



December 24/25, 2017
Fourth Sunday of Advent/Christmas

OUR FAITH. OUR FOUNDATION.

SINCE 1911



Fourth Sunday of Advent

Now that David was king of a united country, with Jerusalem as the capital, he set about building a temple for the Lord. But the Lord pre-empted David's plan. Instead it is the Lord who will build a dynasty for David, a dynasty that will last for ever. When Jerusalem was

destroyed in 587 BC it seemed that the promise would not be fulfilled. Still, the hope remained that a Messiah would come from the house of David.

The expectation was fulfilled when Gabriel announced to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Redeemer, who, through Joseph, would be of the line of David. Gabriel's words echo the words of God's promise to David.

In the second reading Paul says that the promises made in the Old Testament times have been fulfilled in the person and life of Jesus.

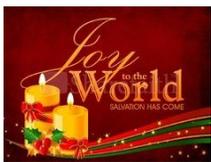
Christmas



All three readings deal with the identity of 'the One who was to come'. The identity of the child was vaguely glimpsed in the Old Testament. Isaiah talked about the coming of a very special child (First Reading). But there is no reason to believe that he knew just how special that child would be. No

prophecy is fully understood until after its fulfilment.

Matthew shows that Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus, and in a far greater way that the prophet could ever have imagined. The New Testament reveals the true identity of this special Child (Jesus). The second reading and the Gospel make it clear that Jesus was the Son of David. This was so because Joseph, his legal father, was descended from the line of David. But he is more than that. He is also the Son of God.



For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is born and the government shall be on his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Is 9,6)

May the peace and blessings of Christmas be yours; and may the coming year be filled with happiness. Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for a Happy New Year!

Papal Prayer Intentions for December

The Elderly – That the elderly, sustained by families and Christian communities, may apply their wisdom and experience to spreading the faith and forming the new generations.

This Week

Monday, December 25

9:00am Mass
11:00am Mass

Tuesday, December 26

10:00am Mass +Mary McMahon

Wednesday, December 27

8:00am Mass
7:00pm Mass +Victor Mendoza

Thursday, December 28

8:00am Mass +Oni Odjegba
7:00pm Mass +Anita Behrend

Friday, December 29

8:00am Mass +Teresa Weisser
7:00pm Mass

Saturday, December 30

8:00am Mass
5:00pm Mass +Josie Gunn

Sunday, December 31

9:00am Mass
11:00am Mass
5:00pm Mass **New Year Anticipatory Mass**

Monday, January 1, 2018

9:00am Mass **New Year**
11:00am Mass **New Year**



OFFERTORY

December 17th, 2017

We are grateful for these gifts:

ENVELOPES: \$6,357.95

LOOSE: \$686.00



Pope's Message



"The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all" (Tit 2:11). The words of the Apostle Paul reveal the mystery of this holy night: the grace of God has ap-

peared, his free gift. In the Child given to us, the love of God is made visible.

It is a night of glory, that glory proclaimed by the angels in Bethlehem and by ourselves as well, all over the world. It is a night of joy, because henceforth and for ever, the infinite and eternal God is God with us. He is not far off. We need not search for him in the heavens or in mystical notions. He is close at hand. He became man and he will never withdraw from our humanity, which he has made his own. It is a night of light. The light prophesied by Isaiah (cf. 9:1), which was to shine on those who walked in a land of darkness, has appeared and enveloped the shepherds of Bethlehem (cf. Lk 2:9).

The shepherds discover simply that "a child has been born to us" (Is 9:5). They realize that all this glory, all this joy, all this light, converges to a single point, the sign that the angel indicated to them: "You will find a child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" (Lk 2:12). This is the enduring sign for all who would find Jesus. Not just then, but also today. If we want to celebrate Christmas authentically, we need to contemplate this sign: the frail simplicity of a tiny newborn child, the meekness with which he is placed in a manger, the tender affection with which he is wrapped in his swaddling clothes. That is where God is.

With this sign, the Gospel reveals a paradox. It speaks of the emperor, the governor, the high and mighty of those times, yet God does not make himself present there. He appears not in the splendour of a royal palace, but in the poverty of a stable; not in pomp and show, but in simplicity of life; not in power, but in astonishing smallness. In order to meet him, we need to go where he is. We need to bow down, to humble ourselves, to make ourselves small. The newborn Child challenges us. He calls us to leave behind fleeting illusions and to turn to what is essential, to renounce our insatiable cravings, to abandon our endless yearning for things we will never have. We do well to leave such things behind, in order to discover, in the simplicity of the divine Child, peace, joy and the luminous meaning of life.

Let us allow the Child in the manger to challenge us, but let us also be challenged by all those children in today's world who are lying not in a crib, caressed with affection by their mothers and fathers, but in squalid "mangers that devour dignity". Children who hide underground to escape bombardment, on the pavements of large cities, in the hold of a boat overladen with immigrants... Let us allow ourselves to be challenged by those children who are not allowed to be born, by those who cry because no one relieves their hunger, by those who hold in their hands not toys, but weapons.

The mystery of Christmas, which is light and joy, challenges and unsettles us, because it is at once a mystery of hope and of sadness. It has a taste of sadness, inasmuch as love is not accepted, and life discarded. Such was the case with Joseph and Mary, who met with closed doors, and placed Jesus in a manger, "because there was no place for them in the inn" (v. 7). Jesus was born rejected by some and regarded by many others with indifference. Today too, that same indifference can exist, whenever Christmas becomes a holiday with ourselves at the centre rather than Jesus; when the lights of shop windows push the light of God into the shadows; when we are enthused about gifts but indifferent to our neighbours in need. This worldliness has kidnapped Christmas; we need to liberate it!

Yet Christmas has above all a taste of hope because, for all the darkness in our lives, God's light shines forth. His gentle light does not frighten us. God, who is in love with us, draws us to himself with his tenderness, by being born poor and frail in our midst, as one of us. He is born in Bethlehem, which means "house of bread". In this way, he seems to tell us that he is born as bread for us; he enters our life to give us his life; he comes into our world to give us his love. He does not come to devour or to lord it over us, but instead to feed and serve us. There is a straight line between the manger and the cross where Jesus will become bread that is broken. It is the straight line of love that gives and saves, the love that brings light to our lives and peace to our hearts.

That night, the shepherds understood this. They were among the marginalized of those times. Yet no one is marginalized in the sight of God, and that Christmas, they themselves were the guests. People who felt sure of themselves, self-sufficient, were at home with their possessions. It was the shepherds who "set out with haste" (cf. Lk 2:16). Tonight, may we too be challenged and called by Jesus. Let us approach him with trust, starting from all those things that make us feel marginalized, from our limitations and our sins. Let us be touched by the tenderness that saves. Let us draw close to God who draws close to us. Let us pause to gaze upon the crib, and relive in our imagination the birth of Jesus: light and peace, dire poverty and rejection. With the shepherds, let us enter into the real Christmas, bringing to Jesus all that we are, our alienation, our unhealed wounds, our sins. Then, in Jesus, we will enjoy the taste of the true spirit of Christmas: the beauty of being loved by God. With Mary and Joseph, let us pause before the manger, before Jesus who is born as bread for my life. Contemplating his humble and infinite love, let us simply tell him: Thank you. Thank you because you have done all this for me.

WELCOME TO ST. AUGUSTINE'S PARISH

St. Augustine's Oblate Parish is a Catholic community centered in Christ and the Eucharist that has a shared mission to – welcome and invite all to participate – celebrate in Word and Sacrament – foster evangelization and spiritual formation – advocate for social justice – care for our common home.

Did You Know...

The Octave of Christmas

Catholics recognize that Christmas is not only on December 25. The Church's liturgy actually emphasizes the eight days or octave of Christmas. The Church recognizes that the days of the Christmas Octave are repeating the solemnity of Christmas for eight

days, concluding on a high note with another solemnity that echoes the solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord.

Two Principal Solemnities

There are two principal feasts in the Liturgical Year: Easter and Christmas. These are both solemnities (and holydays of obligation) and in the current Liturgical Calendar are the only feasts that have octaves attached.

Solemnities are festive and exceptional days, the highest ranked feasts of the liturgical calendar.

What Is an Octave?

An octave is the eight-day period during which Easter or Christmas is celebrated, and includes the actual feast. The eighth day is also called the octave or "octave day," and days in between are said to be "within the octave":

Octave means an eight-day celebration, that is, the prolongation of a feast to the eighth day inclusive. The feast itself is considered the first day, and it is followed by six days called "days within the octave." The eighth or octave day is kept with greater solemnity than the "days within the octave."

Why an Octave?

It has often been said that Catholics know how to celebrate. The Church has a built-in pattern within the liturgical calendar that provides what man needs to celebrate the feasts of the year: times of preparation and penance building to major feasts that are prolonged, and multi-level feast days spread throughout the year.

The octave gives us time to impress upon our souls the mysteries, joys and graces of the principal feasts of the Church year.

Around the Parish...**Year 2018 Parish Envelopes**

Personalized year 2018 Envelope Donation boxes are available for pick-up outside the parish hall. Please do not take a box if it does not have your name on it. There will be volunteers from our new Community theme committee to assist you in finding your envelopes 10 minutes before Mass as well as after Mass. Also, if there is not a box with

your name on it please ask one of the volunteers and they will assign an envelope number to you. DO NOT use 2017 in the year 2018 as your donation may be credited to another individual.

RCIA Agape Ritual**St. Augustine's Refugee Committee Update**

On Sunday, December 17th, we were able to connect with our family to send them Christmas greetings from the parish. They replied that our call was a wonderful Christmas gift to them and they wanted to convey their Christmas message, "May the Child in the manger bless you", to all St. Augustine's parishioners.

Luke 2:1-5 "In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child."

Mary and Joseph had become displaced for some political reasons of the time. Mary had to give birth to her Baby in a land that was new to her. What concerns and worries she must had! Lord, help us see the concerns and worries of those displaced among us.

FAITH AND FOUNDATION UPDATE #7

Over these past many years, many of you have continuously kept our school children and the need to build our new school in your prayers and in your giving plans each year.

As we come to end of our Fall Campaign, we wish to express our gratitude for your amazing generosity this year. Our parish has received gifts or pledges from 97% of the families at the school (raising nearly \$310,000) and almost another \$100,000 from parishioners who do not have children in the school.

Our campaign ends on December 31, 2017. If you can find it in your intentions to support our Parish with a donation please deposit your gift in the Sunday collection or drop it off at the parish office. You can also make an online donation by going to Faithandfoundation.com. If you have any questions, please call the Faith and Foundation office at 604-736-4455 (Ext 231).

If you are writing a cheque please make it out to: St. Augustine's Parish – School Building Fund.

Thank you, everyone – and may this Holy Season of Christmas remind us all of the joy and peace that is Jesus.

Around the Archdiocese...**Archbishop's Annual Mass for Life**

Join us as we celebrate life on Thursday, Dec. 28, at Holy Rosary Cathedral, Vancouver. Rosary begins at 11:30 a.m. and Mass is at 12:10 p.m. Reception to follow in Holy Rosary Hall (donation of finger foods appreciated). "May we defend it and promote it from conception to its natural end."

**Alpha & Discover Discipleship
Information Session**

Tuesday, Nov. 28, 2017 - or - Friday, Jan. 19, 2018
7 p.m. at John Paul II Pastoral Centre

Oblates of Mary Immaculate, cont'd...

At the same time, we ask Your Holiness that, in the Brief of Approval which the Missionaries request, you give them the name of Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary instead of Oblates of Saint Charles: this to avoid any confusion of names with other Congregations; "As Father Fernand Jetté stated, the title of a religious family usually expresses its nature, essence and function. It really seems that the choice of the title Missionary Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary must have been the culmination of a new and deeper insight into the mission of the Congregation on the part of Father de Mazenod. He discovered Mary as the person who was the most committed to the service of Christ, the poor and the Church and saw her as the most comprehensive model of apostolic life as required by his Congregation." *Casimir Lubowicki, "Mary" in the Dictionary of Oblate Values, https://www.omiworld.org/lemma/mary/*

A word from Fr. Andrzej...



The appearance of the crib in our churches is a sign that Christmas is very near. When we look at the crib, everything seems so pretty, so peaceful. This is pretty and we may want to believe it. But we know it's not real. Everything wasn't as neat and tidy as that. The first Christmas was as full of hurry and worry as our Christmas is. It was full of uncertainty, disappointment, and fear.

Mary and Joseph had just completed a long journey. They arrived in Bethlehem poor, unknown, and without influence of

any kind. They were unable to find accommodation. When the time came for Mary to give birth to Jesus, there were no doctors or nurses on standby.

It's easy to move from the poverty of the original crib. We have a tendency to pretty up the Christmas story. But in doing that we remove it from us. We empty it of the meaning it carries for us.

It was St. Francis of Assisi who assembled the first crib. His aim was to make the Christmas story come alive for the people of the locality. His idea was to show them how close it was to them and their lives.

And it seems that he succeeded. On Christmas Eve the friars and the people assembled with candles and torches around the crib. Francis spoke to the people who were mostly farmers and shepherds, about God's Son coming among us to teach us that we too are children of God, and that as such we have eternal destiny.

The shepherds and farmers got the message. At the end of the vigil they returned to their homes, full of peace and joy, feeling very close to God and to one another.

If you are new to our Parish Community or have an address or telephone change, please fill out the information below and submit it to the parish office or drop into the collection basket. please print in block letters.

New Parishioner Need Envelopes Information Change

First Name	First Name
Spouse First Name	Spouse Last Name
Children: Name(s) & Date of Birth	
Mailing Address	
City	Phone
Postal Code	Email
Comments	

Parish Information

RECONCILIATION

Weekdays 15 minutes before weekday Mass
 Saturday 4:00pm-4:30pm

PASTOR

Rev. Andrzej Stendzina, OMI 604.736.4455 x 227
 astendzina@rcav.org

PARISH OFFICE

Monday & Friday 9:00am-12noon,1:00pm-5:00pm
 Tues/Wed/Thurs 10:00am-12noon,1:00pm-5:00pm
 Monday is the Priest's day off.

Email: parish.saug@rcav.org

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Linda Arnold 604.736.4455 x 229

PARISH SECRETARY

Jayne Le Vierge 604.736.4455 x 221

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM—PREP

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY
 Vea Coronado 604.736.4455 x 224
 vea@staugustineschurch.ca

FAITH AND FOUNDATION

Campaign Office 604.736.4455 x 231
 donate@faithandfoundation.com

ST AUGUSTINE SCHOOL

2154 West 7th Avenue V6K 0E3 604.731.8024
 office@staugschool.ca

BAPTISM

604.736.4455 x 221
 Preparation classes held first Thursday of the month

MARRIAGES/WEDDINGS

604.736.4455 x 221 parish.saug@rcav.org

PARISH MINISTRIES

RCIA (RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS)

Linda Arnold rcia@staugustineschurch.ca

MUSIC MINISTRY

Peter Allen 604.257.3525
 Manfred & Suzanne Milbers 604.255.0567
 Mary Ellen Turnbull 778.995.6423

COMMUNION TO THE SICK

Nelson Cheung 604.328.3882

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Sonny Harsono em@staugustineschurch.ca

PARISH COUNCIL

Mary Ellen Turnbull parishcouncil@staugustineschurch.ca

CWL (CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE)

Samantha Strudwick 604.255-1662

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Roy Pimentel 778.330.6850

LEGION OF MARY

Sr. Lilia Yearley 604.734.0535

ADULT FAITH

Alyssa DeMarco & Scott Kenyon
 faithformation@staugustineschurch.ca

LECTORS

Danny Camparmo lectors@staugustineschurch.ca

USHERS

Bill Borgen 604-224-2632

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Penny Rogers pennyrogers@hotmail.com

MOM'S N TOTS

Cat Leung cat_murtha@hotmail.com

BUSY HANDS & GARDENING

Shirley Brown 604.738.0429

ARTS & ENVIRONMENT

Helen Velazquez ae@staugustineschurch.ca