

St. Leo The Great

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Pastor: Rev. Charles T. Forget

Parish Secretary: Magda Nowak 905-655-3286 x 101



prepare the way...

HOLY DAYS MASS TIMES



CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY

Tuesday, December 24: 4:30 & 7:00 pm.

Wednesday, December 25: 9:00 & 11:00 am.

There will be morning Mass on

Thursday, December 26 at 8:30 am.

Friday, December 27, *Holy Hour at 7:30 am.*

Followed by Mass at 8:30 am.

NEW YEAR'S EVE & NEW YEAR'S DAY

Holy Day of Obligation in Canada

Tuesday, December 31, 4:30 pm. Mass

Wednesday, January 1, 11:00 am. Mass only!

Please Note... Incense will be used at all of the Christmas and New Year's Masses.



THE CRIB (by Fr. Charles)



AND THE CROSS

In just a few days we will celebrate the anniversary of that first Christmas when the promise of God to send the long-awaited Messiah was fulfilled. This is our last chance to give some meditation on the great truth and revelation of the real scene of Jesus being born, not in a fitting place for the Son of God to be born, but in an obscure, unromantic, unsanitized location the result of Mary and Joseph being told there was no room, no place for them. Venerable Fulton J. Sheen once said of this scene that the scripture verse, "There was no room at the inn" is perhaps one of the saddest lines in all of the Gospels and in history itself. How true in the sense that Jesus came to be the "inn" of every human heart. He came to, as St. John's Gospel says, "make my home in you". (John 15:4)

Throughout Advent we were told that Advent is about patient waiting which is to say that this season of the Church year is not about celebrating Christmas too early or before it comes. I am reminded of the European customs of the past where Catholics wouldn't even put up their Christmas trees until Christmas Eve and there was a clear focus on the birth of Jesus the Messiah. Today, as we all know, Christmas isn't the same thing for all people. For some it is and has always been a secular observance emphasizing a white-bearded man in a red suit in a sleigh while for believers it is about a

bearded man without a suit who came to *slay* the Evil one's grasp on human souls with the Cross.

While all of us tend to look at the manger scene with Jesus lying in a crib surrounded by warm lights and soft hay, we should be careful not to sentimentalize the crib for it was also the early foretaste of the Cross of Jesus. The wooden crib was the place of food for the animals and yet this was the One who would feed the world with His very own Body and Blood. The very place foretold and fulfilled as the place where the Saviour would be born, Bethlehem, means 'House of Bread'. The One who would later reveal Himself to His disciples as the Bread of Life was born in Bethlehem. When the Wisemen came to the manger, after having followed the star, they brought gifts that not only told of the greatness of this tiny One, that He was a King and a Priest indicated by their gifts of gold and incense, but also that this little One they beheld with their eyes... would die. Myrrh was a funeral spice. It is little wonder that Mary and Joseph continually pondered about everything that was happening to them and their Son as each incident and event of Jesus' life revealed to them.

Later on, when the baby Jesus was old enough to be presented in the temple, the usual Jewish custom, the Prophet Simeon, who had been told earlier that he would not die until he saw the Lord's Messiah, received the baby Jesus in his arms which stirred his heart and very soul by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the same as was experienced by Elizabeth when Mary visited her after the Annunciation. After this personal revelation, Simeon said to Mary, "This child is destined for the rise and fall of many in Israel as a sign to be opposed... and a sword will pierce your heart too!" (Lk 2:34-35) Mary is told, in the midst of Simeon's astounding prophecy, that she will be united to her Son by a sword, a sword of great grief that will cause her much pain and anguish and suffering.

Yes, the Crib of Jesus' birth should remind our thoughts on it to think of His Cross. We humans were born, so we might think, to merely live out our lives on the earth and one day die. For Jesus, however, the reason He was born was to die, to one day die for sinners and the lost, not merely so that the gates of heaven might be opened to receive us after our bodily death but that we might live today and throughout our lives with the desire, the commitment, the passion and zeal to one day stand before those gates and hear the voice of Jesus say, "Come!"

For us, the true Christmas story beckons us to look beyond and deeper within the unfolding of God's plan to save the world from sin, darkness and death. Identifying with Mary and Joseph who are moment by moment piecing together this strange revelation story of the world's salvation we can imagine and see their confusion and tremendous concern for what all these things meant for their child. And yet, they are powerful icons for us to see how even in the midst of mystery and wonder on a universal scale, Mary and Joseph lived the trust that was echoed by Mary's final words to the Angel Gabriel which in that moment made her the Mother of God: "Let it be done to me according to your word". And so must we.

Blessed Christmas! Fr. Charles

Mass Intentions
FOR THE WEEK



Tuesday, December 24th Christmas Eve

4:30 p.m.

7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 25th Christmas Day

9:00 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

Thursday, December 26th

8:30 a.m.

Friday, December 27th

8:30 a.m.

Saturday, December 28th

4:30 p.m. Intentions of Father Charles

Sunday, December 29th

9:00 a.m. † Mariane Laverty

11:00 a.m. † Vincenzina Mammone & Attilio & Maria Tuzi

Sanctuary Lamp is offered for the intentions of the Barker Family



Tuesday, December 31st New Year's Eve

4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 1st New Year's Day

11:00 a.m.

Thursday, January 2nd

8:30 a.m. Intentions of Christopher Duarte

Friday, January 3rd

8:30 a.m.

Saturday, January 4th

4:30 p.m. † Daniel Treacy

Sunday, January 5th

9:00 a.m. † Bryan Shaughnessy

11:00 a.m. † Kathleen Power

Sanctuary Lamp is offered for the intentions of Stanko Tomsic



The Parish Staff wishes you and your families a wonderful and joyful Christmas Season and a Blessed New Year.



St. Leo Knights of Columbus will serve Breakfast in the Church hall on January 12th. following the 9:00 and 11:00 A.M. Masses. Everyone is invited to enjoy a **full**

Breakfast of eggs, sausages, baked beans, pancakes, biscuits, coffee, tea and juice. Adults - \$6.00, Children ages 4 - 10 - \$4.00, and Children under 4 - free.

Please join us.

GIFT OF SECURITIES

You can now support the Church using securities (stocks, mutual funds, bonds.). You will not have to pay any capital gains on your gift and you will get a tax receipt for the full amount. Also, you can divide up your gift to as many Archdiocesan charities as you wish (e.g. Parish Offertory or building fund, ShareLife, The Shepherds' Trust etc.). For more information please contact the Parish Office or the Development Office of the Archdiocese at 416-934-3411 or at development@archtoronto.org

VOCATION SEEDS

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife... When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him." Are you willing to respond as Joseph did? If God is calling you to be a priest, deacon, brother or sister, **contact Fr. Chris Lemieux, Vocation Director, Archdiocese of Toronto 416-968-0997 email vocations@archtoronto.org www.vocationstoronto.ca**

Register for Grade 1 French Immersion

You are invited to enrol your child in a French Immersion program at schools across the Durham Catholic District School Board. Online registration take place from **December 9, 2019 to January 17, 2020**. Students entering Grade 1 in September 2020 are eligible to register. Visit dcdsb.ca and click on the French Immersion banner to register. Opening Doors to Opportunities!

Kindergarten Registration

You are invited to register your child for Kindergarten at a Durham Catholic schools across the region. Your child must be turning 4 years of age by December 31, 2020 in order to enrol. Online registration begins **January 13-17, 2020**. Visit dcdsb.ca to register. For questions, email admissions@dcdsb.ca.



Parish Office will be closed:

December 26, 27 & 31

January 2 & 3

PRE-AUTHORIZED GIVING

This time of year when we enter into a new Liturgical calendar year as well as the coming of the secular new year on January 1st, is a good time for the members of our parish who use Pre Authorized Giving (PAG) to consider annually what they are able to contribute to the Lord through the Church in our parish. While every day of our lives is offered opportunity to show our gratitude to the Lord for our faith and blessings, now is a blessed time to express our commitment to the Lord in the support of His Church. If you wish to change your amount of giving through PAG, simply email the office at office@stleothegreat.ca with your new increased amount.




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