

St. Lawrence Martyr Church

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PASTORAL TEAM:

Rev. Fr. Thomas Lim, *Pastor*

Rev. Fr. Russell Asch, *Chaplain to the Faithful participating in the Extraordinary Rite of the Latin Mass*

Rev. Fr. Giuseppe Scollo, *In Residence*

Julia Di Paolo - *Secretary*



The Epiphany of the Lord

The wise men followed the star, and found Christ who is Light from Light. May you too find the Lord when your pilgrimage is ended. Amen.

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD – JANUARY 7, 2024

Matthew 2:1-12

“THE VISIT OF THE MAGI”



The contrast is overwhelming: Herod, the King of the Jews, the nation prepared since all ages to welcome the coming of God to set all things right, fails to recognise the coming of the Lord. He is so blind as even to make every attempt to liquidate this herald of the completion of history and of Jewish hopes. By contrast the trio of wise men from the East, the traditional home of natural wisdom, show their conviction of the turning-point of history by journeying over desert and mountain to welcome and pay homage to the Lord. The evangelist is clear that this is the fulfilment of Isaiah’s prophecy of the coming of peoples from the East to pay homage to the Lord. Especially in eastern Christianity is the festival of the Epiphany rather than the birthday of Jesus seen as the manifestation of Christ to the world. This is the meaning of the Greek word ‘Epiphany’: it was first used of the manifest coming of the Roman emperor on a state visit, for he was regarded as a deity to whom worship and adoration were due.



Una stella ha guidato i Magi fino a Betlemme perché là scoprissero “il re dei Giudei che è nato” e lo adorassero. Matteo aggiunge nel suo Vangelo: “Entrati nella casa, videro il bambino con Maria sua madre, e prostratisi lo adorarono”.

Il viaggio dall’Oriente, la ricerca, la stella apparsa ai Magi, la vista del Salvatore e la sua adorazione costituiscono le tappe che i popoli e gli individui dovevano percorrere nel loro andare incontro al Salvatore del mondo. La luce e il suo richiamo non sono cose passate, poiché ad esse si richiama la storia della fede di ognuno di noi.

Perché potessero provare la gioia del vedere Cristo, dell’adorarlo e dell’offrirgli i loro doni, i Magi sono passati per situazioni in cui hanno dovuto sempre chiedere, sempre seguire il segno inviato loro da Dio.

La fermezza, la costanza, soprattutto nella fede, è impossibile senza sacrifici, ma è proprio da qui che nasce la gioia indicibile della contemplazione di Dio che si rivela a noi, così come la gioia di dare o di darsi a Dio. “Al vedere la stella, essi provarono una grandissima gioia”.

Noi possiamo vedere la stella nella dottrina e nei sacramenti della Chiesa, nei segni dei tempi, nelle parole sagge e nei buoni consigli che, insieme, costituiscono la risposta alle nostre domande sulla salvezza e sul Salvatore.

Ralleghiamoci, anche noi, per il fatto che Dio, vegliando sempre, nella sua misericordia, su chi cammina guidato da una stella ci rivela in tanti modi la vera luce, il Cristo, il Re Salvatore. . .



Eucharistic Adoration

Mon - Thur 9am - 12pm (Church)*
Every Friday 9am - 7pm (Church)*

*In the Chapel, when there is a funeral.

Come and spend some quiet time in prayer!

Mass Intentions

FOR THE WEEK



SATURDAY JANUARY 6TH – SABATO

5:00 P.M. + Tom Farrell & Ron St. Pierre

SUNDAY JANUARY 7TH – DOMENICA

8:30 A.M. - For All Our Parishioners

10:00 A.M. (Italian)

Susanna, Gianni e Celio Onisto

Pietro e Elvira Fugaccia

Vito Sciuto e famiglia

Lorenzo Volpe

11:30 A.M. + Pat & Valentino Mancuso

1:00 P.M. - Pro Popolo

5:00 P.M. + Sylvia & Hania Helou

MONDAY JANUARY 8TH – LUNEDÌ

8:30 A.M. - Mary-Rose Caccad

12:00 P.M. + Holy Souls In Purgatory

TUESDAY JANUARY 9TH – MARTEDÌ

8:30 A.M. - Patrick & Molina D’Rosario

12:00 P.M. - Carol Morra & Family

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 10TH – MERCOLEDÌ

8:30 A.M. - Nicanora Trivino

- Mari Dorell Lobo

12:00 P.M. + Paul & Pauline Lam

THURSDAY JANUARY 11TH – GIOVEDÌ

7:00 A.M. - Aniela Jakubowksi

8:30 A.M. + Anna Tran Thi Thuc

FRIDAY JANUARY 12TH – VENERDÌ

8:30 A.M. - Joseph & Antonia D’Rosario

7:00 P.M. + Uriel & Hazel Butcher

SATURDAY JANUARY 13TH – SABATO

8:30 A.M. - Fred & Agnes Leung

10:00 A.M. + Joe, Clara & Anthony De Mello



Offertory - Last Weekend:

Regular Collection: \$8,328.20

Initial Offering: \$2,230.00

Solemnity of Mary: \$3,873.35

thank you

Today the Magi gaze in deep wonder at what they see: heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God in man, one whom the whole universe cannot contain now enclosed in a tiny body. As they look, they believe and do not question, as their symbolic gifts bear witness: incense for God, gold for a King, myrrh for One who is to die.

~St. Peter Chrysologus ~

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD – JANUARY 7, 2024



Dear Friends in Christ, let me begin by wishing you and your loved ones a Happy New Year! I pray that the Good Lord will abundantly bless each of you and continue to guide you along the path that leads to Him this coming year!

As we begin a new calendar year, our six catechumens (those who are preparing to be fully initiated into the Catholic Church) began the second leg of their RCIA program (Rite of Catholic Initiation of Adults) this past Tuesday. In the first leg of their journey, they focused on "Learning the Faith"; in the second leg, their focus is "Living the Faith." Over the next couple of months, these catechumens will receive a comprehensive teaching on the two essential dimensions of our spiritual life, namely, the Church's seven sacraments and the Lord's Ten Commandments.

In my fifteen years of being a priest, through my countless interactions with the faithful from all ages and walks of life, what has become very apparent to me is how many of the faithful - especially cradle Catholics - lack a proper understanding on the Church's teachings on the sacraments and the vital role they play in the spiritual life. There are undoubtedly many reasons for this fact such as: a lack of proper catechesis, embracing wrong or erroneous teachings from external/non-Catholic sources, spiritual indifference and/or culpable ignorance, just to name a few. Regardless of the reason, those faithful who have an improper, erroneous, or incomplete understanding of the sacraments invariably will fail to fully appreciate Who it is they are encountering in the sacraments - Our Lord, Jesus Christ - and fully take advantage of the graces that He wishes to impart on them.

Over the next few weeks, as I journey with the catechumen and discuss these pertinent aspects of "Living the Faith", I wish to offer you a brief synthesis of our weekly discussions. I am going to try to do so keeping in mind the obligation imposed on me as I carry out my role as your Pastor: "*Pastors of souls and other members of the Christian faithful, according to their respective ecclesiastical function, have the duty to take care that those who seek the sacraments are prepared to receive them by proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, attentive to the norms issued by competent authority*" (Can. 843 §2).

I know that trying to explain the sacramental economy of the Church is undoubtedly a large task, perhaps one that goes beyond the scope of my Corner; nevertheless, I will try to do so with a modest aim in mind. My hope is that these upcoming reflections will refresh your understandings of the sacraments, offer new insights of which you might not have been previously aware of, and ultimately give you a greater appreciation of the wonderful sacramental economy of our Church. With these words as a precursor for our journey together, let us begin...

The word "sacrament" developed over a period of time within the Church. Historically its origin comes from the Greek word "mysterion" and the Latin word "sacramentum". "Mysterion" means "something hidden or secret"; this is where we get the English word "mystery". During the time of the primitive churches, there were no generic names given to the celebration of the ritual of baptism or the Eucharist - the "breaking of bread." It was not until the third century, however, that the word "mysterion" - a term originally used by pagans to describe their rites of initiation - was employed to describe Christian rites. In order to avoid any confusion with pagan thinking, Tertullian was the first theologian to use the word "sacramentum" for "mysterion." Over a number of centuries, the seven major rituals celebrated by the Church became known as "sacraments", first named in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council, confirmed at the Councils of Lyon II (1247), Florence (1439) and Trent (1547).

What is a "sacrament" from a theological point of view? St. Augustine of Hippo in the 5th century originally defined it as an "*an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace.*" The Catechism of the Catholic Church says "*The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament*" (CCC 1131). What is common to these two definitions are the key ideas of sign, Christ, grace and the Church. The perennial definition given today for a sacrament is "**an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace, instituted by Christ, which causes what it signifies**".

It is important to note that the sacraments are actions of Christ which effect what they signify. As the Code of Canon Law clearly states, "*The sacraments of the New Testament were instituted by Christ the Lord and entrusted to the Church. As actions of Christ and the Church, they are signs and means which express and strengthen the faith, render worship to God, and effect the sanctification of humanity and thus contribute in the greatest way to establish, strengthen, and manifest ecclesiastical communion*" (can. 840). In other words, Christ instituted the sacraments and chose the visible signs and its corresponding invisible graces. The sacraments are entrusted to the Church, who is responsible for transmitting them to the faithful. The Church not only dispenses and administers the mysteries of God, but she also has the power to determine the rites necessary for its validity. The sacraments ultimately are intended to express and strengthen the faith, render worship to God, effect the sanctification of humanity, and help to establish, strengthen and manifest ecclesial communion.

A couple of final thoughts before I conclude this brief introduction... Although I will discuss the sacrament of baptism in greater length in next weekend's Corner, it is critical to point out that only those people who have received baptism may be permitted to validly receive the other six sacraments (cf. can. 842 §1). By virtue of baptism, every Christian faithful is rendered certain rights and obligations. The Church explicitly outlines these rights when it states that "*The Christian faithful have the right to receive assistance from the sacred pastors out of the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the word of God and the sacraments*" (can. 213). Moreover, "*Sacred ministers cannot deny the sacraments to those who seek them at appropriate times, are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving them*" (can. 843 §1).

Next week I offer some thoughts on the sacrament of baptism, one that is necessary for salvation either received by actual reception, or at least by desire (cf. can. 849). Baptism is the sacrament the Lord plainly gave instructions for his apostles to carry out when he told them: "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age*" (Mt. 28: 18-20).

Pax Christi, *Fr. Thomas*

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD – JANUARY 7, 2024

Happy New Year



Thank You!

Words of Thanksgiving:
I want to take this opportunity to say “Thank You!” to the many volunteers, who made this Christmas Season a wonderful experience. In particular, I want to acknowledge: those who beautifully decorated our church, both within and outside our sacred spaces; our musicians and choir members, who provided angelic music to our liturgies; all our altar servers, lectors, extra-ordinary ministers of the Eucharist, and ushers, who assisted in the celebration of the Masses. Thank you so much for your generosity in sharing your gifts, time and talents!

On behalf of Fr. Russell and Fr. Giuseppe, I want to thank the many parishioners who generously gifted us the many Christmas cards, monetary gifts, food, wine and other presents that we received during this Christmas season. May the Lord bless you for your generosity! *Fr. Thomas*



Vocation Reflection

The Son of God was first manifested to the world through the visit of the magi. Today, God's Son is brought into the world and is present to the world through His Church. If you think that God is calling you to be a priest, religious, or permanent deacon, call Fr. Matt McCarthy, Director of Vocations, Archdiocese of Toronto at 416-968-0997 .

www.vocationstoronto.ca

Email vocations@archtoronto.org

Stewardship Reflection

This Sunday we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord where we reflect on the revelation of Christ to humanity. As stewards, we should strive to be like that great star that did not draw the Magi to itself but instead pointed towards Christ. We should try our best to remain humble and direct any praise to Christ who always sustains us in our good works .



Dear Padre

January 7, 2024

On what date was Jesus born? Was it December 25 or some time between December and April, when shepherds watched over their sheep?

Due to the complexity of history's various calendars and ways of calculating time, we cannot be sure of the date. Matthew and Luke, the two Gospels that detail the birth of Jesus, do not give a date.

Early Christians observed an annual feast to remember Jesus' death and resurrection, focusing on the paschal mystery rather than on his birth. As Christianity grew and spread, however, Christians wanted to celebrate more events from Jesus' life. The celebration on December 25 has more to do with an expression of faith in Jesus as Emmanuel, "God with us," than with establishing the exact date of his birth.

December 25 is listed as the date of Jesus' birth in a fourth-century calendar of martyrs, but how this date was chosen is unclear. Some scholars believe Christians in Rome chose December 25 to counteract the celebration of the pagan sun god Emsa. Another theory follows the influences of the seasons: early Christians believed John the Baptist was conceived on the autumnal equinox and born at the summer solstice. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus' conception took place six month after John's. That time line would place Jesus' birth at the winter solstice, December 25 on the Julian calendar. A third theory says Jesus' birth would have occurred on the same date as his death, which we believe to be in the spring at Passover. Regardless of the exact date, we celebrate Jesus as the true Son of God who came to enlighten us and, by his death and resurrection, to give us life. ●

Fr. John Schmidt, CSSR / DearPadre.org

PRAYER FOR THE SICK:

We keep in our prayers the sick, the homebound, and the forgotten members in our community.



2024 OFFERTORY ENVELOPES ARE

READY FOR PICK-UP!



Parishioners are asked to pick up their 2024 Offertory Envelopes at the back of the Church.

Thank you for your support!



FATHER YOU CALLED

SAINT LAWRENCE TO SERVE YOU BY LOVE AND CROWNED HIS LIFE WITH GLORIOUS MARTYRDOM.

HELP US TO BE LIKE HIM IN LOVING YOU AND DOING YOUR WORK.

AMEN