



251 Glenridge Avenue, St. Catharines, Ontario L2T 3Y7
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Mass Schedule

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30 a.m.
Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 9:00 a.m. (Children's Liturgy of the Word)
11:00 a.m.

Confessions

Saturday 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. or by appointment

Office Hours

Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Diocesan Bishop

Pastor

Deacon

Director of Music

Maintenance

Administration

Most Rev. Gerard P. Bergie D.D.

Fr. Greg Schmidt
frgregoryschmidt@gmail.com

Deacon George Newman

Dr. David Holler

Jim Salmon

Christine Buckley
Cheryl Wood

Parish Mailing Address: 16 Adelene Cres., St. Catharines, Ontario L2T 3C7



December 24, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Advent

There is just one day left until the celebration of Christmas begins. Let's live this last day of Advent well.



We read in today's Gospel passage from Luke the wonderful words of the Blessed Mother's "fiat," her "yes" to God's plan. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." These are among the most beloved words in the Gospel. But the next sentence is also important for the Christian steward.

After Mary's fiat, we read, "Then the angel departed from her." Our Blessed Mother was left with a lot of unexplained details about God's plan for her! Yet, she followed God's will perfectly. She gave herself and her life fully to God as a gift. She was the first disciple. We are called to follow her example today.

This Christmas let us resolve to make our whole life a gift to the One Who has given us everything. He will give us all the help and strength we need.

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Prayer for the Advent Wreath

Lord, our God, we praise You for Your Son, Jesus Christ, for He is Emmanuel, the Hope of all people. He is the Wisdom that teaches and guides us. He is the Savior of us all.

O Lord, let your blessing come upon us as we light all candles of this wreath. May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise of salvation. May He come quickly and not delay. We ask this in His holy name. Amen.

Parish Calendar

Monday, December 25
The Nativity of the Lord
9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Tuesday, December 26
8:30 a.m. (Livestream) - Richard McNelis †

Wednesday, December 27
8:30 a.m. (Livestream) - Tom Urlocker †

Thursday, December 28 - No Mass

Friday, December 29
8:30 a.m. (Livestream) - Meaghan Scott †

Saturday, December 30
5:00 p.m. (Livestream) - Joseph & Maria Petric †
Special Intention

Sunday, December 31
9:00 a.m. - Mass for the People
11:00 a.m. - Angie Napoli † | Marie Flynn †
New Year's Mass
5:00 pm (Livestream)

Offerings for November

Envelopes	\$ 38,078.90
Preauthorized Giving	10,098.55
Canada Helps	543.25
Interac e-Transfer	5,765.00
Renovations & Repairs	1,025.00

Total \$ 55,510.70

Thank you for your generosity and support of our parish

Are You Being Called?

"Do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God."

Consider following Christ more closely as a priest or in consecrated life.

Talk to your priest or reach out to Fr. Greg at the church office, 905 684 5603 or email frgregoryschmidt@gmail.com.



December 31, 2023

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Today, we celebrate the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Just as the Holy Family is holy, we are also called to be holy. This holiness is achievable by living as disciples of Christ.

St. Paul calls us to put on "heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience... as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do." Let us "give thanks to God the Father" by being good stewards of His love and mercy to all our family members.



Today's Gospel says a lot about trust and surrender to our Lord. When Simeon and Anna prophesized about what was to come, Jesus' parents were "amazed at what was said about him." We can imagine that two parents would be taken back by these words! Yet, the Holy Family surrendered their lives to God and had unwavering faith and trust in His plan.

God's plan will fulfill our hearts more than we could have ever imagined. Like the Holy Family, we just need to trust, surrender and be attentive to God's voice.

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Parish Calendar



S.V.D.P. News

Monday, January 1 New Year's Day

10:00 a.m. - Carol Ryan †
Yvonne De Rozario †

Tuesday, January 2

8:30 a.m. (Livestream) -
Peter, Antonia & Luigi Petriello †

Wednesday, January 3

8:30 a.m. (Livestream) -
Norm Zwierschke †

Thursday, January 4 - No Mass

Friday, January 5

8:30 a.m. (Livestream) - Wayne Bedford †
Special Intention

Saturday, January 6

5:00 p.m. (Livestream) -
Pierette & Georges Cote †

Sunday, January 7

9:00 a.m. - Maria & Giuseppe Quaresima †
Maria & Antonio Ierace † |
Biaggio Procopio †
Serafina & Angelo Procopio †
Special Intention
11:00 a.m. - Mass for the People

Your ongoing generosity has allowed our Mission to help the less fortunate with "care and compassion." Sadly, our obligation to our clients in our area has grown drastically to 15 families and 37 children. The need for assistance has tripled in the past few years. All of these families are also registered with Community Care for bimonthly support. We have, through your generosity, delivered \$30,600 in food vouchers this year alone.

You have allowed us to help our friends and neighbours at St. Patrick (\$5,500) and St. Mary (\$2,500) Churches with support for their food banks. In addition \$3,125 in \$25 Pen Center gift cards will be added to the "Hampers for the Children" at St Mary's this Christmas.

Westview Center, a nondenominational help center for women, received \$800 to purchase 10 survival kits for homeless women for this winter. St. Vincent De Paul store in St. Catharines has received \$500 to purchase warm winter wear for their clients. Out of the Cold has been given \$1,500 to help support their growing need to feed and shelter the needy. Ozanam Center has received \$4,000 to help support their food program available 5 days each week.

We are thankful to SOCKS FOR CHANGE which has donated a box of socks for the needy.

All of this was provided through your kindness and concern for the poor. You are the perfect example of Christian love for our fellow people.

A heartfelt THANK YOU! and Merry Christmas.

St. Vincent De Paul St. Julia Conference



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Christmas 2023

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On Christmas Eve, 1223, St. Francis of Assisi assembled the first living nativity scene in Greccio, Italy. This Christmas marks the eight hundredth anniversary of this significant event.

The context is simple. When St. Francis was returning to Assisi from Rome, he stopped in the town of Greccio. St. Francis had previously visited the Holy Land and noticed that the countryside around the small town reminded him of Bethlehem. Here he was inspired to create a scene of the first Christmas. St. Francis found a cave and had it prepared with an ox, donkey, and a manger full of hay. The people then gathered around the cave and Mass was celebrated. We are told that everyone went home filled with joy because of what they had witnessed. (Thomas of Celano, First Life 84: Franciscan Sources, 470).

In 2019, Pope Francis visited the Shrine of the Nativity in Greccio. To mark this event, he wrote a beautiful reflection on the meaning and importance of the Nativity Scene. In this Apostolic Letter, entitled *Admirabile Signum* (An Admirable Sign), the Holy Father acknowledges that the nativity scene has the power to touch hearts and strengthen faith. He writes, "Why does the Christmas crèche (manger) arouse such wonder and move us so deeply? First, because it shows God's tender love: the Creator of the universe lowered himself to take up our littleness. The gift of life, in all its mystery, becomes all the more wondrous as we realize that the Son of Mary is the source and sustenance of all life." (*Admirabile Signum*, p.3).

Unfortunately, like so many other aspects of Christmas, the manger scene is being eclipsed by secular symbols. The nativity scene is disappearing from the public square, and in private homes, where it once was prominently displayed. This powerful sign of love is being muted by a misguided understanding of inclusivity and diversity and a lack of faith. The truth is that Jesus came to save all people, not just a select few. The manger scene offers a universal message of hope and love.

On this eight hundredth anniversary of the first manger scene in Greccio, take the time to contemplate this beautiful scene of simplicity, mystery, and love. When you are at your parish church for Christmas Mass, kneel before the Holy Family in the manger and ask that they intercede for your family. As you gaze upon the infant Jesus, contemplate the fact that he became so little so that you could love Him and experience His profound love for you.

If you do this with an open heart, then, like those people in Greccio so many years ago, you too will return home filled with joy because of what you have experienced!

May the joy of Christmas be with you always.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.
Bishop of St. Catharines