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ASSUMPTION CATHOLIC CEMETERY

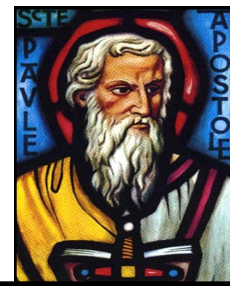
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St. Paul the Apostle Maltese-Canadian Parish

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 Toronto, Ontario M6P 2A3
 Tel 416-767-7054

Email: stpaultheapostleto@archtoronto.org

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Gospel Summary

Today's Gospel reading is taken from the first chapter of John. The passage has many parallels to last week's Gospel. It begins by telling us that John the Baptist "was not the light, but came to testify to the light." John the Baptist himself makes it clear that he is not the Christ. He again explains that he is "the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the LORD."

Reflection for Parents

Tony's mom. Maria's dad. Michael's wife. Angela's husband. How many times and in how many ways do we define ourselves by who we are? And, like John the Baptist, are there times and ways we define ourselves by who we are not? John made it clear that he was not the Christ, not Elijah, and not the Prophet. What he was is what we are called to be—ones who testify to the light, ones who prepare the way of the Lord, and ones who proclaim his message of truth to all. Today, pray to be who you are as a disciple of Christ. Proclaim the Good News through your words and actions, and point the way to Jesus, the One who is to come.

Bringing the Gospel Into Your Family

Today is the Third Sunday of Advent, often called *Gaudete Sunday*. *Gaudete* is a word that means "rejoice." Light two purple and one rose (pink) candles on your Advent wreath and invite family members to recall things that brought them joy in the past week. Decide as a family on one thing you will do to share joy with a family member, friend, or neighbor in the coming week. Then turn out all the lights and sit together in the light of the Advent wreath candles for a few moments of quiet prayer.

Discussion Starters

1. If someone were to ask me who I am, I would say . . .
2. If someone were to ask me who I am not, I would say . . .
3. If I could be the light of Christ to one person today, it would be . . . because . . .

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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.



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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

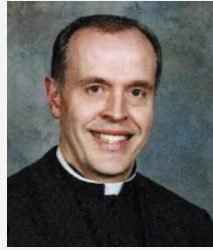
Secretary
 Mrs. Rita Apalit

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 17, 2023

From our Pastor's Desk...



We have reached the Third Sunday of Advent, also known as Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is a Latin word that means “rejoice”. This is the first word of the entrance antiphon for today’s Mass, taken from Philippians 4:4-5: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near.”

Why do we rejoice on this Sunday? Because we are getting closer to the celebration of the birthday of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Because we have received the good news of his coming from the prophets, the angels, and John the Baptist. Because we have seen the signs of his presence and power in our lives and in our world.

We can rejoice not just by attending parties and buying gifts during Christmas, but also by spiritually preparing our hearts and minds for Christ. Advent is a time of penance, of turning away from sin and turning to God. Advent is a time of prayer, of listening to God’s word and talking to him in love. Advent is a time of fasting, of detaching ourselves from material things and attaching ourselves to Christ. The model of rejoicing in advent is Mary, the mother of Jesus. She consented to be the mother of God, trusting in his plan and his promise. She magnified the Lord with her song of praise, the Magnificat. She carried Jesus in her womb with joy and expectation. She gave birth to him in a humble stable, surrounded by angels and shepherds.

Mary is our mother too, and she wants us to share in her joy. She wants us to welcome Jesus into our lives, as she did. She wants us to follow Jesus, as she did. She wants us to love Jesus, as she did.

Let us then rejoice with Mary, and with the whole Church, on this Gaudete Sunday. Let us light the rose candle of the advent wreath, symbolizing our joy and hope. The priest wore rose-colored vestments this weekend, serving as a beautiful reminder of the dawn of salvation. Let us join in joyful song, proclaiming the greatness of our God.

And let us pray we may be ready to receive Jesus when he comes again, in glory and in grace. May God bless you and keep you always in his love.

STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION “Rejoice always!” These are the words that St. Paul writes in the second reading this Gaudete Sunday. He exhorts all of us to always rejoice. It is important to note that he doesn’t say to always be happy, but to rejoice always. Happiness, by definition, is utterly circumstantial. We are happy when we are experiencing something good, like eating ice cream on a hot day. However, when the ice cream melts, or it begins to rain our happiness quickly ceases because that good thing we were experiencing is fleeting. Joy on the other hand is radically different. To experience joy is to remain happy despite the circumstances. This everlasting joy springs solely from recognizing that we are beloved children of God and being aware that we are living in the smiling gaze of Christ. But how do we live in joy? St. James in his letter says, “My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy,” To experience joy is to intentionally call to mind God’s love in the midst of our trials. As stewards, let us not keep this practice of joy to ourselves. One way we can help people rejoice in suffering is by not partaking in complaining about our difficult situations. The next time we are in a tough moment and people around us begin to complain, let us strive to steer the conversation into one of gratitude for the good things the Lord is doing in our lives. This slow adjustment of choosing joy in our trials will begin to revitalize our parishes and communities, and the entire world.

This Gaudete Sunday St. Paul exhorts all of us to “rejoice always.” One way we can help people rejoice in suffering is by not partaking in complaining about our difficult situations. The next time we are in a tough moment and people around us begin to complain, let us strive to steer the conversation into one of gratitude for the good things the Lord is doing in our lives.

Taken from excerpts from the Archdiocese Website.

Archdiocese of Toronto Allocates over \$2.7 Million to Support Eight Indigenous Healing & Reconciliation Projects TORONTO, ON (December 12, 2023) – On this **NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER IN SOLIDARITY WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**, the Archdiocese of Toronto announced the allocation of more than \$2.7 million to fund 8 different projects that will assist in the healing and reconciliation journey with First Nation, Inuit and Métis people. The projects range in scope from mental health support to legal services to education assistance for Indigenous people in the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. The announcement is the first phase of support from the Archdiocese of Toronto, following the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (CCC) comprehensive, national pledge of \$30 million contributing to healing and reconciliation initiatives in September of 2021. The Archdiocese’s \$2,768,000 allocation represents more than 45% of its \$6 million commitment (over five years) announced in February 2022. “In his historic visit to Canada last year, Pope Francis challenged us to consider how we could add our voices to join in the life-changing efforts of healing and reconciliation,” said the Most Reverend Francis Leo, Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto. “Thank you to all those who have walked with us and continue to do so.”

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.

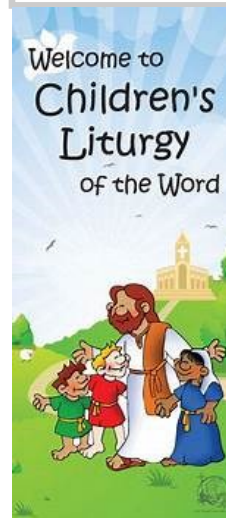


POINSETTIAS

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 15th to Wednesday, December 20th. You may drop them off at the parish office during office hours. **THANK YOU!!**



We have restarted the Children's Liturgy Program!

Every Sunday, during the 9:00 am Mass, children are called forward after the opening prayer, and they will follow the liturgy teacher to the gathering room where they will hear the Word of God at their own level.

The children will return to the Church during the Offertory.

You may contact the parish office at 416-767-7054 for more information.



Come join us for coffee and good company this Sunday, December 17th, after all the Sunday Masses in the Lower Hall!

Hope to see you all there!

Sunday Missals for the next Liturgical Year are still available at a cost of \$5.00 each. Pick up your copy from the Church or Parish Office during office hours.

An Advent Prayer for Families with the Sick

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus, who is the light of the world and the healer of our souls. As we light the candles of our Advent wreath, we remember your promises and your faithfulness. We ask you to bless our family and all those who are sick in our midst. Give them comfort, strength, and healing, according to your will. Help us to be compassionate and supportive of their needs, and to share your love and mercy with them. May we always trust in your goodness and your power to save us. Lord, we pray for the coming of your kingdom, where there will be no more pain, sorrow, or death. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.