



Welcome to HOLY FAMILY PARISH

DECEMBER 24, 2023 TO JANUARY 1, 2024

Email: contact@holyfamilymh.ca ~ Website: www.holyfamilymh.ca ~ Phone 403-527-6933

Facebook: Medicine Hat Holy Family Parish ~ YouTube: Medicine Hat Holy Family Church

Office Hrs. Monday to Friday - 8:30am – 12:00pm & 1:00pm to 4:30pm. Closed on Holidays.

CLERGY AT HOLY FAMILY PARISH

Fr. Iqbal Khurshid &
Deacon Robert Risling

RECONCILIATION...

Friday 9:30am–10:30am. & Saturday 3:30–
4:45pm. Or by Appointment

MASS TIMES... MONDAY to FRIDAY at 9:00AM

FIRST SATURDAY OF MONTH at 8:30AM, SATURDAY at 5:00PM

SUNDAY at 8:30AM, 10:30AM & 6:00PM

THE CHAPEL IS OPEN

MONDAY - FRIDAY 9:30am - 4:00pm

ADORATION FRIDAY 9:30 – 10:30am

Knights of Columbus – Greg Martin

Catholic Women's League – Cathy Koch

Parish Pastoral Council Chair - Gary Heinbecker

Parish Finance Council Chair - Cheryl Pocsik

**We acknowledge that Treaty 7
Territory, on which we stand, is the
ancestral land of the Indigenous
Peoples and is common home to
everyone in Virtue of God, our
Creator's Gracious Gift.**

Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16.

Psalms 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29.

Romans 16:25-27.

Luke 1:26-38.

How Can This Be?

Words of a visiting angel: Do not be afraid; God has this plan; you are full of grace. Mary speaks aloud what we all are thinking: "How can this be?" God makes it possible because God makes us holy!

† What should I stop fearing?

† What is God's plan for me just for this day?

† What will I do this week as God's holy person that benefits someone else?

Love... 4th Sunday of Advent

DECEMBER 24, 2023 TO JANUARY 1, 2024



The Nativity of the Lord [Christmas]

A Great Light. Isaiah declares (in 9:1): "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." We have surely walked in darkness during this pandemic year. Some of us, perhaps all of us may still be there. We have been confined to home. We have jobs and homes in peril. We grieve the sickness and death of family, friends, and unknown-to-us citizens of this country and of the world. Yet we take hope this Christmas. For we are not alone. We are not left in darkness. Today, the Lord Jesus Christ is with us. In truth, he never abandons us. He will be with us today and tomorrow and tomorrow's tomorrow. And all the tomorrows.

† How do I know that Jesus is with me, is with us?

Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God

Being Amazed. All those who heard the shepherds (among the riffraff of ancient society) were amazed at what was said about angels on high ... about glory to God ... about the resting favor of God.

† How will I glorify and praise God this day?

VOCATIONS

We celebrate the birth of our Lord into our world; however, many have not received the birth of our Lord into their hearts. If Christ lives in your heart and you would like to help others discover the Lord, you may be called to be a priest, religious, or permanent deacon. If God is calling you, please contact the Office of Vocations at 403-218-5500 or email Fr. Cristino Bouvette at

vocations@calgarydiocese.ca
www.catholicqyc.ca/vocations.html

If you found a Baby Jesus figurine at the church last weekend, it is very old and has great sentimental value.

If you could bring it to the office, it would be so appreciated.

A thank you reward is offered!



This is not
a replica of
lost one



† Masses & Mass Intentions †



Saturday, December 23

5:30am ~ Simbang Gabi

5:00pm ~ Gualberto & Lucia Pimentel †

Sunday, December 24

9:30am ~ Vi Sheridan

5:00pm ~ Holy Family Parish

8:00pm ~ Frank Gutfriend †

10:30pm ~ Sofron & Nikola Faysa & Vlado Mali †

Monday, December 25

10:30am ~ Holy Family Parish

Tuesday, December 26

No Mass Today

Wednesday, December 27

9:00am ~ Michaela Sehn

Thursday, December 28

9:00am ~ Italo Dal Molin †

Friday, December 29

9:00am ~ Msgr. Mario Ramos †

Saturday, December 30

5:00pm ~ Roy Ries †

Sunday, December 31

8:30am ~ Amara Welford †

10:30am ~ Holy Family Parish

6:00pm ~ Dean & Maria Sehn & Family

Monday, January 1

9:00am ~ Jaxon Richard †

Tuesday, January 2

9:00am ~ Reuben Steinkey †

6:30pm ~ Richard Family

Wednesday, January 3

9:00am ~ Richard Hoffarth †

Thursday, January 4

9:00am ~ Julia Landry †

Friday, January 5

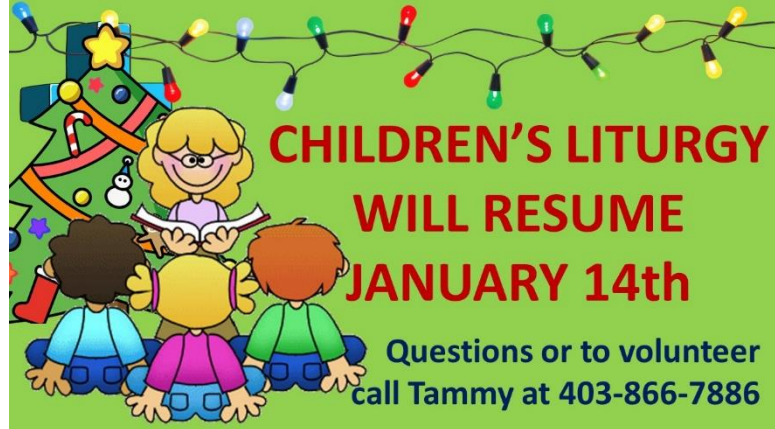
9:00am ~ George Corcoran †

Holy Communion to the Hospital

Volunteers are needed to bring Holy Communion to parishioners, in hospital, who desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Training will be provided.

If you have a family member or friend who is in hospital and is requesting Holy Communion, please phone the Parish Secretary with the name and room number of the parishioner. The information will be forwarded to Pastoral Care.

Thank you!



THE HOLY FAMILY PARISH
OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FROM
DECEMBER 23RD TO JANUARY 1ST FOR
OFFICE STAFF TO GET CAUGHT UP ON
YEAR END REQUIREMENTS.

IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO DROP
OFF, PLEASE LEAVE IT ON THE OFFICE
WINDOW LEDGE.

IF YOU NEED TO MAKE A YEAR-END
DONATION, PLEASE DROP OFF IN THE
MAIL SLOT BESIDE THE OFFICE WINDOW
OR USE E-TRANSFER AT
ACCOUNTING@HOLYFAMILYMH.CA

OR CALL RIA AT
403-527-6933 EXT. 104



*Wishing You a Blessed Christmas
And all the best in 2024*

From Fr.
Iqbal & the
Whole Gang
here at Holy
Family
Parish.

Thank You
for all that
you do!

Faithfully
FAITH. LIVED. FULLY.

catholiccyyc.ca/Faithfully keeps you
updated with what's happening in
and around our Diocese!

**EMAIL SCAMS AGAIN FROM
PREISTS, CHURCH, STAFF, ETC.**

NOBODY is going to ask you for gift
cards, or bit coins! **NOBODY!!!**

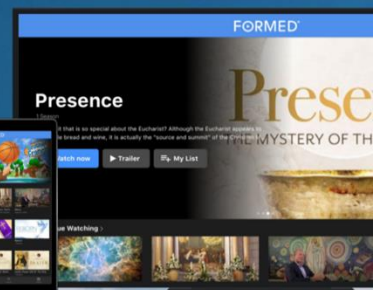
If you get an email or a text, **PLEASE**
DO NOT RESPOND to it,
JUST DELETE IT!

FORMED.ORG

This service is free to all parishioners.

Catholic video content for use in small
group, Bible study, individual prayer, or
as an alternative to movie channels.

Sign-up at
formed.org



E-transfer
ONLINE GIVING



accounting@holyfamilymh.ca

Listen to Mass on your phone...
Download the "Audio Fetch" app.
Our Network is: HFP_LIVE
The Password is: Liv3HFP*



Vincentian Corner

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the parishioners at Holy Family and St. Patrick's Churches. Your commitment to generously donate to Society of St. Vincent de Paul allows us to continue our mission of helping our neighbours in need. With the cost of living so high and wages not keeping up, so many are struggling to sustain a place to call home as well as to buy enough food to feed their family. We are very blessed to be able to assist those who are in dire situations. The stories we hear are heartbreaking, but we are often able to make a difference. That brings us great peace and joy.

God bless you all for your prayers and your generosity. We wish you a blessed and peaceful Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year in 2024.



**Medicine Hat Catholic
Board of Education**

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Medicine Hat Catholic Schools'
Education Foundation AGM



January 16, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
at Medicine Hat Catholic Board Office

All public welcome to attend!

HOMESTAY FAMILIES NEEDED

Are you interested in hosting an international student? Desire to help a student learn about our Canadian culture? The international program with MHCBE is currently recruiting homestay families for our February intake. We have students joining us from all over the world to attend our highly rated junior high and high schools. If you have a spare room and the ability to make a student feel like part of the family, please reach out to... lori.frelick@mhcbe.ab.ca



4th Sunday of Advent Year B

December 24, 2023

LOVE COMPLETES EVERYTHING

We have come to the completion of our Advent Season as we light the 4th Candle which opens our hearts and minds to reflect on the theme of Love. The season of Advent basically is a time to reflect on the journey of the Divine becoming Human as St. John says, "He became flesh and dwelt among us". This journey started right before the creation of the world as Jesus said, "he was even there when the world was created" and the author of Letter to Hebrews adds witness in this way "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds".

I love the following story by an unknown author and his dialogue with God inspires us to always appreciate the love God has for us.

One day, I woke early in the morning to watch the sunrise. Ah! ... the beauty of God's creation is beyond description. As I watched, I praised God for His beautiful work. As I sat there, I felt the Lord's presence with me. He asked me, "Do you love me?" I answered, "Of course, God! You are my Lord and Saviour!"

Then He asked, "If you were physically handicapped, would you still love me?"

I was perplexed. I looked down upon my arms, legs and the rest of my body and wondered how many things I would not be able to do and thought about the things that I take for granted. I answered, "It would be tough Lord, but I would still love You."

Then the Lord said, "If you were blind, would you still love my creation?"

How could I love something without being able to see it? Then I thought of all the blind people in the world and how many of them still loved God and His creation. So, I answered, "It's hard to think of it, but I would still love you."

The Lord then asked me, "If you were deaf, would you still listen to my word?"

How could I listen to anything being deaf? Then I understood. Listening to God's Word is not merely using our ears, but our hearts. I answered, "It would be tough, but I would still listen to Your word."

The Lord then asked, "If you were mute, would you still praise My Name?"

How could I praise without a voice? Then it occurred to me, God wants us to sing from our very hearts and souls. It never matters what we sound like. And praising God is not always with a song, but when we are persecuted, we give God praise with our words of thanks. So, I answered, "Though I could not physically sing, I would still praise Your Name." And the Lord asked, "Do you really love Me?"

With courage and a strong conviction, I answered boldly, "Yes Lord! I love You because You are the one and true God!"

I thought I had answered well, but God asked, "Then why do you sin?"

I answered, "Because I am only human. I am not perfect."

"Then why in times of peace do you stray the furthest? Why only in times of trouble do you pray the earnest?"

I had no answers ... only tears.

The Lord continued. "Why only sing at fellowships and retreats? Why seek Me only in times of worship? Why ask things so selfishly? Why ask things so unfaithfully?"

The tears continued to roll down my cheeks. "Why are you ashamed of Me? Why are you not spreading the good news? Why in times of persecution, you cry to others when I offer My shoulder to cry on? Why make excuses when I give you opportunities to serve in My Name?"

"You are blessed with life. I made you not to throw this gift away. I have blessed you with talents to serve Me, but you continue to turn away. I have revealed My Word to you, but you do not gain in knowledge. I have spoken to you, but your ears were closed. I have shown My blessings to you, but your eyes were turned away. I have heard your prayers and I have answered them all. Do you truly love me?"

I could not answer. How could I? I was embarrassed beyond belief. I had no excuse. What could I say to this? When my heart had cried out and the tears had flowed, I said, "Please forgive me Lord. I am unworthy to be Your child."

The Lord answered, "That is My Grace, My child."

I asked, "Then why do you continue to forgive me? Why do You love me so?"

The Lord answered, "Because you are My creation. You are my child. I will never abandon you. When you cry, I will have compassion and cry with you. When you shout with joy, I will laugh with you. When you are down, I will encourage you. When you fall, I will raise you up. When you are tired, I will carry you. I will be with you until the end of days, and I will love you forever."

Never had I cried so hard before. How could I have been so cold? How could I have hurt God as I had done? I asked God, "How much do You love me?"

The Lord stretched out His arms, and I saw His nail-pierced hands. I bowed down at the feet of Christ, my Savior. And for the first time, I truly prayed.

God created the universe when there was nothing and his spirit was hovering over the waters which clearly showed how God loved the world and for that love, he gave his only Begotten Son that anyone who believes in him, may have life and life in abundance. After creating the universe, God saw something missing and then he created his masterpiece "Adam" from the dust and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and Adam became living being. Did God's love stop there? Absolutely not, but rather started growing deeper and deeper even though Adam and Eve committed sin and became unfaithful to him, he could not deny himself as St. Paul says because God created Adam on his own image.

Throughout the Salvation history of humankind God always walked with them but there it was still a long time to see him taking our human form and walking like us on this earth. God was preparing people for centuries to see him become human and take on the human form to be like us but without sin. God's deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egyptian slavery and leading them to the promise land was the first step to prepare them for the journey of Divinity to humanity.

Later we read in the Scripture God kept sending his messengers and prophets to prepare people for this great mystery of "God becoming man". We read from the Letter to Hebrews "Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the message declared through angels was valid, and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty, how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, while God added his testimony by signs and wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to his will". This mystery was also announced 700 years ago by Prophet Isaiah "a virgin will bear a son and she will name him Emmanuel which means 'God is with us'". After the long wait, God started to become human "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth". God, leaving the heavenly throne, came down to earth, the footstool for his feet because he loved the world so much. The following story will help us to understand that once we have his Son, we have everything. If someone will ask the question "when did you fall in love with God?" What would be our answer to this question? Is there a certain time that we fell in love with God or is it a continuous journey with God? Just imagine if we ask the same question to God "when did you fall in love with the world?" what would be his answer? God fell in love with the world the day Adam and Eve disobeyed him and committed sin: "I will put enmity between

you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel” and this love never ended. God continued to journey with people. As we reflect on the Readings of today’s Sunday, we come to know that the journey of Divinity to humanity was finally completed in Blessed Virgin Mary when the Angel Gabriel came to her and greeted her in a very solemn way. God’s promise to become human was fulfilled when Blessed Virgin Mary said, “Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done according to your Word”. God loved the world so much that he gave his only Begotten Son, so that anyone who believes in him, may have life and life in abundance. Christmas (Nativity of the Lord) is a day where we reflect on the journey of God’s becoming human. The journey which started from becoming divine to human has brought everyone to become God’s children and God is making everyone to become like him because we are all created on the image of God and have received grace upon grace. Do we struggle everyday to become like him? Are we walking in his divinity to allow him to help us to become true image of his love on earth? The following story, which is written by unknown author, will assist us to have better relationship with him who became flesh and dwelt among us.

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art.

When the Vietnam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.

About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands. He said, "Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart, and he died instantly. He often talked about you and your love for art." The young man held out the package. "I know this isn't much. I'm not a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this." The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. "Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It's a gift."

The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home; he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected. The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection.

On the platform sat the painting of the son. The auctioneer pounded his gavel. "We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?" There was silence. Then, a voice in the back of the room shouted, "We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one." But the auctioneer persisted. "Will somebody bid for this painting. Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?"

Another voice said angrily, "We didn't come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Goghs, the Rembrandts. Get on with the real art!" But still the auctioneer continued. "The son! The son! Who'll take the son?"

Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the longtime gardener of the man and his son. "I'll give \$10 for the painting." Being a poor man, it was all he could afford. "We have \$10. Who will bid \$20?" "Give it to him for \$10. Let us see the masters." "\$10 is the bid. Won't someone bid \$20?"

The crowd was becoming angry. They did not want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections. The auctioneer pounded the gavel. "Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!" A man sitting on the second row shouted, "Now let's get on with the collection!" The auctioneer laid down his gavel. "I'm sorry; the auction is over." "What about the paintings?"

"I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who took the son gets everything!"

How do we see God's love in our life?



HE IS EMMANUEL

Prophet Isaiah opens us our hearts to reflect on the mystery of God becoming man and dwelling among us "Behold a virgin is with a Child and she will name him Emmanuel which means God is with us". He, being Emmanuel walks with us and shares our humanity.

St. Bernard rightly reflects on this mystery this way as he believes that conceiving of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary has made the path clear for us to understand that he dwells among us and walks with us. "You have heard, O Virgin, that you will conceive and bear a son; you have heard that it will not be by man but by the Holy Spirit. The angel awaits an answer; it is time for him to return to God who sent him. We too are waiting, O Lady, for your word of compassion; the sentence of condemnation weighs heavily upon us. The price of our salvation is offered to you. We shall be set free at once if you consent. In the eternal Word of God we all came to be, and behold, we die. In your brief response we are to be remade in order to be recalled to life. Tearful Adam with his sorrowing family begs this of you, O loving Virgin, in their exile from Paradise. Abraham begs it, David begs it. All the other holy patriarchs, your ancestors, ask it of you, as they dwell in the country of the shadow of death. This is what the whole earth waits for, prostrate at your feet. It is right in doing so, for on your word depends, comfort for the wretched, ransom for the captive, freedom for the condemned, indeed, salvation for all the sons of Adam, the whole of your race. Answer quickly, O Virgin. Reply in haste to the angel, or rather through the angel to the Lord. Answer with a word, receive the Word of God. Speak your own word, conceive the divine Word. Breathe a passing word, embrace the eternal Word.

Why do you delay, why are you afraid? Believe, give praise, and receive. Let humility be bold, let modesty be confident. This is no time for virginal simplicity to forget prudence. In this matter alone, O prudent Virgin, do not fear to be presumptuous. Though modest silence is pleasing, dutiful speech is now more necessary. Open your heart to faith, O blessed Virgin, your lips to praise, your womb to the Creator. See, the desired of all nations is at your door, knocking to enter. If he should pass by because of your delay, in sorrow you would begin to seek him afresh, the One whom your soul loves. Arise, hasten, open. Arise in faith, hasten in devotion, open in praise and thanksgiving. Behold the handmaid of the Lord, she says, be it done to me according to your word".

This mystery of God's taking fleshing and dwelling among us leads to us reflect on the title of Jesus found in O Antiphons as mentioned in the last week's reflection. Those seven titles of Jesus in fact sum up the whole mystery of Lord's Nativity and his dwelling among us. Let me share them again.

O Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love: come to teach us the path of knowledge! The Old Testament treats of Wisdom as the eldest daughter of creation, but also as a co-creator with God. Many of the OT references are commonly (and easily,) applied to the Holy Spirit, but this antiphon clearly applies to Jesus. Prophet Isaiah had prophesied, the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the

Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord. (11:2-3), and Wonderful is His counsel and great is His wisdom. (28:29). Wisdom is here personified, present with God at the beginning of creation. This is a prefigurement of Jesus, the eternal Word of God, the "logos" John described in the opening of his gospel. Wisdom is the foundation of fear of the Lord, of holiness, or right living: it is wisdom whom we bid to come and teach us prudence. The cry "Come" will be repeated again and again, insistent and hope filled. His might is gentle, not harsh, He is forceful and holds a creator's power, but sweetly, bearing these two traits, not in contrast, but in perfect, divine complement.

O Leader (Lord) of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai: come to rescue us with your mighty power! With this second antiphon we progress from creation to the familiar story of God manifesting himself by name to Moses and giving his law to Israel as their way of life. We are also reminded of the Israelites' deliverance from bondage under pharaoh a foreshadowing of our own redemption from sin. The image of God's arm outstretched in power to save his chosen people also brings to mind the later scene of Jesus with his arms outstretched for us on the cross.

O Flower of Jesse's stem, sign of God's love for all his people: come to save us without delay! Isaiah prophesied a restoration of David's throne a new branch budding out of the old root. Christ is the root of Jesse in a two-fold sense: he is the descendant of David, who was the youngest son of Jesse, and he inherited the royal throne. The angel foretold to Mary, "The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over the house of Jacob forever and his reign will be without end" (Luke 1:32-33). Our hearts more and more urgently cry out for God's reign to extend over all humanity: "Come, save us, and do not delay".

O Key of David, opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom: come and free the prisoners of darkness! Isaiah had prophesied, God will place the Key of the House of David on His shoulder; when he opens, no one will shut, when he shuts, no one will open. And His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over His kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. The key and scepter are traditional symbols of kingly power and authority. Christ, the anointed one, is the heir of David and possessor of the kingdom. Jesus himself also made use of this symbol, showing the prophetic relationship of the earthly kingdom of David to the kingdom of God. All power and authority were given to him after the resurrection, and he entrusted this power to "bind and to loose" to Peter and the ministers of his church.

O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death. This title is variously translated "morning star", "Dayspring", "rising sun", "radiant dawn", "orient". All beautifully express the idea of light shattering the darkness of night, of sin and death, of sickness and despair, with its brightness bringing healing and warmth to cold hearts. Jesus is indeed the true light, the radiance of his Father's splendor. The church prays this petition daily in the Benedictus, joining in the words of Zechariah: "He, the Dayspring, shall visit us in his mercy to shine on those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:78-79).

○ King of all nations and keystone of the Church: come and save man, whom you formed from the dust! The earlier antiphons have already alluded to the Messiah coming not only to Israel but to convert the gentile nations and redeem them for his own. Now this sixth antiphon clearly addresses the savior as the king of the gentiles (Jer. 10:7) and the Desired One of the nations. The Messiah is the cornerstone on whom our spiritual foundations are laid, but on whom unbelievers stumble (Matt. 21:42). This cornerstone unites and binds Jew and gentile into one, making peace between them. The plea is that God save all humanity, all his creation that he formed from the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7). We yearn for him once again to breathe the breath of his new life into us.

○ Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law: come to save us, Lord our God!

These titles of Jesus really help us to understand the mystery of Incarnation of the Lord. With this last antiphon our expectation finds joy now in the certainty of fulfillment. We call Jesus by one of the most personal and intimate of his titles, Emmanuel, God-with-us. We recall that in his birth from the Virgin Mary God takes on our very flesh and human nature: God coming nearer to us than we could have ever imagined! Yet he is also to be exalted above us as our king, the lawgiver and judge, the one whom we honor and obey. And he is our savior, long expected by all creation. The final cry rises from us urgent in our need for daily salvation and forgiveness of our sins, and confident that our God will not withhold himself from us.

The mystery of God's dwelling among us is also revealed in the visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, where these two women, mothers, and sisters to encounter the greatest mystery of God becoming man "why this has happened that the mother of my Lord has come to visit me" as Elizabeth says. St. Ambrose explains the greatest mystery by saying "When the angel revealed his message to the Virgin Mary, he gave her a sign to win her trust. He told her of the motherhood of an old and barren woman to show that God can do all that he wills. When she hears this Mary sets out for the hill country. She does not disbelieve God's word; she feels no uncertainty over the message or doubt about the sign. She goes eager in purpose, dutiful in conscience, hastening for joy. Filled with God, where would she hasten but to the heights? The Holy Spirit does not proceed by slow, laborious efforts. Quickly, too, the blessings of her coming and the Lord's presence are made clear: as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting the child leapt in her womb, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit".

He continues to explain "Notice the contrast and the choice of words. Elizabeth is the first to hear Mary's voice, but John is the first to be aware of grace. She hears with the ears of the body, but he leaps for joy at the meaning of the mystery. She is aware of Mary's presence, but he is aware of the Lord's: a woman aware of a woman's presence, the forerunner aware of the pledge of our salvation. The women speak of the grace they have received while the children are active in secret, unfolding the mystery of love with the help of their mothers, who prophesy by the spirit of their sons. The child leaps in the womb; the mother is filled with the Holy Spirit; he fills his mother with the same Spirit. John leaps for joy, and the spirit of Mary rejoices in her turn. When John leaps for joy Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit, but we know that though Mary's spirit rejoices

she does not need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Her son, who is beyond our understanding, is active in his mother in a way beyond our understanding. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit after conceiving John, while Mary is filled with the Holy Spirit before conceiving the Lord. Elizabeth says: Blessed are you because you have believed. You also are blessed because you have heard and believed. A soul that believes both conceives and brings forth the Word of God and acknowledges his works. Let Mary's soul be in each of you to proclaim the greatness of the Lord. Let her spirit be in each to rejoice in the Lord. Christ has only one mother in the flesh, but we all bring forth Christ in faith. Every soul receives the Word of God if only it keeps chaste, remaining pure and free from sin, its modesty undefiled. The soul that succeeds in this proclaims the greatness of the Lord, just as Mary's soul magnified the Lord and her spirit rejoiced in God her Savior. In another place we read: Magnify the Lord with me. The Lord is magnified, not because the human voice can add anything to God but because he is magnified within us. Christ is the image of God, and if the soul does what is right and holy, it magnifies that image of God, in whose likeness it was created and, in magnifying the image of God, the soul has a share in its greatness and is exalted".

In the words of Holy Father Pope Francis, the mystery God's sharing our humanity and dwelling among us is the greatest ever. Who would have thought God all powerful can take our image and will walk in our streets. This prophecy of Isaiah never ceases to touch us, especially when we hear it proclaimed in the liturgy of Christmas Night. This is not simply an emotional or sentimental matter. It moves us because it states the deep reality of what we are: a people who walk, and all around us – and within us as well – there is darkness and light. In this night, as the spirit of darkness enfolds the world, there takes place anew the event which always amazes and surprises us: the people who walk see a great light. A light which makes us reflect on this mystery: the mystery of walking and seeing".

This verb makes us reflect on the course of history, that long journey, which is the history of salvation, starting with Abraham, our father in faith, whom the Lord called one day to set out, to go forth from his country towards the land which he would show him. From that time on, our identity as believers has been that of a people making its pilgrim way towards the promised land. This history has always been accompanied by the Lord! He is ever faithful to his covenant and to his promises. Because he is faithful, "God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all" (1 Jn 1:5). Yet on the part of the people there are times of both light and darkness, fidelity and infidelity, obedience, and rebellion; times of being a pilgrim people and times of being a people adrift. In our personal history too, there are both bright and dark moments, lights and shadows. If we love God and our brothers and sisters, we walk in the light; but if our heart is closed, if we are dominated by pride, deceit, self-seeking, then darkness falls within us and around us. "Whoever hates his brother – writes the Apostle John – is in the darkness; he walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (1 Jn 2:11). A people who walk, but as a pilgrim people who do not want to go astray. There rings out the proclamation of the Apostle: "God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the

whole human race” (Tit 2:11). The grace which was revealed in our world is Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, true man and true God. He has entered our history; he has shared our journey. He came to free us from darkness and to grant us light. In him was revealed the grace, the mercy, and the tender love of the Father: Jesus is Love incarnate. He is not simply a teacher of wisdom; he is not an ideal for which we strive while knowing that we are hopelessly distant from it. He is the meaning of life and history, who has pitched his tent in our midst.

The mystery of God’s dwelling among needs to be celebrated with joy and love because our God is an awesome God who loves us all.

Do we all allow him to walk with us?

Wish you Merry Christmas to All of You





DIOCESAN SUNDAY UPDATES

Merry Christmas

"For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." ~Isaiah 9:6

Parish Christmas Masses

Parish Christmas Mass schedules are now available on our website - visit catholiccyyc.ca

Year-end Giving Donation

In order to receive a tax receipt for the 2023 calendar year, online donation to parishes or diocesan ministries must be received by Sunday, Dec. 31, 2023. To give online, visit catholiccyyc.ca/give

Sunday Mass at Calgary Hospitals

Great news! The celebration of Sunday Mass has resumed at three hospitals in the City of Calgary on the First Sunday of Advent. Patients, family members and friends, and hospital staff are now able to avail themselves of this pastoral outreach in the following facilities:

- Sundays at 3:30 pm - Foothills Hospital Chapel
- Sundays at 3:00 pm – Peter Lougheed Hospital Chapel
- Sundays at 3:30 pm – Rockyview Hospital Chapel

Transitions

Transitions provides a God-centered group environment that encourages discussion through an 18-week program. In this supportive setting, individuals can share and discuss their personal journey with others going through separation and divorce. When/Where: Every Tuesday, from Feb 13, 2024, 7 pm to 9 pm at the Catholic Pastoral Centre (120 – 17th Avenue SW, Calgary). No fee registration but only limited spots available. Register now at catholiccyyc.ca/transitions

The Stories We Tell

Join researchers and church leaders to interact with recent research findings from four congregational case studies across Canada. When: Saturday, Jan 13 at 8 am MT (10 am ET). To register, visit <https://bit.ly/ambstorieswetell24>

Apply to St. Mary's University

Applications are now open for Fall 2024 in all BA/BSc programs and the helpful admissions team at St. Mary's is ready to guide you through the process. Get a head start on building the foundation of your future by applying to St. Mary's University today at stmu.ca.

Inspiration Unplugged

presents: The Saint John's Bible Please join us for our third installment of the Inspiration Unplugged Catholic Lecture series! Come learn about and experience The Saint John's Bible! Brad Neary, Director of the Heritage Program, will share the history of the original manuscript as well as details of the full-sized printed version, referred to as the Heritage Edition. The Saint John's Bible is the first-handwritten, illuminated Bible commissioned by a Benedictine monastery in 500 years! When: Wed, Jan. 24, 2024, McGivney Hall – M100 (St. Mary's University, Calgary) from 7 to 9 pm

Airdrie Dream Vacation Raffle 2024

The Knights of Columbus in Airdrie invites you to participate in their Airdrie Dream Vacation Raffle.

Proceeds go back into the community through the Knights of Columbus (Council 8045) in Airdrie. For more information and to purchase tickets, go to airdriedreamvacation.ca

Theology of the Body Conference

Join experts Dr. Christopher West, Sister Helena Burns FSP, Fr. Cristino Bouvette, and internationally acclaimed songwriter, Mike Mangione, as they introduce and reflect St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body. When/Where: Friday, Feb. 9, 2024 from 6 pm to 10 pm at Holy Spirit Catholic Church (10827 24 St SW Calgary). Register online. For any questions, please contact theologyofthebodyconference@gmail.com

Subscribe to Faithfully

If you haven't already, please subscribe to the [Diocesan publication Faithfully](http://DiocesanpublicationFaithfully) – to keep you updated with what's happening in our Diocese. Faithfully gives a snapshot of faith at work in the lives of everyday people in our Diocese and provide us with opportunities to spread the Good News of Christ beyond the walls of our churches. New release is coming up this Monday! To subscribe, catholiccyyc.ca/faithfully

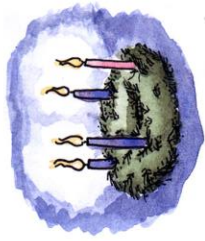
Joe McKenna Council #9502 Knights of Columbus

Position	Name
Grand Knight	Greg Martin
Deputy Grand Knight	Jimmy Tablan
Financial Secretary	Pat Ries
Treasurer	Ron Pisoni
Chancellor	
Recorder	Pat Brigham
Advocate	Andy Hamel
Warden	Walter Pratt
Inside Guard	Dale Maddaford
Outside Guard	Michael Camphor
Year 1 Trustee	Herb Durda
Year 2 Trustee	Gary Heinbecker
Year 3 Trustee	Kent Friedt
Lecturer	Rick Brown
Membership Director	Garry Lux
Faith in Action Program Director	Greg Martin
Faith in Action Life Director	Allan Lawson
Faith in Action Family Director	Jimmy Tablan
Faith in Action Faith Director	Darrell Bonagofsky
Faith in Action Community Director	Ron Pisoni
Pastoral Parish Council Representative	Garry Mastel



2023-24 Knights Events

Date & Activity
Sunday, September 10 Corn Roast
Sunday, September 24 Knights Mass
Sunday, October 15 Breakfast
Sunday, November 19 Breakfast
Saturday, December 9 Knights Mass
Sunday, December 17 Christmas Breakfast
Sunday, January 21 Breakfast
Sunday, February 25 Breakfast
Sunday, April 7 Breakfast
Sunday, May 5 Breakfast
Sunday, June 23 Parish Picnic



*Christmas
is almost
here!*



Christmas is almost here! Isn't it exciting? It's like when it's getting really close to your birthday, except that people all over the world are going to be celebrating Christmas! We should help make Jesus' birthday as special as we can!

I CAN WASH

THE SINK

FOR
MOM!



If your family has an Advent wreath, today all four of the candles will be lit.

This represents the light of Jesus coming closer and getting brighter. Jesus is

the light of the world. If we want to make Christmas beautiful, then we should make our own lives shine with the love of Jesus.

HI DAD! I

VACUUMED
UNDER
YOUR DESK!



Does your family have a Christmas tree? Are there lights on it? Do you have Christmas lights on your house? All the little lights you see can represent all the people whose lives are lit up with the love of God. Or maybe they can represent all the good things you can do to brighten up other

people's lives! Think of some things you can do to love God and bring His love to your family and your friends and neighbours this Christmas!

Answers to True or False: 1. false, (Gabriel) 2. false, 3. true, 4. true, 5. false, 6. true, 7. true, (the baby was John the Baptist!)

www.thekidsbulletin.com

The Kids' Bulletin

Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 24th, 2023

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llsde uoy bus ,nos s rised bus dmow

tsaerg eð lliw eH .aurel mid emsnt

eð fo no2 bells eð lliw bus

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Behold, I am

the pangs of

bro I eð fo

may it be done

gnibdroos em of

.brow uoy of



legns eðt nreT

berisqeb

.reJ mori

What did the angel Gabriel say to Mary?

What did she reply to him?

Look in the mirror to find out!

SAINT JOSEPH'S CHRISTMAS



GOD CHOSE SAINT JOSEPH, A GOOD AND HUMBLE MAN, TO BE THE PROTECTOR OF HIS SON JESUS AND JESUS' MOTHER, MARY. IT WASN'T AN EASY JOB- THEY HAD TO TRAVEL FAR ON FOOT AND STAY IN A STABLE WITH ANIMALS, BUT SAINT JOSEPH WAS HAPPY TO SUFFER FOR LOVE OF GOD. ARE YOU?



Who did What?

Write the number of the person beside what they did in the Christmas Story.

1. Saint Joseph
 - ___ Announced the joyful news of the Saviour's birth
 - ___ Commanded that everyone register in their hometown
2. Our Lady
 - ___ Did not have room for the man and his wife
3. The Shepherds
 - ___ Took his wife to Bethlehem
4. The Angels
 - ___ Pondered all these things in her heart
5. The Innkeeper
 - ___ Went to find the newborn Saviour
6. Baby Jesus
 - ___ Came to save the people from their sins





Jesus is Born!

Christmas is one of the most important days in the year. We know that it's Jesus' birthday, but let's think a bit more about what that means...

Who is Jesus? He is God. He is also a real man. When Adam and Eve sinned they lost the privilege of going to Heaven. Now

people needed to pay back for their sins, but no sacrifice they could make could ever be big enough.

Only a perfect man could make a perfect sacrifice. And because God loved us so much He became a man to die for us!



Now think about God, Who made Himself a little baby, coming down to our world. He had a poor mother and foster father, and He was born in a little barn, far away from their home.

The first people who came to visit were the rough men who lived in the fields, looking after their sheep.

God loved us so much that He made Himself into a poor baby. Doesn't that just make you want to love Him more? Today or in the next few days, spend some time looking at a creche (a nativity scene) and think about Baby Jesus and how much God loves us.



Answer to front page: there are seven shepherds hiding in the picture.
Answer to inside page: the numbers are in this order: 4, 7, 5, 1, 2, 3, 6.

www.thekidsbulletin.com

The Kids' Bulletin

Christmas Day
December 25th, 2023



During the night of the first Christmas, the shepherds were out in the fields watching their sheep before the angels came to tell them that the Saviour was born.



Can you find all the shepherds in this picture?

How many are there?

You can colour in the picture too!

Saint John the Evangelist

December 27



IN HIS GOSPEL SAINT JOHN CALLS HIMSELF "THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED." HIS HEART WAS PURE AND DEDICATED TO JESUS, SO HE WAS OPEN TO RECEIVING JESUS' LOVE. WHEN HE GREW TOO OLD TO GO OUT AND PREACH, SAINT JOHN JUST TOLD THE PEOPLE, "LOVE ONE ANOTHER."



True or False?

Today's Gospel Reading: The Angel Visits Mary

*How well do you know the story of the Annunciation?
See if you know which are true and which are false:*

1. God sent the angel Michael to bring His message to Our Lady. True or false?
2. When Mary saw the angel, she covered her eyes. True or false?
3. The angel told Mary, "Do not be afraid." True or false?
4. The angel told Our Lady that she would have a Son that she would name 'Jesus.' True or false?
5. Mary just said okay and the angel left right away. True or false?
6. When Mary said she didn't understand, Gabriel told her that the baby would be the Son of God. True or false?
7. Before he left, the angel told Mary that her old cousin, Elizabeth, was going to have a baby too. True or false?

The Kids' Bulletin

December 31st, 2023: Feast of the Holy Family

January 1st, 2024: Feast of Mary the Mother of God



A simple, stylized illustration of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child. Mary is depicted with a yellow halo, wearing a blue robe over a white garment. She holds the Christ Child, who is also wearing a blue robe, in her arms. The background is a soft, pinkish-purple wash.

Mary,

Use the code to find out!

DEFGH MORT



Saint Gregory Nazianzen

January 2



GREGORY'S FATHER WAS A PAGAN AT FIRST BUT BECAME A BISHOP IN THE EARLY CHURCH THROUGH THE PRAYERS AND SACRIFICES OF HIS HOLY WIFE.



DURING A STORM AT SEA, GREGORY REALIZED HIS SOUL WAS IN DANGER BECAUSE HE WAS NOT YET BAPTIZED.

My soul isn't ready!



I baptize you...

HE WAS BAPTIZED AND BECAME A GREAT FRIEND OF ST. BASIL.



THEY STUDIED THE SCRIPTURES AND LED DEVOUT LIVES.

Look what Isaiah says about Christ!



I need to pray about this...

WHEN HIS FATHER FORCED HIM TO BE ORDAINED, GREGORY RAN AWAY TO THE DESERT FOR A WHILE.

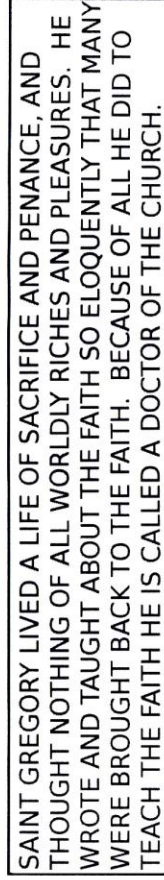


The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son.

WHEN HE RETURNED HE BEGAN TO PREACH AND WAS MADE A BISHOP EVEN THOUGH HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE.



HE PREACHED SO WELL THAT HERETICS CAME BACK TO THE FAITH. HOWEVER, HE WAS PERSECUTED TOO. FINALLY HE GAVE UP HIS DIOCESE AND BECAME A HERMIT.



SAINT GREGORY LIVED A LIFE OF SACRIFICE AND PENANCE, AND THOUGHT NOTHING OF ALL WORLDLY RICHES AND PLEASURES. HE WROTE AND TAUGHT ABOUT THE FAITH SO ELOQUENTLY THAT MANY WERE BROUGHT BACK TO THE FAITH. BECAUSE OF ALL HE DID TO TEACH THE FAITH HE IS CALLED A DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH.

Holy Family Word-Find



See if you can find all these words about the Holy Family in the puzzle!

Use the leftover letters to fill in the blanks at the end!

L G O D S E L F L E S S
O M H V J E F A E J A C
C O O P E R A T I O N A R
H T L C S L M H S S H R
I H Y H U E I E H E L P
L E O O S A L R A P O E
D R T M A R Y H R H V N
H O M E H N J A E E E T
F A I T H R O P E A C E
F O S T E R Y P P O R E
P E R F E C T Y C A R E

CARE	GOD	LOVE
CARPENTER	HAPPY	MOTHER
CHILD	HELP	MARY
COOPERATION	HOLY	PEACE
FAITH	HOME	PERFECT
FAMILY	JESUS	POOR
FATHER	JOSEPH	SELFLESS
FOSTER	JOY	SHARE
	LEARN	

The best way to be like the Holy Family:



Back for a second series, Fr. Tim Boyle will speak on The Art of Accompaniment, picking up on the theme from the Synod preparation document "Enlarge the Tent."

St. Martha's Parish, Lethbridge

Monday, January 22, 2024

"Zacchaeus... the first of Many Seekers... and why they don't want to join"

Monday, February 19, 2024

"Finding the Real Presence of God outside the church"

Monday, March 18, 2024

"Mother Maria of Russia... on uniting the Cross and the Sword"

Monday, April 15, 2024

"Flourishing... not just maintaining the Faith".

Gatherings begin at 10:15 am with 15 minutes of checking in with participants.

Mass follows at 11:15 am

St. Martha's parish, 355 Columbia Blvd W., Lethbridge – 403 381 8891

Retreat Centers in Southern Alberta

AN "OASIS" IN THE HEART OF CALGARY

FCJ Retreat & Conference Centre is seen by many as a spiritual home where God feels very present both in the building and the surrounding landscape, and every year welcomes thousands of visitors to a unique experience of warm hospitality and deep spirituality.

Our hope is that those who come to the FCJ Centre will encounter God, whether in prayer, in the Word, in the silence and the beauty; and that this encounter will touch many other lives too.



Mount St. Francis Retreat Centre is nestled in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains where are all welcome in the name of Christ. The Franciscan Friars of Canada, inspired by the vision and example of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, have served here since 1949.

We offer silent retreats and spiritual direction. We also serve those in the 12 Step Program through weekend and evening Serenity

retreats. We listen to 5th steps. We host groups and individuals seeking a place of quiet and stillness in an often-hectic world. We can accommodate up to 50 people (46 rooms/50 beds). We have one large and one small meeting room, a library and chapel. We can accommodate most dietary restrictions. There are approximately 500 acres to explore.

Our retreats are organized through a group of dedicated volunteer Captains that oversee the registration. Please see our retreats page for more information.

We have strong ties with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary; other Christian Churches, schools, and organizations; as well as others not affiliated with any particular faith but who are in accord with our mission of peace, healing and prayer. We value the many loyal friends and benefactors that have supported us in our ministry for over 70 years.

Martha Retreat Centre, situated on the edge of the beautiful Lethbridge coulees, is a ministry of the Martha Retreat Centre Society, which was established in 2018. Originally founded by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Martha of Antigonish, Nova Scotia in 1968, the Centre continues to be supported by and aligned with the mission of the Sisters of St. Martha: inspired by God's graciousness, we strive to hear, embrace and respond to the cry for gospel hospitality.





Scams Alert

There are many scams going around masquerading as your clergy (priests, deacons or lately, the bishop).

Please exercise caution when responding to email messages. If you receive unusual emails, check the sender's email address to see whether it is the person's genuine address. Even if the sender's address looks correct, always verify suspicious emails by phoning the sender. There have been many similar scams reported by several parishes in our diocese and across Canada.

Note that these scams do not stop at emails. Those in social media should stay vigilant when responding to friend requests or to other compelling posts requiring a response. There are many fake Twitter, Facebook and other social media accounts trying to impersonate people you know and our church leaders. Some scammers may take the time to build a relationship with you to gain your trust, before trying to extort money or other things like gift cards.

Please exercise vigilance when you are being charitable. Use the channels you are most familiar with and avoid becoming victims of a scam.

NOBODY is going to ask you for gift cards, or bit coins from the church! NOBODY!!!

All our email addresses only end in @holyfamilymh.ca never a @gmail account.

If you get an email or a text, PLEASE DO NOT RESPOND to it, you can forward it to contact@holyfamilymh.ca so it can be sent to the diocese.