

# *St. Leo The Great*

## ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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**Pastor: Rev. Charles T. Forget**

**Parish Secretary: Maureen Holly 905-655-3286 x 101**



*May the Blessings of this  
Holy Season be with you Always.*

SAINT LEO THE GREAT PARISH'S  
FAMILY OF FAITH CAMPAIGN  
*We're there... times two, plus!*

St. Leo the Great Parish

Family of Faith Campaign Update

CONGRATULATIONS



Campaign Goal – \$390,000.

Pledges received (as of Mon. Dec. 14) –

**\$795,000.!**

That's over **204%** of our goal!

We did it – People of St. Leo the Great Parish! We did what seemed almost impossible just a few short months ago when our Family of Faith campaign began: we not only reached our goal of \$390,000. but have exceeded it in doubling our goal. I believe we have earned bragging rights in what all of you, our parishioners, have done in this campaign and will continue to do. Congratulations and may God bless you and all of us.

Over the weekend of Pledge Sunday (last weekend) our parishioners pledged ***over a quarter of a million dollars*** to this great effort which has been gaining great momentum week by week.

While the official campaign is over for our parish the opportunity for anyone who was not able to participate continues. Many parishioners indicated on their pledge cards that they were still praying and thinking about contributing and all of these will receive a call from our parish Family of Faith volunteers over the next few weeks to follow up on whether, through prayer and reflection, they have come to a decision.

For full information, brochures, pamphlets, pledge forms and prayer cards about the Family of Faith or to speak to one of our parish campaign team members, visit the Family of Faith table located in the vestibule.

Our parishioners are so good and have shown their big hearts in the generosity that has realized the doubling of our goal amount and even beyond. And a big THANK YOU to our campaign volunteers who have been tireless in their work for the goal.

God is so good to us – He who cannot be outdone in generosity, and has blessed us in so many ways as a young parish (formed in 1985). Our parish share of the money pledged will responsibly and spiritually secure our parish's future in Christ. Thank you! God love you all. I am so proud of all in our parish.

(Fr. Charles)



Christmas

MASS TIMES

**CHRISTMAS EVE**

Thursday December 24

5:00 pm. & 8:00 pm. only

**CHRISTMAS DAY**

Friday December 25

9:00 am. & 11:00 am.

\* Incense will be used at all Christmas Masses.

Please note that the 5 pm. Christmas Eve Mass is usually full even with 175 extra seating spaces made available. For those who plan on arriving just a few minutes before Mass, you might want to come much earlier if you wish to get a seat. This is our most well attended Mass.

*I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*

There are so many Christmas songs, hymns, carols and popular music that we might not even know or understand the lyrics of many of them. Writer Lindsay Terry researched one of them, a well known tune whose lyrics may have gone unnoticed, *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The words of this Christmas song are composed by the famous poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

For those who are living in the midst of the good life we tend to turn toward those among us who may be having a rough go of things or are dealing with tremendous sadness, loss or emptiness. We tend to think that offering relief and some remedy to the plight of others at this time of year is catching '*the Christmas spirit*', but in fact this is but a seasonal addressing of an everyday present reality for many people year round. For Christians there cannot be a particular time when we feel generous as it is an every moment maxim to love God, our neighbour and ourselves. It is so often in human tragedy that we see the greatest human spirit of selfless love and care for others. We turn to God in times of greatest adversity, to the One who can bring about the impossible in life's sometimes tragic circumstances.

Lindsay Terry writes:

Tragedy struck the home of American's most popular poet. On July 9, 1861, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's wife, Fanny, was near an open window sealing the locks of her daughter's hair in a packet, using hot sealing wax. It was never known whether a spark from a match or the sealing wax was the cause, but suddenly her dress caught fire and engulfed her with flames. Her husband, sleeping in the next room, was awaked by her screams. He desperately tried to

put out the fire and save his wife. He was severely burned on his face and hands. She, tragically was burned, slipped into a coma the next day and died. His grievous burns would not even allow him to attend her funeral. He seemed to lock the anguish within his soul. Because he continued to work at his craft, only his family knew of his personal suffering. They could see it in his eyes and observe his long periods of silence. His white beard, so identified with him, was one of the results of his tragedy-the burn scars on his face made shaving almost impossible.

Although a legend in his own time, he still needed the peace that God gives to His children. On Christmas Day, three years following the horrible accident-at age 57-he sat down to capture, if possible, the joys of the season. He began:

**"I heard the bells on Christmas day,  
Their old familiar carol play,  
And wild and sweet the words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good will to men"**

As he came to the third stanza he was stopped by the condition of his beloved country. The Civil War was in full swing. The Battle of Gettysburg was not long past. Days looked dark, and he probably asked himself the question, "How can I write about 'peace on earth, good will to men' in this war-torn country, where brother fights against brother and father against son?" But he kept on writing-and what did he write?

**"And in despair I bowed my head:  
'There is no peace on earth', I said,  
'For hate is strong, and mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, good will to men!"**

It seems as if he could have been writing these words for us today! Wadsworth then turned his thoughts to God, the only One who can give true and perfect peace, and continued writing:

**"Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;  
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,  
With peace on earth, good will to men."**

As so we have the marvelous Christmas carol "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day". A musician, J. Baptiste Calkin, wrote the musical setting that has helped make this carol a favorite.

**What can I give Him  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd,  
I would give Him a lamb,  
If I were a Wise Man,  
I would do my part-  
But what can I give Him,  
Give my heart.**

-Christina Rossetti

**Mass Intentions – Dec. 22- Jan 3, 2016**

Tues. Dec.22-8:30am–Minda Figuracion+ req. The Ralph Family  
Wed. Dec.23 – 8:30 am – Douglas Farola+ req. The Farola Family  
**Thurs. Dec.24 – Christmas Eve 5PM & 8PM Masses**  
**Fri. Dec. 25- Christmas Day – 9:00 & 11:00 AM Masses**  
**Sat. Dec. 26 – 5:00 pm –**  
Sun. Dec. 27 – 9:00 am –Ints. Simon & Eva Karam  
req. The Karam Family  
11:00 am – Elozer Alonza+ req. The Lombardi Family  
Tues. Dec. 29-8:30 am – Marianne Laverty+ req. N & T Johnson  
Wed.Dec.30-7:00 pm – Minda Figuracion+  
**Thurs. Dec.31 – 5:00 PM – New Year’s Eve Mass**  
**Fri. Jan 1- 11:00 am ONLY – New Year’s Day Mass**  
Sat. Jan 2 – 5:00 pm - Ints. Margaret Forget  
Sun. Jan 3 – 9:00 am – Choucraallah Ghafari+ req Karam Family  
11:00 am – Oliveen Trainor+

**Reminder: There will no Evening Mass and Holy Hour on Wednesday December 23. There will be Morning Mass at 8:30 am only.**

**The Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Are you called to follow in the footsteps of Mary as a priest or religious to carry the Good News of God’s great Love? If you think God is calling you to be a priest, religious or deacon, contact Fr. Chris Lemieux, Vocation Director, Archdiocese of Toronto 416-968-0997.

**Feast of the Holy Family – December 27, 2015**

By Baptism we are God’s holy family. Pray today for the grace to live faithfully your vocation as a single, married, ordained or consecrated person.

**Thursday Dec.31 (New Year’s Eve) 5:00 pm Mass only**  
**Friday Jan. 1 (New Year’s Day) 11:00 am Mass only**

**Reminder: In Canada, New Year’s Day is the Feast of Mary, the Holy Mother of God and is a Holy Day of Obligation.**

**Masses & Holy Hour have been cancelled the week of January 5 – 8, 2016 as Fr. Charles is on a week’s vacation.**

**The Parish Office will be closed on Thursday December 24, 2015 to Friday January 1, 2016 and will re-open on Monday January 4, 2016.**

**IMPORTANT: 2016 WEEKLY OFFERTORY ENVELOPES ARE AVAILABLE FOR PICK-UP IN THE ‘QUIET ROOM’ PLEASE PICK THEM BEFORE CHRISTMAS**




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