St. Clare Inn Office:
1320 Leslie Street, Suite 200
Toronto, ON M3C 2K9
416-690-0330
info@stclareinn.org

St Bonaventure School
1340 Leslie Street
Toronto, ON M3C 2K9
416-393-5263
<https://www.tcdsb.org/SCHOOLS/STBONAVENTURE/>

Society of St. Vincent de Paul
416-447-5571 ext 570

Casseroles for the Good Shepherd Centre, contact
casseroles@st-bonaventure.ca

REFLECTION

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord...'" ~ John 1:23

Advent is a time for us to hear the call - ultimately which comes from Jesus - to prepare his way. We are sent before him to the non-geographical places where the good news of Jesus hasn't been heard or where it is no longer accepted. Pope Francis tells us - in the *Joy of the Gospel* - that we share the good news best by our actions, more than by our words. Our inner joy, made manifest in our freedom to witness our joy, in our service for others, evangelizes, that is, it credibly announces the good news of our salvation in Jesus. We tell people about it best when we look like we believe it, and we look like we believe it because we live it.

We become those who prepare the way for faith, through our core relationships and in our families, when we witness our faith in Jesus. Perfectionism, harshness, judgements, the pointing finger never brought anyone closer to Jesus. Yet, this is too often what "being religious" looks like to others. Our role in preparing the way for Jesus is to announce, to witness, to show how full of joy and how free we are by the personal relationship we have with Jesus. It is the exact opposite of being "self-righteous" or "impatient." We "proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes" when we look and act like loved sinners. When we know we are forgiven and saved by God's mercy in Jesus, we are not only free from our own self-centeredness, but we become courageous in loving as we have been loved. We become compassionate. We have the heart of Jesus for others. We are the people who keep the door open, even when it seems there is no hope that someone will return. We become more merciful. We hear the cries of those in need and we reach out and stand on the side of those in need.

When we are on fire with the reality of the Incarnation of our God - for us - we become not only more charitable, and kind and generous. We become on fire with being advocates for those in need. We desire, with Jesus, with the power of the Holy Spirit, to stand up and speak the truth about the need for justice and prepare a highway for Jesus to let God's Kingdom come on earth - as it is in heaven.

~ From Creighton University Online Ministries Webpage.

May the Lord bless you and keep you!