

# *St. Mark Roman Catholic Parish*

55 Driftwood Drive, Kitchener, Ontario N2N 3A2  
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## **Solemnity of Christmas**

✦ **The Nativity of the Lord** ✦



*“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us ...”*

JOHN 1:14

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## Mass Intentions for the Week

**December 23 – 29, 2019**

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> – NO MASS**

**Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord**

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve**

- 6:00 PM** + Antero Correia – *Correia family*
- 10:30 PM *You are warmly invited to join the choir for Christmas carols and hymns before the 11:00 pm Mass.*
- 11:00 PM** - Int. of the Parishioners of St. Mark's

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day**

- 10:00 am** + All those in whose memory donations were made toward Christmas Flowers



**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>** (FEAST – ST. STEPHEN)

- \* 7:00 PM** + Irene Brierly – *Paul Krevs*

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup>** (FEAST – ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE)

- \* 12 noon** – Intentions of Brian & Mary Jo Flood

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>** (FEAST – THE HOLY INNOCENTS)

- 9:00 am** + Adolf Burchat – *Terry & Gerry Gerth*

**FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH** (DEC. 28/29)

*Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14; Colossians 3:12-21; Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23*

- Sat. 5:00 PM** - Int. of the Parishioners of St. Mark's

- Sun. 9:30 am** + Kay Donovan – *John*

- 11:30 am** + Joaquina Costa – *Julia*

St. Stephen was a deacon who was stoned to death in Jerusalem two years after the death of Christ. He is the first martyr. The account in the Acts of the Apostles relating his arrest and the accusations brought against him emphasize the parallel with our Saviour's trial; he was stoned outside the city wall and died, like his Master, praying for his executioners. Stephen belongs to the group of seven deacons whom the Apostles associated with their work in order to lighten their load. He was "filled with faith and with the Holy Spirit," "full of grace and strength" he showed himself as a man of God, radiating divine grace and apostolic zeal. His name appears in the first Eucharistic Prayer.

St. John was an apostle and evangelist. Born in Bethsaida, he was called while mending his nets to follow Jesus. He became the beloved disciple of Jesus. He wrote the fourth Gospel, three Epistles and the Apocalypse. His passages on the pre-existence of the Word, who by His Incarnation became the light of the world and the life of our souls, are among the finest of the New Testament. He is the evangelist of the divinity of Christ and His fraternal love. With James, his brother, and Simon Peter, he was one of the witnesses of the Transfiguration. At the Last Supper, he leans on the Master's breast. At the foot of the cross, Jesus entrusts His Mother to his care. John's pure life kept him very close to Jesus and Mary in years to come. John was exiled to the island of Patmos under Emperor Domitian.

In the Feast of the Holy Innocents, the Church celebrates the memory of the small children of the neighborhood of Bethlehem put to death by Herod in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus as accounted in Matthew 2:16-18. Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry, and sent his soldiers to kill all male children ages two and under that were in Bethlehem and on the borders, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. The Church venerates these children as martyrs. "They are the first buds of the Church killed by the frost of persecution; they died not only for Christ, but in his stead (Sermon, St. Augustine). The Church has been celebrating this feast since the 5<sup>th</sup> century.



*Thank you to everyone who donated toward flowers for the church, and to the many people who helped to decorate and prepare the church for Christmas!*

## Meetings & Events This Week:

DATE	TIME	ROOM	EVENT
<u>Mon. Dec. 23</u>	8:00 pm	(H)	Alcoholics Anonymous
<u>Fri. Dec. 27</u>	6:00 am	(M)	Men's group
	11:00 am	(M)	Legion of Mary

**Finally, on this the Fourth Sunday of Advent**, our Gospel Reading permits us to begin our contemplation of the mystery of the Incarnation we celebrate at Christmas: "Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about." (MATTHEW 1:18).

The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of the birth of Jesus from Joseph's perspective. Today's Gospel passage is the second movement in this story. In the preceding verses of the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel, the Evangelist has listed the genealogy of Jesus, tracing his lineage through King David to Abraham. In the chapter to follow, Matthew tells of the visit from the Magi, the Holy Family's flight into Egypt, and Herod's massacre of the infants in Bethlehem.

*The other stories which we associate with Christmas, the Annunciation, the Visitation, the angel and the shepherds, are found in the Gospel of Luke. The Gospels of Mark and John contain no infancy narratives.*

We must not gloss over too quickly the difficult circumstances described in today's Gospel. The way that Joseph and Mary face these circumstances tells us much about these holy people and their faith in God.

Joseph and Mary are betrothed to be married. This is sometimes described as an engagement period, but it is more than that. Betrothal in first century Jewish culture was in fact the first part of the marriage contract. A breach of this contract was considered adultery. Mary is found to be with child. If adultery is proven, the punishment might be death. Joseph has rights under Mosaic law, but chooses to act discreetly in his plans to break the marriage contract, so as to protect Mary. Then God intervenes.

The message of the angel of the Lord given to Joseph in his dream tells us much about the child that Mary bears and his role in God's plan. He is conceived by the Holy Spirit. His name will be Jesus, which in the Hebrew means "Yahweh saves." He will be the fulfillment of the prophecy heard in today's first reading from Isaiah: ". . . The virgin shall be with child . . . and shall name him Emmanuel [God with us]."

Joseph does as the angel of the Lord directs. He takes Mary to be his wife and accepts the child in her womb as his own. Joseph and Mary are both cooperative with God's plan. They are both models for us of what it means to be faithful servants of God. ■

### Weekly Offertory Report for Dec. 14/15, 2019

	THIS WEEK	YTD - WEEK 50
Offertory Collection:	\$ 4,636.95	\$ 161,676.20
Pre-Authorized Debits:	\$ 1,425.35	\$ 68,628.50
<b>Total Offerings:</b>	<b>\$ 6,062.30</b>	<b>\$ 230,304.70</b>
<i>Budget:</i>	<i>\$ 5,200.00</i>	<i>\$ 260,000.00</i>
<i>Under/Over Budget:</i>	<i>\$ 862.30</i>	<i>(\$29,695.30)</i>
<b>Mortgage Offerings to date this year:</b>	<b>\$ 28,914.00</b>	





★ All Liturgical Ministers are reminded to **sign-up for Christmas and New Year's Masses** in the binder on the table in the narthex.

Dec. 28/29	5:00 PM Mass	9:30 AM Mass	11:30 AM Mass
Altar Servers:	V./P./J. Miller N./J. DeSouza	D./D. Jacobs	C. Chacon B. Starr; R. Robin
Commentator:	M. Dufresne	J. Flanigan	I. Kangaloo
1 <sup>st</sup> Reader: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reader:	K. Smith	P. Enticott V. DeVries	D. DeSouza B. Starr
Ushers:	I. Cimermancic	L. Koehler F. Seaward M. Walser	M. Monte
Gift Bearers:		<i>Children's Liturgy Kids</i>	Chacon
Eucharistic Ministers:	K. Smith F./Y. Tully	T. Lee; M. Lynch L. Riedel	C./K. Dignam S. Markides

**FINANCIAL DONATIONS TO ST. MARK'S FOR THE 2019 CALENDAR YEAR must reach the parish office before 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> in order to be included on your 2019 tax receipt. Any donations received after 10 a.m. will be receipted in 2020.**

**Missed the Enrollment Mass? (Gr. 2's & Gr. 7's)**

If you and your child were unable to attend the Enrollment Mass for **First Communion** and **Confirmation** on Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, please be sure to have your child submit their enrollment form (along with a photocopy of their baptism certificate) personally to Fr. Steve after any Mass during the month of December. All forms must be submitted to Fr. Steve no later than January 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Diocesan Prayer Calendar**

This week, let us pray for...  
 Dec. 23 - Very Rev. Wojciech Kuzma  
 Dec. 24 - Rev. James McSharry  
 Dec. 25 - (The Nativity of the Lord)  
 Dec. 26 - Rev. Martin Mikulski, S.A.C.  
 Dec. 27 - Rev. Joseph Okoko, i.v.Dei.  
 Dec. 28 - Rev. Franjo Sprajc

**Prayer for Vocations:**

*God, the source of creation and love, You invite each of us to serve you through the life which is your gift. May your grace encourage men and women to heights of holiness through service to the Church as priests, sisters, brothers, and lay ministers. Make me an instrument to encourage others to give themselves and challenge me to do the same. Amen.*



**Manger Blessing**

This prayer may be used to bless your Christmas Manger at home:

*God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation you have made manifest your love: when our need for a Saviour was great you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love. Lord, bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise up our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Saviour of all, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.*

**C.W.L. Membership Dues**

Please look for the blue envelope for 2020 membership fees in your December envelopes. All councils have been asked to submit membership renewals as of December 31<sup>st</sup> each year. This will help National office have an accurate snapshot of our membership at Parish, Diocesan, Provincial and National levels. It will also ensure that The League Magazine will continue to be sent to you, uninterrupted. **New members are always welcome.** Come out to any General Meeting, talk to members in the Narthex during our membership drive or contact Kim Montag (519) 500-1964 or [kim.a.montag@gmail.com](mailto:kim.a.montag@gmail.com) for more information.

**Children's Liturgy of the Word Program**

Every Sunday during the 9:30 Mass for children aged 5 to grade 3. No registration is necessary, just bring your children to Mass. **Please note: No Children's Liturgy on Dec. 29 nor Jan. 5.**

**Parish Office – Holiday Hours**

<b>Open 9 am - 12 noon:</b> Dec. 23, 24, 27 Dec. 30, 31, Jan. 2, 3.	<b>CLOSED:</b> Dec. 25, 26 and Jan. 1.
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**During the Christmas season**, our liturgy invites us to consider the birth of the Lord from many vantage points. As we begin this season, it is useful to remember that the stories of Jesus' birth and childhood are found in only two of our Gospels, Matthew and Luke. Throughout this season, we will hear stories from both Gospels. Those Gospels tell different but complementary stories about Jesus' birth, highlighting items of theological importance about the Incarnation and the salvation that Jesus brings.

On Christmas, we are given the details of Christ's birth as found in the Gospel of Luke. Here we learn about the census that brings Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, where Jesus is born. We also hear about the angel's announcement of this good news to the shepherds. In these details, we find two of Luke's particular concerns: (1) to locate the coming of Christ in the wider framework of salvation history as good news for all people, Gentiles and Jews, and (2) to show the Lord's favour upon the poor and lowly.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is born as one of the poor. Laid in a manger in a stable, because there was no room at the inn, he comes into the world through obscure and surprising means. Yet, as the angel proclaims this good news to the shepherds, this infant is announced as the Messiah and Lord. In the song of the angels, all are invited to give glory to God for this miraculous birth, in which God comes to share our humanity.

The angels sing that Jesus' coming brings peace. Yet there is little in the details of this Gospel that gives evidence of peace. Jesus is born as a traveler away from home, born in a stable in a crowded city under the occupation of foreigners. The appearance of the angel to the shepherds frightens them. When the angels proclaim Jesus' birth as the harbinger of "peace on earth," the evangelist Luke clearly wants us to take the long view. The shepherds are invited to claim a faith that will enable them to see this infant as a sign God's promise of a messiah. It is through such faith that one finds the peace of which the angels sing.

**Wishing everyone a Merry and Blessed Christmas,**

~ Fr. Steve and Nicholas



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