



*Growing  
in Spirit,  
Community,  
and Service*

### **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,  
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[www.franciscans.org](http://www.franciscans.org)

*Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord and the Christmas Octave  
December 25, 2023 -January 1, 2024*

# Bonnie News

*Franciscan Church of St. Bonaventure*



*The Nativity (c.1420), Robert Campin (1375/1379-1444), oil on panel, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon.*

### **Christmas Eve by Christina Rossetti**

Christmas hath a darkness  
Brighter than the blazing noon,  
Christmas hath a chillness  
Warmer than the heat of June,  
Christmas hath a beauty  
Lovelier than the world can show:  
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,  
Brought for us so low.

Earth, strike up your music,  
Birds that sing and bells that ring;  
Heaven hath answering music  
For all Angels soon to sing:  
Earth, put on your whitest  
Bridal robe of spotless snow:  
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,  
Brought for us so low.

Today you will know the Lord is coming,  
and in the morning, you will see his glory.

- Invitatory, Morning Prayer, Christmas Eve

## LITURGY & SACRAMENTS

### THIS WEEK'S MASS SCHEDULE ~ THE CHRISTMAS OCTAVE

Monday, December 25	10 AM	The Parishioners
	12 PM	The Parishioners
Tuesday, December 26	9 AM	† Gregory Dosman
Wednesday, December 27	9 AM	† Pablo Ungab, Jr.
Thursday, December 28	9 AM	† Yolanda Hernandez
Friday, December 29	9 AM	† Filemeno Liwanag † Elvira and Alfonso D'Amico † All Souls in Purgatory Brothers, Sisters and Benefactors of the Order
Saturday, December 30	5 PM	† Percival and Charlotte Pinheiro
Sunday, December 31  <i>Mary, Mother of God</i>	8:30 AM	The Parishioners
	10 AM	Intentions of Ann and Dan Fellin
	12 PM	† Ana and Cristobal Fernandez
	5 PM	† Deanna Andrew
Sanctuary Lamps    Bl. Sac. Bl. Sac. O.L. Chapel	† Sofronio Bautista	
	† Carolina Bautista	
	† Angelita Dy	

### NEXT WEEK'S MASS SCHEDULE

Monday, January 1	10 AM	† Edmond Odette
	12 PM	† Peter Glowczewski
Tuesday, January 2	9 AM	† Manuel and Cruz Sanchez
Wednesday, January 3	9 AM	† Sean Harte
Thursday, January 4	9 AM	Catherine Dean
Friday, January 5	9 AM	Mary Fitzpatrick
Saturday, January 6	5 PM	† Alice Eaglen
Sunday, January 7	8:30 AM	The Parishioners
	10 AM	† John Trudeau
	12 PM	† Frank Szauer
Sanctuary Lamps    Bl. Sac. Bl. Sac. O.L. Chapel	Personal Intention	
	Hisey Family	
	† Norman Bell	

### CHANGES THIS OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS ~ DEC 25 TO JAN 1

- There will be no Liturgy of the Word with Children at the 10 am Mass on Sunday, Dec. 30. Liturgy of the Word with Children will resume on Sunday, Jan. 7 at 10 am.
- There will be no 8:30 am Mass on Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>.

All the angels cry aloud with joy, for God has come to save humankind.  
Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.

- *Responsory, Office of Readings, Christmas Day*

#### A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Parishioners,

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Christ took on our flesh so that his Spirit can animate our lives. May these days of Christmas bring you the warmth of human love with family and friends, the peace that comes from reconciled differences, and the joy of glimpsing the Divine.

Fr. Tom

#### CHRISTMAS IS A SEASON, NOT SIMPLY ONE DAY



While so many of our cultures only celebrate the build-up to Christmas, as a faith community we celebrate Christmas for the next several weeks. And, there is much to celebrate here, much to enter into more deeply. Too often, the days before Christmas are too busy to enter into the meaning of this feast or to reflect on the daily scriptures and the graces that are offered us, in our concrete life circumstances. This first week is a time for us to enter into the stories of special saints who are associated with the Birth of our Lord because of their innocence: our first martyr and the Disciple Jesus loved. Next week, we return to stories of Jesus' life and ministry.

#### What this First Week Offers Us

**Christmas Day** is the first day in the eight-day celebration of the Octave of Christmas. We take joy in the story of the nativity and of our savior's entrance into the world in the humblest of ways.

**December 26**, the day after Christmas, is the Feast of St. Stephen, the first Martyr. The reading from Acts takes us into the story of his being stoned by an infuriated crowd.

On **December 27th**, we traditionally celebrate the Feast of St. John, Apostle, and Evangelist. This apostle's name is associated with the wonderful tradition and writings that receive his name. This week, our reflection is framed by the wonderful words of the First Letter of John and the story from the Fourth Gospel of Simon Peter and “the other disciple whom Jesus loved” ran to find the empty tomb on Easter morning.

On **December 28th**, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Innocents. This celebration takes us back into the infancy narrative of Matthew. The account of how Jesus begins his journey to become one with us, is powerfully told as a journey of Jesus' entering into the journey of his people, with the flight into Egypt and the horrible slaughter of the innocent children. This very difficult scene is important for us to reflect upon as we imagine the unborn and the newly born who are so unjustly deprived of dignity and life today.

The Feast of the Holy Family is often celebrated on the **Sunday after Christmas** (this year **December 31**). When a Sunday does not occur between December 25 and January 1, this feast is celebrated on December





30 with only one reading before the Gospel. What family or faith community can't benefit from reflecting upon the Holy Family? This is not the time to reflect upon a "perfect family," but to ask ourselves how we might be blessed to reflect upon Joseph, Mary and Jesus, and ask ourselves what graces they could offer us. And, this allows us a bit more time to reflect upon the Christmas story, including the everyday reality that was part of their lives as family - the patience, give and take, the self-sacrifice and the love that was a part of their very human interaction together, throughout what we call "the hidden life" of Jesus. That can include all the growing up years of Jesus' life, what their village was like and what ways they spoke with each other, as well as what difficulties they might have experienced. These are all great ways for us to contemplate this feast. We can imagine what Jesus learned from both Mary and Joseph that prepared him for his life of proclaiming the coming of the Reign of God. Finally, we can imagine the death of Joseph and the life of Mary and Jesus after his death.

**Monday, January 1st** will be the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, a Holy Day of Obligation. It is also the World Day of Prayer for Peace.

We celebrate the Epiphany, **the following Sunday** (this year **January 7**). We can draw great fruit from reflecting upon the readings and prayers of the days before Epiphany or the days after Epiphany.

This week we keep asking for the grace to celebrate his coming among us. Each of us can keep growing in a sense of freedom and joy over the gift we have been given to know God's love for us and presence with us more deeply. It is a week of gratitude. However, if our celebration of the days before Christmas and Christmas Day itself were busy or even difficult, then this can be days of recovery and added time to let Our Lord come into our lives where we need him to come.

- From Creighton Online Ministries, with gratitude: <https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/>

## 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.

## 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*.

Today true peace came down to us from heaven.  
Today the whole earth was filled with heaven's sweetness.

- *Responsory, Office of Readings, Christmas Day*

## 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.

## A PRAYER BEFORE CHRISTMAS DINNER

God of all gifts, we thank you for the many ways you have blessed us this day. We are grateful for all who are gathered around this table. We ask you to bless us and our food and to bless those we love who are not with us today. In our gratitude and love, we remember your humble birth into our lives and pray for those who are without enough to eat. We remember the stable in which you were born and pray for those who have no place to live. We remember your challenging message of caring and giving and we pray for peace in families and nations throughout the world. We bless you and give you thanks for your Spirit who brings our hearts to life this Christmas Day and forever. Amen.

## A PRAYER AS I REFLECT ON ALL THE PEOPLE YOU PLACE IN MY LIFE THESE HOLY DAYS

I think about my family, my relatives, the neighbours, people with whom we will spend these holy days celebrating the mystery of your birth. Dear Jesus, as I look at their faces and remember their stories, there are feelings of gratitude and some fear and anxiety. Thank you for these loved ones and please forgive me for the ways I have been less than accepting and loving. Please heal the wounds, division and conflicts that stand between us and help me to remember how dearly you love them. I only want to remember that you have come to save us all. Amen.

## A PRAYER FOR GOING TO WORK ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Loving God, on this sacred day, I am going to work. There is something special about working on Christmas, when so many others are home with loved ones. My work today might even have a wondrous sense of service and necessity. But it doesn't always feel noble and inside me there is a struggle: I wish I could stay home. Help me to feel missioned by you today. Let me recognize the unique way my co-workers and I are called to serve our brothers and sisters. Let me take just a moment in this quiet to feel your deep love for me. May I carry that sense of peace with me as the light of your love, shining on everyone I come in contact with today. Amen.

## A PRAYER FOR CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS AFTER THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE

God of compassion, there is such a hole in my heart! Today should be a day of joy, but I feel only the emptiness and loss of someone so beloved. While the world celebrates around me, I remember Christmas celebrations of the past and I long to have my loved one with me. I bring my sorrows to you, Lord, like some odd gift of the magi and dump them at your feet. In my blind tears I wonder if anyone can possibly understand the depth of my sadness. Yes, you can. You sent your Son to be *with* us in our deepest sorrows and I know that even though I might not feel it at this minute, you are here with me, grieving with me, caring for me in my sadness and loving me. Dearest Lord, help me to turn to the one I miss so much today and speak. Help me heal the loss of our parting and help me not to regret the things I didn't say. Sorrow tears at my heart, but today I ask that my loss soften my heart and make me more compassionate with everyone I meet. Amen.

*Christmas Prayers for Various Circumstances from Crieghton Online Ministries, with gratitude.*

**The Word was made flesh; and dwelt among us.  
And we have all received from His fullness.**

*~ Responsory, Evening Prayer, Feast of the Holy Family*

## A PRAYER TO MARY DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

Loving mother of the Redeemer, gate of heaven, star of the sea, assist your people who have fallen yet strive to rise again. To the wonderment of nature, you bore your Creator, yet remained a virgin after as before. You who received Gabriel's joyful greeting, have pity on us poor sinners. Amen.

## HELPING OTHERS

### CASSEROLES FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD REFUGE



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/>



## FOOD DRIVE FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD CENTRE

The weekly food drive at St. Bonaventure Church helps provide meals for the homeless and at-risk individuals in our community.

The Food Drive for the Good Shepherd was started a year ago. With the support and generous food donations from our parishioners and the children of St. Bonaventure School. So far this year we have sent ten thousand lbs. of food to the Good Shepherd to help feed the hungry. Wow!!!

Thank you. Thank you, to all our parishioners and the children of St. Bonaventure for your generous donations. Thank you to the Knights of Columbus for organizing this effort to help our neighbors in need.

**He had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way  
to show the fullness of his mercy.**

*~ Responsory, Evening Prayer, Feast of the Holy Family*

“The Shepherds went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child cradled in a manger.” ~ *Luke 2:16*

## 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?

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*

### 800<sup>TH</sup> 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.

## 800<sup>TH</sup> 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 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Francis & the first Christmas at Greccio. This event became the origin of the custom of the Christmas Crèche.

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](http://chalice.ca)

## THANK YOU FOR THE GIVING TREE GIFTS

Thank you to everyone who participated and made donations towards the Giving Tree this year. Your giving spirit and willingness to help is much appreciated by the recipients. Wishing each of you a Merry Christmas.



A little child is born for us today,  
little and yet called the mighty God, alleluia.

- Antiphon, Morning Prayer, Christmas Day

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MINISTRY WITH MATURING ADULTS

**Nurturing Our Spirituality in the Second Half of Life**

**With a Focus on Care of the Body, Mind and Spirit**

Coffee and Conversation: 9:45 - 10:00 am

Meeting: 10:00 - 11:30 am



*I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for a happy and healthy 2024.*

*And heartfelt thanks for all your support by your presence and prayers since I became involved in this wonderful ministry. I look forward to seeing you at our in-person sessions in January!*

*Trena Finnegan,*

Ministry Coordinator

Email: trena@st-bonaventure.ca Telephone: 416-447-5571 X 550

**January 16, 2024: Following the Star - Reflections on the Epiphany and the Journey of the Three Wise Men**

**January 30, 2024: Practical Spirituality from the perspective of a Permanent Deacon**

More details to follow.

### RESOLUTION IN PRAYER BY FRIAR MARK STEED, OFM CONV.

*The following article was originally published in the January 1986 issue Companion Magazine. With the beginning of a New Year upon us, we reprint it here.*

I've just returned from a Solemn Vows ceremony. This is a Franciscan ritual during which young men promised the rest of their lives to God, their Order and their Church, to be faithful servants and guardians of their special grace, a gift from God. The ceremony was filled with joy and hope as these men resolved to be for God forever. It sounds like the ultimate New Year's resolution. In fact, it is in a way. What could be better than to give one's life to the one you love? But it is so much more involved that calling it a resolution, New Year's or whatever, sounds a bit flippant. These men did resolve but did so with a firm purpose of continuance and because of a conviction that rose up from within their hearts, to manifest itself to their Church, Order and their God for life.

Resolutions are fine things, and we need to ponder them often. The resolution is in fact a re-thinking about how life is moving and what we want to augment, eliminate, or initiate. But the resolution is just the thinking part. It is the great plan before the battle, and it's elaborated with all kinds of unreality. Think about the resolutions you made last year and ask yourself: how long did they endure before they were forgotten and the lofty ideals put aside? Did you do what you wanted for yourself? Did you lose weight or stop smoking, or did you improve your prayer life and work on your relationship with God? What were your last year's resolutions and what will they be this year.

For me, last January...is so long ago. I forget exactly what I resolved to improve in my life. As I look back on the year and what transpired, I am moved to ask a more important question. What am I doing now for myself and for my relationship with God? I think the more important direction in one's life is with the present, with the ever-new beginnings, and not with a murky past.

The young men who professed solemn vows were asked by their Church and Order, and most especially by their God, not what they would be like in the years to come, but what they will do today and all of the *today's* of their lives. The hardest part of vow taking or making resolutions is not the ceremony but the keeping of the good intentions. For these men, and for all of us, it is the daily re-professing and the resolving that must be our focus if we really will change and grow as God's special people.

During the season of resolutions, it's not the letting go of bad habits or even faults or sins that will be the difficult part but rather the moving to embrace new horizons and better ideals. The only way I know of changing an old attitude is to seek a new one we can believe in and devote our energy toward. To discontinue a fault or failing is not enough and it won't work unless you hold onto a positive opposite. A simplistic example might be with food. If you want to lose weight it would seem unreasonable to read cookbooks as a hobby. The movement away from the temptation is a movement toward a better good.

We all make New Year's resolutions of one sort or another and we all break them periodically. In truth you just can't make them once and for all. Just like myself and my fellow friars, we have to renew our vows daily, living one gifted day at a time. The married person or the single man or woman must also live each day with their God and renew each day their particular relationship with him. The relationship grows and changes each day and the growth and change calls forth newness and renewal. There is no *once and for all* time but only a daily journey along a path that keeps turning and twisting.

Sometimes the journey in life and with God is full of joy like this day of Solemn Vows and it is celebrated with happiness and resolve. Sometimes the path becomes obscure and unfamiliar but always it is the same journey that leads us to our God. It is the same God who will always be with us, not as he was in the first moment of our resolve but as he is now; not as we were with him then but as we are with him today. Resolutions work but only when they lead us to better good and not just away from past condition. Our resolution to be with our God must be new every day of our lives. Celebrate this year as one of new beginnings and it will be a year to grow and change with God.

## SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD ~ JANUARY 1



“Blest are you among women” (Luke 1:42). In its simplicity, Elizabeth’s exclamation expresses all that we can say on the subject of the Mother of God, which we constantly repeat when we pray to her: “Hail Mary, full of grace.” In the language of our day, benediction evokes, primarily, if not exclusively, the consecration of a thing or a person. In the Bible, it is an action of God that leads to happiness and fulfillment. “Blessed,” then, is the one who has the favour of God, whom divine grace inhabits and leads; by definition, that person is also just, because he or she participates in the justice and sanctity of God, who is himself the Blessed One in the absolute sense of the term. For the celebration of Holy Mary, Mother of God, on the first day of the year, the liturgy uses the most solemn benediction that can be found in the Old Testament (Num. 6:22-27): “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.”

The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God is a celebration of extraordinary theological and spiritual richness. It enables us to contemplate in Mary the humble servant of the Lord elevated by the grace of God to an inconceivable majesty because she brought into the world the one who was, for her first of all, “God saves,” Jesus. In her we salute the one who is blessed among all women, perfect model not only of all the blessed of God, but of the whole Church, of which she is the greatest icon. In bearing the Saviour, she gave us the one who makes us sons and daughters of God, heirs by the grace of the kingdom, who cry out to the Father by calling him “Abba!” The wish that ends the liturgy and which we exchange among ourselves before Communion takes on, in this day of grace, its full meaning: “Go in the peace of Christ! Thanks be to God!”

## CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE



### **Weekday Masses within the Octave of the Nativity**

Tuesday, December 26<sup>th</sup> to Friday, December 29<sup>th</sup> - 9 am

### **Feast of The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**

Saturday, December 30<sup>th</sup> - 5 pm

Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup> - 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 31<sup>st</sup> - 5 pm

#### **New Year's Day**

Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup> - 10 am and 12 noon only (*no 8:30 am Mass*)

### **Weekday Masses of the Christmas Season**

Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> to Friday, January 5<sup>th</sup> - 9 am

### **Solemnity of The Epiphany of the Lord**

Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup> - 5 pm

Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> - 8:30 am, 10 am and 12 noon

### **Feast of the Baptism of the Lord**

Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> - 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

## 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!

**Blessed is the womb that bore you, O Christ, and the breast that nursed you,  
Lord and Saviour of the world, alleluia.**

*Antiphon, Evening Prayer II, Mary, Mother of God*

## CONTACT US

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

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## REFLECTION

*"This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."*  
~ Luke 2:12

Isaiah the prophet announces the coming of the Messiah. Foreseeing the birth of Christ, the prophet says of the people living at that time, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." Sometimes other people keep us in the dark for their own purposes. But we can keep ourselves in the dark, too, because we cannot face our sins and weaknesses. We do not want to see what we are. We shut our eyes against the light that reveals us to ourselves because that light seems so threatening. We cleave to the darkness because it seems so safe.

When Christ is born, a great light is shone in our darkness because God is in our midst now. The King has come. His dominion is vast; he is Father forever. We lay a plumbline against a wall to check whether the wall is crooked or not. God himself is the plumbline by which our unbearable bentness is made manifest to us. When Christ comes among us, that holy measure illumines us and reveals what we are. And so, as Malachi says (Mal. 2:3), "who can abide the day of his coming? Who wants to be in this light?"

And maybe that is why the Messiah comes to us through human birth, as a new-born baby. When he comes, he is tiny, fragile, weak. Needy and hungry, he suckles at the breast of his mother. The great Judge of all the earth comes to the creatures who are subject to him as a baby, helpless, powerless. How much harsh judgment, superior condemnation, unbending rejection is there in a baby?

Our fear of the light is defeated here. We do not have to figure out how to abide the day of his coming. We can surrender to it with gratitude and joy. The baby invites us. The light of his love welcomes us.

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**May the Lord bless you and keep you!**