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Sunday, December 20th, 2020
Fourth Sunday of Advent

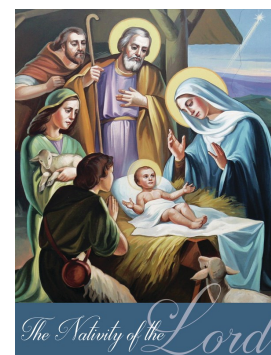


In Blaise Pascal's work, *Pensees*, he says: "What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself." We have a difficult time accepting that fulfillment and happiness are not achieved by our own merits but through a relationship with God. We are hardwired for this relationship and it is in our DNA. The simple fact is that we come from God and are designed to return to God. If our beginning and our end define who we are, why would we not want to seek the One who can truly satisfy? The world does not realize that it is waiting. It is waiting for the birth of God in time, within one's soul and in eternity. We get so confused by seeking other momentary satisfactions that we misinterpret the hunger within. We crave God. The union of God and humanity, revealed in Jesus Christ, is precisely what sets us on a straight path, orders our relationships, establishes proper focus and goals and tells us whose kingdom we really are meant to serve. We are so lost. God is with us. The prophet Nathan told this to King David, the angel said this to Mary and the birth of Christ brings this Good News to us. We do not need to be busily looking for more things but must learn to find contentment and blessing in the One Presence. This is the beautiful simple message of Advent!

If you are feeling unsettled, anxious, angry, disgruntled, disconnected, unhappy, worried, fearful, off center, becoming overly self-indulgent, unable to spend time alone and without distraction, then there's a good chance you are lost. Now is the time to allow God to find you! Ponder the holy simplicity of Mary's call to be the Mother of God. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." When we are helpless and at home with our emptiness, God will fill us. Our Saviour has come.

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR ALL 5 CHRISTMAS MASSES. PHONE OR EMAIL THE OFFICE TO LET US KNOW WHICH MASS YOU WILL BE ATTENDING AND THE NUMBER OF PERSONS. The 5 & 8pm Masses on Christmas Eve are filling up fast.

Friday, December 25th, 2020
The Feast of the Nativity of the Lord



The angel said to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a saviour has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests." Luke 2:10-14

Glory to God in the highest! The celebration of the glorious birth of Christ the Lord has begun...Merry Christmas! Try to put yourself in the shoes of these shepherds. Little excitement would have regularly come their way. They were poor, simple shepherds who spent their days and nights tending the sheep of the fields. That night, a group of them had gathered together for camaraderie. It's easy to imagine the scene of normal talking, laughing and being together. Little did they realize what was about to happen. As they were gathered, an angel of God appeared to them announcing "good news of great joy!" They must have been stunned. But that's only the beginning. The angel announced that the Saviour of the World had been born and then, much to their surprise, they witnessed the whole host of heavenly angels singing praises: "*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*" "Glory to God in the highest!" These humble shepherds were the first to be called by God to go and greet the newborn King. What's amazing is that God did not first call the "important" of the age to come worship. He called these poor shepherds. One thing this tells us is that, in the eyes of God, all are equal. God does not pick favourites from among those who are seen as important in the eyes of the world. No, He sees the great value and dignity of each and every person and desires all of us, rich or poor, powerful or weak, to come to Him in adoration and love. Christmas is a time filled with many exciting things. Often there are gifts and gatherings, food and good times. But more than anything else, Christmas must be seen as a time for us to step back and take in the deep and rich meaning of this sacred event. We must see, first, that God entered our human condition and, in doing so, is able to identify with all that we experience in life. God understands human life! He lived it. Second, we must understand that the birth of the Saviour of the world and His appearance to shepherds reveals that each and every one of us is invited to come and meet Him. God humbled Himself in the most profound way so that we could come to know Him and His perfect love for us. "Do not be afraid," as the angel said, to come and behold the Christ who came as your Saviour. Do not be afraid to come to meet Him, love Him, adore Him and get to know Him. God is given to us, today, as an infant. Small, weak, fragile and innocent. Do not be afraid to gaze upon His humble presence and to give glory to God for His blessed coming.

Lord, I thank You for the unfathomable gift of Your divine presence among us. I thank You, especially, for the invitation You offer me to join the poor shepherds as they come to adore You. May this Christmas celebration be one in which I understand, more deeply, the incredible love You have for all Your children. May I know that You came for me, to save me and to invite me to worship. May we enter into that worship and adoration with all the Heavenly Host. Jesus, I trust in You.

Offertory envelopes for 2021 are now available. Volunteers will hand them out as you enter the church. If you want to make alternate arrangements, let the office know. E-transfer will continue to be available to make your donation. Check your envelopes for Special Collection dates. Every year there are updates made to the offertory numbering system. **FOR THE YEAR 2021, USE ONLY THE ENVELOPES ASSIGNED TO YOU FOR THAT YEAR.** This will ensure that donations are credited to the proper person. **If a box has not been prepared for you, let the office know.** Also, please do not begin using your new envelopes until 2021. Thank you!

This is always a good time of the year to update your contact information. If there has been a change of address, email or phone numbers, please let the office know soon. During these past months, during the Covid pandemic, emails have been sent to parishioners with updates. If you have not received them, then we don't have your email address.

PLEASE NOTE: All Church contributions/donations for 2020 (**envelopes and e-transfers**) must be received on or before **Dec. 31st, 2020** to be applied to your 2020 tax receipt. It is best to make a donation by envelope for 2020 on the weekend of Dec 26/27 if you are attending Mass. If you mail in donations, please be sure to give some extra time as there may be delays with the post office. **The parish office will be closed from Dec 24-Jan 1st. Messages will be checked daily.**

Solemnity of Mary the Most Holy Mother of God

Thursday, Dec 31st 5:00pm Mass
 Friday, Jan 1st, 2021 9:30 & 11am Masses
 A reminder that this Solemnity is a Holy Day of Obligation.

Our hearts are aglow with the joy of Christmas! Our senses are alive with the season, from the rich smells of evergreen and gingerbread to the feel of crisp air on our skin and the warmth of a loved one's embrace. At some point in the holiday hustle and bustle, take a few moments of quiet. In the silence, reflect on the other senses of the season. Imagine the cool damp of an animal stable, the earthy smell of hay and feed, and the crisp night air blowing in softly. Imagine kneeling beside an exhausted, joyful mother and a relieved, protective father. Imagine an infant wrapped in cloth scraps held out to your open arms. Imagine holding the infant Jesus. As his eyes meet yours, welcome into your heart the greatest gift of Christmas.

The 89th annual broadcast of Midnight Mass from the Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria will be available on Newstalk 610 CKTB at 11:30pm and at www.610cktb.com.

Latin Masses are on hold until further notice. As well, Confessions 9-10 on Saturdays are also on hold.

MASS INTENTIONS

Sat. Dec 19	4-4:45pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Confessions Fourth Sunday of Advent
	5:00pm	✠ Angelo & Ghislaine Tedesco (Zarb Family)
Sun. Dec 20	9:30am	Missa Pro Populo
	11:00am	✠ Anthony Filbert (Lynda Filbert & Family)
		✠ Anthony, Muriel, Ron & Sherry Guest (Rebeiro Family)
Mon. Dec 21	9:30am	Reparation for all offences Committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Teresa & Colin Walters)
	7-8pm	Holy Hour & Confessions
Tues. Dec 22	9:30am	✠ Anthony Fernandes (Marguerite Fonseca)
Wed. Dec 23	9:30am	✠ Margaret Marshall (Mike & Anne Young)
Thurs. Dec 24		Christmas Eve Masses
	5:00pm	✠ Wally & Sophie Paterak (Christine Meyo & Family)
	8:00pm	✠ Dominique Forgeron (Larocque Family)
Fri. Dec 25		Christmas Day Masses
	Midnight	Missa Pro Populo
	9:30am	In Honour of St. Joseph (Teresa & Colin Walters)
	11:00am	Fr. Chad Grennan (Vince & Lena Addario)
Sat. Dec 26		Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
	4-4:45pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Confessions
	5:00pm	✠ Ralph Biancaniello (Lena Addario)
		Intentions of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Teresa & Colin Walters)
Sun. Dec 27		Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
	9:30am	✠ Mary Rutyna (Stan & Gloria Rutyna)
	11:00am	Missa Pro Populo

Confessions from 9-9:20am before all weekday Masses.

Offertory December 12th & 13th, 2020

Envelopes	\$2,007.00
Loose Collection	\$ 53.25
Total Offertory	\$2,060.25
Christmas	\$ 250.00
Flowers	\$ 130.00

Interac E-transfer: stannfendonations@cogeco.net
 (No password required)

