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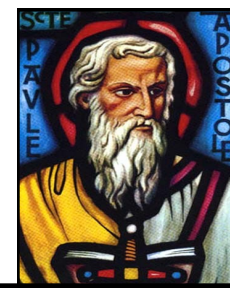


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St. Paul the Apostle Maltese-Canadian Parish

**3224 Dundas Street West,
 Toronto, Ontario M6P 2A3
 Tel 416-767-7054**

Email: stpaultheapostleto@archtoronto.org

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Gospel Summary

Today's Gospel passage is from the beginning of the Gospel according to Mark. The coming of John the Baptist is foretold in the verses quoted from the book of the prophet Isaiah: *Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way.* John the Baptist did indeed prepare the way of the Lord.

Reflection for Parents

John the Baptist was clothed in camel's hair, wore a leather belt around his waist, and fed on locusts and wild honey. He stood out as being different, even strange, in comparison to the people around him. Yet people were drawn to him and to what he said. They heard his call to repentance and were baptized in the Jordan River. Today, think about and pray for coworkers, classmates, family members, friends, and neighbors who stand out as being different. What can you learn from them?

Bringing the Gospel Into Your Family

Light two purple candles on your family's Advent wreath. Ask family members to share how they have prepared the way of the Lord in the past week. Did they take time to pray? Did they do a kind deed for another family member or neighbor? Decide as a family on one or more ways you will follow the example of John the Baptist and prepare the way of the Lord in the week to come.

Discussion Starters

1. I saw someone else prepare the way of the Lord this week when . . .
2. Someone who reminds me of Saint John the Baptist is . . . because . . .
3. If I could proclaim one message to the world today it would be . . .

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Visit Our Website!!

You can register for Sacraments, become a member of our parish community, get information on upcoming events, and much more. Visit our website at stpaultheapostleto.archtoronto.org or simply scan the QR code below.



Mass Intentions

**Saturday, December 9
 5:30pm**

- +John & Vincenza Darmanin

**Sunday, December 10
 9:00am**

- +Rita Caruana

10:30am

- +Joseph Farrugia
- +Moses & Elizabeth Mifsud
- +Teresa Muscat & Leonard Attard
- +Carmelo Attard
- +Joe & Vince Bonnici

12:00 noon

- +Missa Pro Populo

Monday, December 11

- +Anthony Fernando & Leticia Tranchell

Tuesday, December 12

- +Mary Joyce Tonna Brown

Wednesday, December 13

St. Lucy, Virgin & Martyr

- +Mohan & Agnes Rajendra

Thursday, December 14

St. John of the Cross, Priest & Doctor of the Church

- +Calci Tanti

Friday, December 15

- +Emmanuel Sammut (birthday)

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Pastoral Team

Fr. Roy Francis Farrell
 Pastor
 Deacon Raymond Frendo
 Permanent Deacon

MASS SCHEDULE

Daily morning Mass:
 Monday, Wednesday & Friday
 9:15am (Maltese/English)
 Tuesday & Thursday
 9:15am (English)

Weekend Masses:

Saturday: 5:30pm (English)
Sunday:
 9:00am (English)
 10:30am (Maltese/English)
 12:00pm (English)

Weekly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Every
 Wednesday 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Secretary

Mrs. Rita Apalit
OFFICE HOURS (Trial)
 Sunday 10:00am - 1:00pm
 (Church Foyer)
 Monday 9:00am - 1:00pm
 Tuesday to Friday
 9:00am to 4:30pm
 (Priest is always available by
 appointment)

SACRAMENTS

Baptism: Please contact the
 priests. Baptisms are
 held on the first Saturday of the
 month at 10:30am

Marriages: Contact the priest
 one year in advance of the
 wedding. A marriage preparation
 course is mandatory.

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

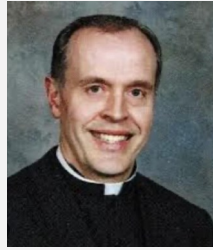
First Friday: 8:40am to 9:10am
 Saturdays: 4:45pm to 5:15pm
 Anytime by appointment.

Anointing of the Sick:

Contact the priests. Parishioners
 are reminded that this is not a
 sacrament that should be left for
 the last possible minute. It is a
 Sacrament for the sick, not just
 for the dying.

December 10, 2023

From our Pastor's Desk...



In today's Gospel, we learn about John the Baptist and his role in preparing the way for Jesus. As stewards, we are also called to imitate John and point others to Christ. Evangelization is an essential part of our stewardship, as we should share the knowledge and love of Christ with as many people as possible.

During this Advent season, let's help our friends and family members understand the true meaning of Christmas, especially those who may have lost their faith. However, it's important to evangelize with truth and charity. St. Thomas Aquinas reminds us to guide others by taking them by the hand.

Evangelization requires effort. We should lovingly and patiently meet people where they are and accompany them as they explore the wonders of the Church. As a simple action, we can invite someone to attend Mass with us next week. Let's use this Advent season as an opportunity to grow in our spirit of evangelization.

Confession is important for our souls. As your parish priest, I urge you to make time in your busy schedules to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Christmas. Many Catholics are no longer practicing confession, and as a result, they have lost their understanding of sin. Sin is not only harmful to individuals, but it also hinders the Church. It paralyzes the Church and limits its ability to do good. Just like mud on a car's headlight dims its light, sin diminishes the Church's missionary work.

The main reason for going to confession is because Jesus, the Son of God, commanded it. Jesus established confession as one of the seven sacraments on the first Easter Sunday night. Confession should not be a mechanical act. When preparing for confession, it's important to reflect on not just the sins we've committed, but also why we committed them. We need to examine our attitudes.

When we go to God, it's not like going to a judge for a traffic violation. We don't just pay a fine and leave feeling relieved. God is loving and merciful. He not only forgives our sins but also wants to heal the wounds caused by sin. He welcomes us with open arms, just like the father in the story of the prodigal son, and celebrates with us. Confession then becomes a heartfelt expression of joy, praise, and thanksgiving to God for His incredible mercy. This Christmas, give yourself and your family the greatest gift - peace with God and with one another.

STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." This was the prophecy by Isaiah concerning John the Baptist who ends the line of prophets pointing to Jesus. John the Baptist played his role in preparing the people of Judea for the coming of Christ. As stewards, we can look to John as a model of how to best lead others to Christ. Firstly, we must remember that it is never our own merits that convert people but is instead always a pure gift from God. John the Baptist fully recognizes this when he says that he baptizes with water while the one coming after him, Jesus, will baptize with the Holy Spirit. We too should always remember that it is the Lord who does great things, and we are only his instruments. However, while we may not cause the actual conversion, we do play an important role in helping others encounter Christ. During the encounter, God does all the work, but we must still help facilitate this encounter. People can most readily encounter Christ through His church which is why we must play our part in making our parishes as hospitable and welcoming as possible. This Advent and Christmas season as we may begin to see new faces in the parish, let us welcome them with loving hearts and smiles. The angels and saints in heaven rejoice whenever someone comes back to church, shouldn't we do the same? Let us strive to be charitable stewards and say hello to any new parishioners we may encounter this season as a sign of our love and hospitality.

As stewards, we must imitate the example of John the Baptist and help prepare the way for others to encounter Christ. People can most readily encounter Christ through His church which is why we must play our part in making our parishes as hospitable and welcoming as possible. This Advent and Christmas season, as we may begin to see new faces in the parish, let us welcome them with loving hearts and smiles.

Taken from excerpts from the Archdiocese Website.

CHANGE IN VIGIL MASS SCHEDULE

Please be advised that effective **Saturday, January 6th, 2024**, the vigil mass that is presently at **5:30 PM** will be at **4:30 PM**. This change will last for **six months**, after which we will evaluate its impact and feedback.

If you have any questions or concerns about this change, please feel free to contact us.

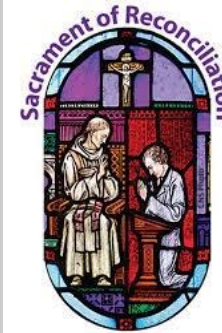
We appreciate your support and participation in our parish life. We look forward to seeing you at the new vigil mass time beginning in January 2024.

Offering Envelopes



If you haven't done so already, you may pick up your box from the back of the church. **Please note that some envelope numbers have changed**, therefore please double-check the name and address of the box you are taking. We thank you for your continuous support for the parish, it is all very much appreciated.

There are still **Sunday Missals** for the next Liturgical Year available at a cost of \$5.00 each. The new liturgical year began on the first Sunday of Advent. Pick up your copy from the Church or Parish Office during office hours.

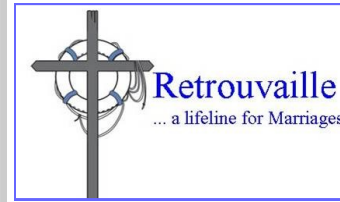


As we prepare for the celebration of Christmas, we are invited to receive the **Sacrament of Reconciliation**, which is a source of grace and healing for our souls. Confession helps us to repent from our sins, to receive God's forgiveness, and to grow in holiness. On Friday, December 15th, Fr.

Massimo Buttigieg will be available for confessions from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. This is an opportunity for those who feel more comfortable in going to a Maltese speaking priest.

I will also be available to hear confessions in English at the same time. In addition, I will hear confessions in English on December 20th, 21st and 22nd from 10:00 am to 11:00 am.

Please make an effort to come to confession before Christmas and experience the joy and peace that God offers to those who seek Him with a sincere heart. May God bless you and your families during this Advent season.



In marriage, communication is more than just talking. At some point, did you stop sharing about the things that were important to you? Did your spouse? Improving a

marriage takes time and a conscious effort to learn about your spouse. Growing closer in a marriage does not happen automatically. Retrouvaille is a marriage program dedicated to helping couples grow closer and develop a stronger bond. You give your heart and soul to everything you do, between your work and your family. Are you giving your heart and soul to your marriage? Sometimes the distance between a husband and a wife can seem so wide that it cannot be repaired. Retrouvaille is a marriage program designed to bring couples closer together. For more information visit our website at www.torontoretrouvaille.com

Archdiocesan Consultation Underway

– Share Your Ideas to assist with future planning!

Archbishop Francis Leo is inviting the Catholic community to share thoughts and ideas regarding future pastoral planning in the Archdiocese of Toronto. Feedback will help inform a renewed Pastoral Plan to be used in the years ahead. To learn more about the process, read the letter of invitation from the archbishop and complete the short survey by December 15, 2023, please visit: www.archtoronto.org/consultation Please take a few minutes to share your insights and ideas.

Thank you for your collaboration in this archdiocesan initiative.

POINSETTIAS

As we get closer to Christmas, we are beginning to prepare the Church for our celebrations. Please help us with our preparations by donating Poinsettia plants to us.

We will be accepting these beautiful flowers during the week before Christmas, that is from Friday, December 15h to Wednesday, December 20th. You may drop them off at the parish office during office hours.

THANK YOU!!

