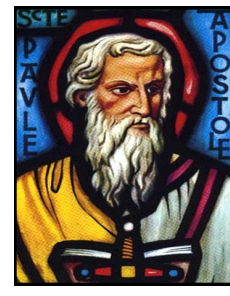


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Visit Our Website
 You can register for Sacraments, become a member of our parish community, get information on upcoming events, and much more. Visit our website at www.stpaultheapostleto.archtoronto.org or simply scan the QR code below.



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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: 3:45pm to 4:15pm
 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 15, 2024

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Gospel Summary
 In today's Gospel reading, those in the crowd, tax collectors, and soldiers all ask John the Baptist what they should do. In each response, and according to each group's circumstance, John emphasizes keeping or taking only what is needed or prescribed. John also makes it clear to all that the Christ for whom they have been waiting is yet to come.

Reflection for Parents
 This Gospel highlights several Christian values that are learned in the home—generosity, fairness, truthfulness, and contentment with what you have. Take some time today to think about each of these values. How are your children learning these values through your example? How can you make these values more a part of your family life as Christmas nears?

Bringing the Good News Into Your Family
 At this halfway point in Advent, choose as a family one way you can share what you have with others. Perhaps you can donate gently used coats and sweaters or new hats and mittens to a local shelter. If your parish food pantry is in need of donations, go grocery shopping and help meet the need for food. If you are a musically gifted family, plan to carol in your neighborhood or at a local care facility.

Discussion Starters
 1. Something that I have more than enough of is . . .
 2. I can share the extra that I have with . . .
 3. Something that is hard for me to share is . . .

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Mass Intentions
Saturday, December 14
4:30pm
 • +Paolo Corapi
Sunday, December 15
Third Sunday of Advent
9:00am
 • +Missa Pro Populo
10:30am
 • +Carmen & Joseph Gové
 • +Vic & Josephine Attard & Family
12:00 noon
 • +Suzanne Camilleri
Monday, December 16
 • +Anthony & Agnes Grech & Family & Carmen Moriera
Tuesday, December 17
 • +Carmel Piscopo
Wednesday, December 18
 • +Teresa Massa & Kitty Tonna
Thursday, December 19
 • +Maria Attard
Friday, December 20
 • +Philip & Maria Massa, Nona & Lawrence Facciol

From the Pastor...

The Meaning and Symbolism of the Third Sunday of Advent

As we journey through this holy season of Advent, we find ourselves approaching a significant milestone: Gaudete Sunday, the Third Sunday of Advent. The Introit for Gaudete Sunday comes from Philippians 4:4-5: "Gaudete in Domino semper" ("Rejoice in the Lord always"). This call to rejoice invites us to pause and reflect on the joy and hope that the coming of Christ brings into our lives.

Gaudete Sunday: A Shift in Focus

Advent is a time of penance, prayer, and preparation, much like Lent. The priest's purple vestments remind us of the penitential nature of this season. However, Gaudete Sunday offers a moment of reprieve as we pass the midpoint of Advent. The Church lightens the mood, and the priest may wear rose vestments. This change in color is meant to encourage us to continue our spiritual preparation for Christmas with renewed vigor.

The Symbolism of the Rose Candle

On this special Sunday, we light the third candle of the Advent wreath, which is traditionally rose-colored. This candle symbolizes joy and rejoicing, reflecting the light that Christ brings into our world. It serves as a visual reminder that the Lord's coming is near, and we should prepare our hearts to welcome Him with gladness.

The Sacrament of Confession: A Path to Renewal

As disciples of Jesus, part of our preparation for Christmas involves seeking reconciliation with God through the Sacrament of Confession. This sacrament is one of the most unique and beautiful aspects of our Catholic faith. In His abundant love and mercy, Jesus Christ established the Sacrament of Confession so that we, as sinners, can obtain forgiveness for our sins and reconcile with God and the Church.

Through this sacrament, we are "washed clean" and renewed in Christ. As Jesus said in John 20:21-23, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Experience Peace and Love

If it has been a while since you last went to Confession, I encourage you to take this opportunity to return. The Church welcomes you with open arms and invites you to participate in this beautiful sacrament of healing. Many Catholics describe feelings of peace, joy, relief, and love after receiving Reconciliation—feelings that they never expected. Jesus is calling you to experience His mercy in this way too. On Tuesday, December 17th confessions are available from 10 am to noon in both English and Maltese.

Preparing Our Hearts

As we light the rose candle this Gaudete Sunday, let us remember that our preparation for Christmas goes beyond decorations and festive gatherings. It is a call to prepare our hearts spiritually. Let us take the time to go to Confession, to seek God's forgiveness, and to open our hearts to His love and mercy. By doing so, we can truly rejoice in the Lord always, as St. Paul encourages us.

Conclusion

As we continue our Advent journey, let us keep the spirit of Gaudete Sunday alive in our hearts. Let us rejoice in the hope and love that the birth of Christ brings. May our preparations lead us to a deeper relationship with God and a greater appreciation of His infinite mercy.

May God bless you and your families as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Upcoming Events

- ◆ **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17TH** - Confessions from 10:00 am to 12 noon in English and Maltese.
- ◆ **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22ND**
 - ◇ **12 noon Mass** - Anointing of the Sick followed by our annual Seniors' 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.

VOCATION REFLECTION Could God be calling you to be a priest, deacon, brother, or sister and announce the Good News to His People as John the Baptist did?

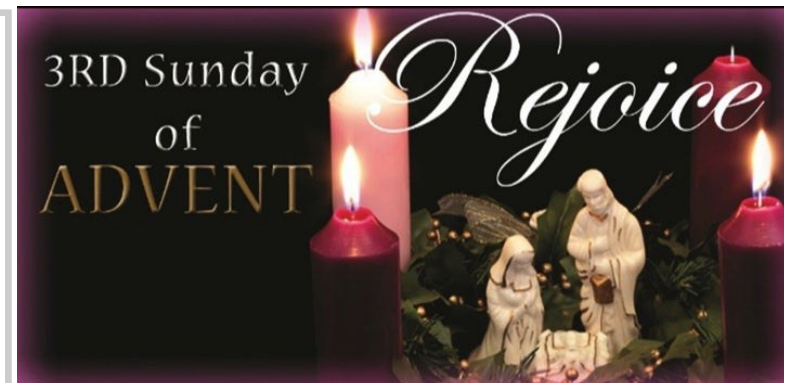
Contact Fr. Matt McCarthy, Director of Vocations, Archdiocese of Toronto at 416-968-0997.

vocations@archtoronto.org
www.vocationstoronto.ca

STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice." These are the beautiful words we hear from St. Paul on this Gaudete Sunday. This Third Sunday of Advent is a time for joy in the midst of the waiting and preparation for Christmas. It is a reminder for us that despite the crosses and difficulties of our lives, the joy of Jesus' birth should always shine brightly. One way in which we can cultivate a spirit of joy is through an intentional "attitude of gratitude." Former U.S. president, Theodore Roosevelt, once said that "comparison is the thief of joy." When we compare our lives, possessions, gifts and attributes with those of others, we inherently become ungrateful for the blessings God has placed in our lives. If we begin to thank God for all of the good things in our lives, we will quickly realize that there are far more things to be joyful about than upset over. This Advent, as society is trying to make Christmas more and more materialistic, let us take some time to be grateful for all the things we already have. Perhaps one tangible way we can express our gratitude is to offer our time and talents to others this Christmas. For example, we could visit a nursing home or a soup kitchen or perhaps help with a toy drive for those who are less fortunate than us. As stewards, let us constantly strive to be grateful for our blessings and then seek to share them generously with others.

On this Gaudete Sunday we are reminded that despite the crosses and difficulties of our lives, the joy of Jesus' birth should always shine brightly. If we begin to thank God for all of His blessings, we will quickly realize that there are far more things to be joyful about than upset over. Perhaps one way we can share this joy is by offering our time and talents to help others this season, whether it be at a nursing home, a soup kitchen or helping with a toy drive.

Taken from excerpts from the Archdiocese of Toronto website.



CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

We are raffling off three Nativity Scenes! Tickets can be purchased during the weekend Masses, or from the Parish office during office hours.

Tickets prices: 1 for \$2.00
3 for \$5.00
7 for \$10.00

For The Giving Tree For those participating in our Giving Tree Initiative, please return your wrapped gifts by Monday, December 16th. These gifts will be picked up by Brother John of St. Francis Table on Wednesday, December 18th. On behalf of Brother John and the team at St. Francis Table, thank you all for your generosity.