

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Wednesday	8:00am	Int. of Bruce Martin
Saturday	5:00pm	Int. of James Doyle

DIOCESAN PRAYER CALENDAR

Monday	Rev. Janusz Roginski, S.A.C.
Tuesday	Rev. Robert Sims
Wednesday	Voluntas Dei Institute
Thursday	Rev. Michael Downey
Friday	Christmas Day (The Nativity of the Lord)
Saturday	Rev. Martin Vallely

ADORATION

There will be Adoration this Wednesday,
December 23rd from 8:45AM to 7:00PM
Eucharistic Benediction at 6:50PM.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Wed., December 23rd – 9:00AM to 10:00AM
7:15PM to 8:30PM

NEW YEAR'S MASS

Thursday, December 31st, New Year's Vigil – 5:00PM
January 1st, New Year's Day – 11:00AM

2021 Offering Envelopes

2021 Offering Envelopes are available in the Parish Office for pick up during office hours.

Please Note: If your envelope number was from 451 to 500, your number has been changed due to the decrease of boxes ordered for 2021.

CHRISTMAS FOOD DRIVE

“The Dundas Food Bank and Salvation Army would like to thank the parishioners of St. Augustine's Parish for their generosity in their Christmas drive for the food bank. They were overjoyed at the extent of the contributions knowing how much that will mean to families that are struggling.”

PRAYER REQUEST

If you know of anyone who is in need of prayers, place their request on our network and volunteers will pray specifically for your request. Call Gail at 905-628-2304 or go to our website: www.staugustinesparish.ca to place your request.

CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT MASS

Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King – Hamilton
His Excellency, Bishop Crosby, will celebrate Christmas Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King, Hamilton. The Midnight Mass will be preceded by a Carol Service beginning at 11:30p.m. Both the Carol Service and the Midnight Mass will be broadcast on Salt+Light Media and shared with CHCH-TV. The Mass will be repeated on CHCH-TV at 8:00AM on Christmas morning.

Due to COVID restrictions, all seating for Midnight Mass has already been reserved. Join us for the broadcast and share in the joy of this Christmas feast!

Mighty Big Thanks!

Helping to keep our church safe

A special thank you for all the parishioners who clean the pews after masses which has helped keep our church community safe!



**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
COUNCIL 6579**

WINTER BOTTLE AND CAN DRIVE

Please drop off all wine, beer and spirit containers
In Support of Knights of Columbus Charities
We are looking to turn your holiday season empties and the revenue we earn from them into donations to Knights of Columbus charities. Your kindness will go a long way to helping those in need.

We'll make it easy for you to donate as the Knights will meet you at the parish parking lot to collect the empties from your trunk. Of, if you like, you can meet us with your empties at our collection point located in the area near the parish hall garage.

DONATION DAY IS:

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 2ND
FROM 10:00AM – 5:00PM
CHURCH PARKING LOT**

For more information, please contact Tom Muldoon,
Grand Knight via email: tommuldoon@hotmail.com.

DECEMBER 20, 2020

REGISTRATION FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES

This year, parishioners planning to attend our Christmas Masses will need to reserve their seat **IN ADVANCE**. You may reserve your seat and seating for your family by phoning the Parish Office Or by reserving your seats on our parish website: www.staugustinesparish.ca. by **Tuesday, December 23rd**. Due to COVID restrictions, there will be no standing at any of the Masses. Our seating is limited to 30% capacity at each Mass (130 maximum), these numbers will be strictly adhered to by our us

SCHEDULE OF CHRISTMAS MASSES

CHRISTMAS EVE

4PM AND 7PM (FULL: All seats for these Masses are filled)

9PM AND 11PM (Seats are available)

CHRISTMAS DAY

9AM AND 11AM (Seats are available)

“In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.” – The Gospel according to Luke, 2.1

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Go to our parish website, and the banner on the home page reads: “Christmas Mass Registration.” I had it put up, but it does not sit well with me. Registration, “reserve seating only,” ushers told to turn people away when we hit our much-reduced capacity, none of this seems right, feels right. Head and heart, reason and emotion both say, this is wrong.

I won’t argue the merits of government policy here. Rather, I would like to briefly reflect on its effects upon us, and what we are called to do in the midst of what is a spiritual crisis.

The Church cannot gather as it has historically in times of trouble; the community is dispersed like sheep scattered in the wilderness. The pastors, we who shepherd, are restrained from action by civil authorities. We cannot go readily, or by familiar ways, to find the separated and the lost. Through the sterile virtual landscape, by means of “apps” and other “online” resources, we must search, find, and re-connect people to people, and people to God.

This is a deepening of a longer-standing crisis. As a society, we’ve been detaching from real community, as the connecting tissue of church, schools, local business, true local governance (not local representation within a huge amalgam of communities), and simply knowing our neighbours is progressively cut away. Poor substitutes are offered via the digital universe and its ubiquitous screens that peer into our lives more than serve as windows on the world. As Pope Francis has warned, “Digital connectivity is not enough to build bridges. It is not capable of uniting humanity.” (*Fratelli tutti*, 43)

Few understand that the virtual lives we lead, that give the semblance of connection via social media and newsfeeds, are an illusion generated by algorithms; that by their selectivity, omissions and exclusions, distort according to our biases and the interests of those who pay to be given priority in search engines and crowd out independent voices. We are kept in the dark by the glowing screens.

Our auxiliary bishop-elect, the Most Rev. Wayne Lobsinger, in a recent Advent homily spoke of Advent as a time to go beyond remembrance and fantasy. We must avoid being overly sentimental about the past, nor

escape from current difficulties into fantasies of heaven. Instead, we must remember that Christ has come, He is with us; and we who are His Church, we are “the light of the world.” (*Matthew 5.14*)

Each and everyone of us is to carry that light, not hide it under the bushel basket. How do we hold up this light, not only as a beacon of hope for others, but to illumine our own way in difficult times?

We are called to fresh inventiveness, to innovation, to use today’s technologies that despite a capacity to connect everyone, has delivered increasing isolation. Like the Roman roads that spread the dominance of an empire, we must find a way to use today’s conduits of communication to spread the gospel to others, and share in its glory among the faithful in study, discussion, and creative expression of God’s life-giving Word.

However, this is not a mere matter of technology. It is about, as it always has been, disciples willing to take to the road, “to be sent” as apostles (from the Greek *apostolein*, “to be sent”). While the parish can make investments in wiring up its buildings for “streaming” and make online resources like FORMED available to parishioners, none of this works without people willing to learn how to use the technology to make real human connection. As Pope Francis tells us, “We need constantly to ensure that present-day forms of communication are in fact guiding us to generous encounter with others, to honest pursuit of the whole truth, to service, to closeness to the underprivileged and to the promotion of the common good.” (*Fratelli tutti*, 205)

We are in the process of building up the infrastructure to provide these new ministries. Karen Kiely is our new volunteer coordinator, ready to help anyone realize their gifts in ministry. We have a few technically-minded parishioners who’ve begun the work of sorting out how to best exploit the online environment. The parish is “wiring up” the parish centre and our worship space to be capable of streaming meetings, seminars, liturgies, etc. through the internet.

This upgrading of our internet services is being done at unexpected expense. We’ve taken the initial step of extending cabling as preliminary to the installation of cameras, etc. that make streaming possible. Revenues are down currently despite the tremendous support of so many. Our expenses are also reduced as parish activity has lessened. However, this hasn’t left a sufficient surplus for this unexpected initiative. So, any additional financial help through the annual Christmas collection would be much appreciated by the parish leadership.

Our Parish Advisory Council, our Finance Committee, Worship Committee have been working prayerfully and diligently in finding solutions to the problems arising from the current crisis. I know by faith that this work is preparatory to wonderful things.

When Pope Gregory the Great was enthroned at St. Peter’s in 590 A.D. he took over a diocese much diminished (Rome’s population had declined from over 2 million to 20,000) and beset by plague. He framed the challenge with these words: *Affliction strengthens the vigor of our soul.*

With vigor he launched the first recorded large-scale mission from Rome that successfully Christianized the British Isles. Out of surrounding adversity, he triumphed for Christ, through steadfast faith and dogged, persistent, steady effort. He said, “You don’t climb a mountain in leaps and bounds, but by taking it slowly.”

Let us move, perhaps, a little more quickly in this high-speed, 5G, high-def age of ours, but move nonetheless: toward the manger in adoration, along the road as with the disciples, to the foot of the cross, to the empty tomb, to the glories of the Ascension and of Pentecost in this coming year of our Lord, 2021.

May God bless you all abundantly. Merry Christmas,

Fr. Scott Whitfield