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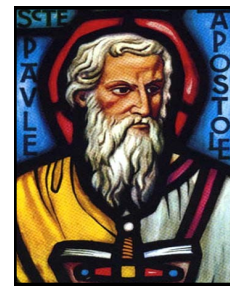
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St. Paul the Apostle Maltese-Canadian Parish

3224 Dundas Street West,
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 Email: stpaultheapostleto@archtoronto.org

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 www.stpaultheapostleto.archtoronto.org or simply scan the QR code below.

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 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: 4:30pm (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
 Monday 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 1, 2024

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Gospel Summary
 Just a few weeks ago, we heard a Gospel passage with a similar message. In the end times many unusual things will happen and people will be frightened, but the Son of Man will come with great power and glory to redeem his own. The second half of today's Gospel reading stresses the importance of being ready for Christ's coming at all times.

Reflection for Parents
 Yes, it is important to be ready for the Second Coming of Christ, but it is also important to be prepared for his arrival into every moment of every day. He may come to us through a conversation, in the form of a beggar on the streets, through the words or actions of our children, or through the kindness of a stranger. Are our hearts open to receiving him? Advent affords us the opportunity to prepare our hearts and lives for Christ's coming today, at Christmas, and at the end of all time. This Advent, open your eyes, your ears, and your heart to the coming of Christ in ordinary and extraordinary ways.

Bringing the Good News Into Your Family
 Take time today to make a family Advent plan. Create a family Advent calendar or Advent chain listing ways your family will spiritually and physically prepare for the celebration of Christ's coming at Christmas. Include on your calendar or chain parish Advent opportunities, such as an Advent Penance and Reconciliation service or shopping for and wrapping gifts for the parish Advent Giving Tree.

Discussion Starters

1. One way I have been lazy about my faith is .
2. One thing I can do to become more ready for Christ's coming at Christmas is . .
3. One thing I am looking forward to doing with my family this Advent is . . .

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Mass Intentions

Saturday, November 30
4:30pm
 • +Rita Caruana

Sunday, December 1
First Sunday of Advent
9:00am
 • +Veronica Micallef

10:30am
 • +Calci Tanti
 • +Carmen & Joseph Govè

12:00 noon
 • Missa Pro Populo

Monday, December 2
 • +Beatrice Schembri

Tuesday, December 3
St. Francis Xavier
 • +Doris Micallef

Wednesday, December 4
 • +Schembri & Grech Family

Thursday, December 5
 • +Amante & Salvina Zammit & Edmond Sciberras

Friday, December 6
St. Nicholas
 • +All Souls in Purgatory

From the Pastor...

Advent reminds us to pause and reflect on our path of discipleship. This season is a spiritual journey to encounter Christ in various ways, not just a countdown to Christmas. Advent is a time to step back from the hectic pace of our lives and the busyness of the holiday season. It's easy to get caught up in the preparations for Christmas—shopping, decorating, cooking—and lose sight of the true purpose of this period. Advent calls us to slow down and remember that we are not just celebrating a historical event but expecting the second coming of Christ and recognizing His presence in our lives today.

Week One: On the First Sunday of Advent, we are called to ponder how we will greet Christ when He comes again. This is a powerful reminder that Advent is as much about the future as it is about the past. How are we preparing our hearts and minds for His return? What changes do we need to make in our lives to welcome Him fully?

Week Two and Three: The Second and Third Sundays of Advent invite us to reflect on how the people of Jesus' time reacted to John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Christ. Their responses challenge us to consider our own readiness to receive Christ. Are we open to His message? Are we willing to change our lives in response to His call?

Week Four: The Fourth Sunday of Advent reminds us that those with deep faith can help Christ come into the world in unexpected ways. Just as Mary's faith brought Christ into the world, our faith can make His presence known in our daily interactions and acts of love and kindness.

Amid our daily concerns and the chaos that often accompanies the Christmas season, someone encourages us to lift our eyes and put things into perspective. The Gospel readings during this time call us to stand up and raise our heads, for our redemption is near at hand. Despite the calamities and challenges we face, we should remember that Christ's return is like the coming of summer - bringing renewal and hope.

Discussion Points:

1. **What worldly cares really weigh you down?** How might Christ help you bear them?
2. **What signs of hope help you raise your head and face the future?**
3. **Whose love gives you the strength to carry on?**
4. **Who needs you to be their source of hope in this world?**
5. **Why does Christian society seem to be preoccupied with when the end-time will occur?**
6. **How and when should you prepare for the end-time?**
7. **What do the gospels say you must do to be prepared for the second coming?**

Practice:

One of the classic Advent songs is Psalm 25. Try praying it slowly each day this week and let its words of trust and longing settle deep within you. Allow this practice to centre your spirit and guide your reflection throughout the Advent season.

Let this Advent be a time for you to deepen your faith, refocus your priorities, and prepare your heart for the coming of Christ. By embracing the true meaning of this season, we can experience a more profound and joyous celebration of Christmas.

MEMORY AWAKENS HOPE - POPE BENEDICT "Advent is concerned with that very connection between memory and hope which is so necessary to man. Advent's intention is to awaken the most profound and basic emotional memory within us, namely, the memory of the God who became a child. This is a healing memory; it brings hope. The purpose of the Church's year is continually to rehearse her great history of memories, to awaken the heart's memory so that it can discern the star of hope...."

It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope."

ADVENT CHAIN: Make your own Advent chain with a link for each day from the first Sunday in Advent through December 25. Use purple construction paper to make links for the days in Advent and white construction paper to make the link for Christmas Day. On each link write one activity. After writing an activity on each link, attach the links to make a chain. Each day remove a link and do the activity as a family. Here are some suggestions to get you started: Bake cookies for college students, sing a favorite carol, visit a shut-in, decorate the Christmas tree, set up the crèche, read a story about St. Francis and the crèche, make Christmas gift tags, shop for toys to donate to a shelter for women and children, deliver the toys purchased to the shelter for women and children, go caroling in your neighborhood, talk about what Advent means, share a memory from past Christmases, make ornaments for your tree. do a good deed for your neighbor, attend Mass during the weekdays, support the pro-life movement, choose a project to donate money to and decorate a container to collect change from each family member, decorate a mini Christmas tree and give it to someone in a nursing home, read a favorite Christmas story, invite another family to go with you to cut your Christmas trees, place items for a traditional Christmas dinner in a large laundry basket and deliver the basket to an agency in your area that will bring it to a family who would not have that kind of dinner.

- Fr. Roy

Upcoming Events

- ◆ **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3RD** - St. Therese of Lisieux Group will meet in St. Joseph's Room following morning Mass.
- ◆ **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6TH** - Parish Trip to Niagara-on-the-Lake and Winter Festival of Lights, Niagara Parkway. Coach will leave St. Paul's at 1:30 pm. Tickets are \$40.00 per person (this cost does not include lunch). Please call the parish office for more information or to book your seat.
- ◆ **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17TH** - Confessions from 10:00 am to 12 noon in English and Maltese.
- ◆ **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20TH** - Annual Christmas Concert at 7:00 pm in the church.
- ◆ **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22ND**
 - ◇ **12 noon Mass** - Anointing of the Sick
 - ◇ **1:00** - Senior's Christmas Luncheon hosted by the Maltese Canadian Cultural Association (MCCA).

Tickets for the luncheon are \$20.00 per person and can be purchased from the Parish Office during office hours at 416-767-7054, or from the back of the church after all Sunday Masses.



This coming Friday, **December 6th is the First Friday of the month.** Mass is at 9:15 am followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by some time of adoration and benediction **ending at 11:00 am.**



The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is traditionally celebrated on December 8th. However, since December 8th falls on a Sunday this year, and all Sundays take precedence, the Solemnity will be observed on Monday, December 9th.

To mark the occasion, there will be a small reception in the lower hall after the 9:15 am bilingual Mass on Monday, December 9th. All are welcome to join in celebrating this special day.

The Giving Tree is back for its second year, bringing Christmas joy to those in need and allowing the parish community to unite in the spirit of giving.



This year, we are supporting St. Francis Table, located on Queen Street, which provides daily meals for individuals facing hardship.

Starting this weekend, a tree will be placed in the foyer of the church starting. The tree will be adorned with 60 tags, each representing a person in need and specifying the gift they are requesting. To participate, simply choose a tag that resonates with you and purchase the corresponding gift.

For those who select a tag reading "SFT Meals," please place \$20 in a greeting card, write "Meal" on the envelope, and include the recipient's name. All wrapped gifts with their corresponding tags should be returned to the office by Monday, December 16th.

STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION We have arrived at the beautiful and powerful season of Advent. It is a season to prepare in awe and wonder for the coming of Christ at Christmas, His coming as a tiny babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. It is also a period to prepare for the final coming of Christ as well as our own individual day of judgement at the end of our lives. We will all be called to give an account of how we used the gifts God gave us to better serve Him and the Church. Essentially, Advent is a season of stewardship. The readings this Sunday quickly call our attention to the need to be aware of our judgement. The Gospel boldly warns, "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life." It is so easy for us to lose focus of our heavenly destination by excessive preoccupation with the pleasures and worries of this life. To avoid this pitfall Jesus says to "be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength." During Advent, we stewards must ask ourselves some difficult reflective questions. Are we staying faithful to our prayer life? Are we using all of our energy to offer our time and talents to our parish community? Are we seeking reconciliation and forgiveness in the sacrament of Confession for the times we've failed? Are we living for the present moment or for our heavenly home? Let us get ready for the Lord's coming and prepare with awe and wonder. Summary The readings this Sunday quickly call our attention to the final coming of Christ as well as our own individual day of judgement at the end of our lives. It is so easy for us to lose focus of our heavenly destination by excessive preoccupation with the pleasures and worries of this life. This Advent season, let us heed the advice of Jesus to "be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength."

Taken from excerpts from the Archdiocese of Toronto website.