

St. Leo The Great

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

NEW YEAR'S MASS TIMES 2014

Wed. Dec. 31 (New Year's Eve) 5 pm. Mass

Thurs. Jan. 1 (New Year's Day) 11 am. Mass

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

In the 'SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS'

St. Bridget School, one of our parishes three Catholic elementary schools began Advent by thinking of others in our community. The school spearheaded an idea to see that all 192 residents of Fairview Lodge Nursing Home in Whitby, which experienced the terrible fire at the end of October displacing all of its residents, would receive gift bags. Families gathered together at a special Advent school event on December 2nd to put together the gift bags. Kudos to St. Bridget School staff, students and families who worked so hard to make this gift for others possible.

Since my mother, Margaret Forget, is one of the residents who has been displaced since the fire, I can relate to you how much of a struggle this transition has been for many of the residents of Fairview Lodge and their families. The residents have all been reassigned to either nursing homes or area hospitals, even some to Lyndsay and Peterborough hospitals. For some people, who previous to the fire may have received very few visits from family, they are all the more estranged as they have lost their familiar surroundings and the staff and fellow residents they knew as well as the lack of routine they had previously known.

Another school in Whitby – West Lynde Public School, had prepared 'care packages' for all the residents of Fairview Lodge back in November. God bless them all for their kind hearts and generous spirit. (Fr. C.)

SYNOD ON THE FAMILY



Years ago, when I was a seminarian at St. Augustine Seminary, I lived with about 90 other men who were discerning the priesthood. Some of them were studying for the Archdiocese of Toronto while others were sent to Toronto from Eastern

Canada dioceses from Quebec to Newfoundland. There was also a group of seminarians who were part of a more recently founded Order called the Companions of the Cross under the leadership of the late Fr. Bob Bedard. Their background and charism was evangelization long before Catholics even heard of the word much less used it. This religious community of men were rock solid in their Catholic formation and had a great sense of joy and lived faith. One of these young men was a Christian Riesbeck. He is now Auxiliary Bishop of the Ottawa. Since his ordination to the episcopacy on March 14, 2014 he has been outspoken on the Right to Life of the Unborn, the family and the upholding of Catholic teaching in the public square.

Recently a Catholic Register article referred to his remarks as well as those of his Ordinary, Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, at The Family Conference held in Ottawa from November 20-22, 2014 which followed the Synod on the Family held in Rome this fall. Both leaders made it clear that Catholic teaching is not going to be overhauled despite the news that made the headlines in the media. The Register stated, "*Media reports ran rampant that the Church under Pope Francis would be softening its stance on same-sex marriage and opening up communion to divorced and remarried Catholics. But that was only a small part of the Synod though it garnered the most attention outside of Church circles.*"

Archbishop Prendergast stated "*The full title of the Synod was Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization. As a side note, we hear very few people making any reference to evangelization in and through the family. Most of the hype thus far has been on all of the challenges.*"

The Archbishop also referred to a *Catholic Register* column by Fr. Raymond de Souza in which he described "two competing Synods: the 'Synod of the media' and the actual 'Synod of bishops.'" He went on to say that "*We are all certainly grateful for the gift of the media, but should not be too naive and too quick to jump to conclusions based on third-party reports. We need to wait to read the official and final Church documents.*"

Bishop Riesbeck, who also spoke at the Conference said, "*We may have heard or read that the Synod has been about changing the teaching of the Church on marriage, family life or sexual morality. This is not true.*" He went on to explain that the purpose and objective of this October's synod and next year's full synod "*is to look at ways we can strengthen families which are the bedrock of our Church and our society — in their vocation and mission to witness to God's love for His people. There are many families that are beset by tensions and difficulties and have fallen apart through separation and divorce. Cohabitation and non-sacramental unions are part of the reality of today. More than ever, Christian families need to be encouraged and sustained as*

DECEMBER 28, 2014

they strive to live and proclaim the Gospel, but we also need to be a 'field hospital.'"

The bishop was making obvious reference to the statement of Pope Francis that the Church is a 'field hospital' which is clearly indicative that much healing is necessary in the world today with a fragmented and twisted sense of the family. Bishop Riesbeck pointed out that the necessary healing comes in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

"There is a great need for a new evangelization or a re-evangelization. One of the reasons for much resistance to the Church's teaching on moral issues related to the family identified by episcopal conferences is a want of an authentic Christian experience, namely an encounter with Christ on a personal and communal level, for which no doctrinal presentation, no matter how accurate, can substitute. Without that personal encounter, people have a hard time understanding and embracing the beauty and power of the Church's teaching on marriage and the family and moral issues related to these teachings," he said.

Archbishop Prendergast said that *"Pope Francis has told us that as Church we need 'to receive the needy, the penitent and not only the just or those who believe they are perfect.' He has even gone further to state that we must not only welcome the lost, but go out and find them. This Synod was called in response to a crisis in our time: the crisis of the family. In Canada and in the West our crisis is caused by ideologies which oppose the sanctity of human life and the institution of marriage and the family."*

The Archbishop blamed what Pope Benedict XVI called "the Dictatorship of Relativism."

"We don't get to make the rules, God makes the rules. Or rather, God has designed us beautifully, and written His plan for our happiness in our hearts and on our bodies. Another common error today is a false sensitivity or tolerance which suggests it's good to allow people to continue down a dangerous path. As if misleading people is somehow more loving."

As we think on the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph this weekend we might want to begin praying now for the full Synod on the Family which will take place in 2015. The family has suffered so much in recent history because the individuals who make up the family are themselves facing the affront of a culture so desperately in need of God and to be centred once again in Him. As Bishop Riesbeck has said, we need to have a personal encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ and from this the healing that is necessary will come.

When some are suggesting that the problem with the family is caused by the Church which is tantamount to saying the problem with the family is Jesus Christ, we know that nothing could be any further from the truth of what we need to do in order to allow God to restore and heal the family. Let us pray for that healing and wisdom to come from the Lord. Let us pray for all the human family to be blessed and made whole.

(Fr. Charles)

MASS INTENTIONS – WEEK OF Dec. 30 – Jan 2, 2015

Tues., Dec. 30 – 8:30 am – No Mass

Wed., Dec. 31 – 5:00 pm Only – New Year's Eve

Thurs., Jan 1 – 11:00 am Only – New Year's Day

Fri., Jan 2 – 8:30 am – No Mass

Sat., Jan 3 – 5:00 pm – Bogumila Zubrdycki + – Req. Bawol Family

Sun., Jan 4 – 9:00 am – Frank Utrosa+ Req. Anna Utrosa & Family

11:00 am – Roberto Liut+ Req. Mary, Laurie & Sarah Park

REMINDER: THERE WILL BE NO MORNING MASS ON TUESDAY DECEMBER 30 AND FRIDAY JANUARY 2.

THE PARISH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2014 TO FRIDAY JANUARY 2, 2015 AND WILL RE-OPEN ON MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2015.

IF YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY REQUIRING A PRIEST, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE AT 905-655-3286 EXT. 8.

Masses & Holy Hour have been cancelled the week of January 6 – 9, 2015 as Fr. Charles is on a week's vacation.

Feast of the Holy Family – December 28, 2014

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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. If God is calling you, contact Fr. Chris Lemieux, Vocation Director, Archdiocese of Toronto

416-968-0997 email vocations@archtoronto.org

www.vocationstoronto.ca

PAPAL BLESSING SCROLLS

The Archdiocese of Toronto will no longer facilitate ordering Papal Blessing Scrolls. Parishioners will be able to go online www.vatican.va. Under the Roman Curia tab, and then the Office of Papal Charities under 'Institutions Connected with the Holy See', download the order form and send it directly to the Vatican by fax or mail. The scroll order will be processed and sent to the parishioner, along with an invoice for the scroll including shipping costs.

OFFERTORY ENVELOPES 2015

The 2015 Offertory Envelopes have been removed from the vestibule of the church and are now in the parish office for pick-up. Please do so ASAP. Thank you.




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