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Fourth Sunday of Advent

Each Advent season, we prepare to welcome Jesus into the inns and stables of our hearts. For St. Joseph, the first coming of Jesus was a joyous event. "When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit." For some of us, the birth of Christ is a bit relationally complicated. Perhaps over the past few months, a loved one has died. This

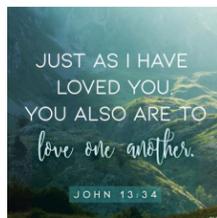


Christmas, you're taking it upon yourself to keep up the traditions and hold the family together. Perhaps it's a difficult relative (or two or three) and it's all you can do to bite your tongue and swallow your pride while they're under your roof. Will there be strife, discord, tension?

Yet "do not be afraid," the angel says. Do not be afraid. Why? Because we celebrate the birth of "Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" Before Jesus' earthly ministry would begin, Jesus would lose his father, Joseph. God is with us in our grief. Wherever Jesus went, he stirred up controversy and faced down challenging personalities. God is with us in our stress. The trick is, like Joseph, to allow supernatural grace to prevail. Our natural abilities only take us so far. Where is receiving Jesus complicated this Christmas season? Are you relying on your own strength to get you through, or are you truly ready to accept the grace of Emmanuel, God with us?

EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP - RECOGNIZE GOD IN YOUR ORDINARY MOMENTS- Afraid, Yet Never Alone

I did not end up being the great parent I had hoped I would be. I am not saying I was bad, but I was not the cool dad I who did all things right and led my children by the example of my endlessly good actions. I messed up a bunch. Sometimes I was afraid. I was afraid of decisions I had to make and the possible repercussions. At times, I was afraid that I was not strong enough to lead my family. The fear occasionally led me toward inaction or eventual mistakes. The only thing that got me through the tough times



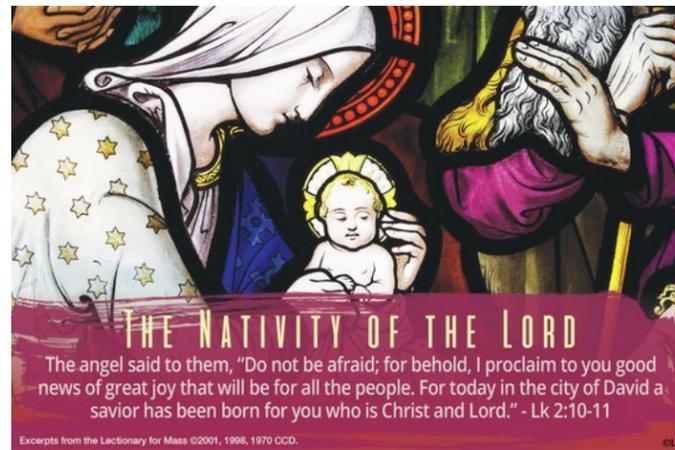
and allowed me to see it was okay was Jesus. Without Jesus, I would never have been half of the father and husband I have been through the years.

When we try to tackle life alone, we can find ourselves in a very lonely position. Just like Jesus' parents, we need God to assist us and provide us with the strength for what lies ahead. Joseph needed God to be with him as he took Mary as his wife and became a legal father. Every parent needs God to become more than they can be on their own. How do you treat those who you love? Who is there to help you when a relationship faces an obstacle? We are called to love others as our Father in heaven loves us. Yet with God, all things are possible. As this Advent ends, may your Christmas be about more than presents and decorations. May the most profound gifts you give and receive be that of each other, and may your lives be decorated with the fruits of that love.



Christmas Prayer: Jesus, the Light of the World, as we celebrate your birth may we begin to see the world in the light of the understanding you give us. As you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart. May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this Holy season of giving. Amen.

Wednesday, December 25th, 2019



The Nativity of the Lord

One of the most beautiful things about the Christmas story is its human simplicity. How very ordinary! How relatable! We see a young family caught up in government regulations, encountering difficulty booking travel arrangements. We see a belated baby shower filled with the most unlikely attendees. Yet, if you attended Christmas Mass during the day, the Gospel does not contain the familiar story of overcrowded inns and hay-lined mangers. It features something much more mysterious. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God ... all things came to be through him."



"What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light

of the human race." C.S. Lewis described Christmas as God parachuting down behind enemy lines. Jesus entered into a world darkened by sin, and it isn't so different today. We can find it in the complications of our own lives and the lives of our families. We can find it in our cities, our nation, our world. But it wasn't only the star that shone on Christmas night. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." In the midst of all that is so very human — whether the humdrum or the horrible — "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." No matter what we bring into this Christmas day, God enters our existence. He enters our experiences. When we allow God into our lives in a new way, when we surrender to Him our lingering areas of darkness, then we will "[see] his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth." It's time to welcome Him.



Cathedral Appeal Update: The St. Catharines Journal wrote in November 1846: "The Church of St. Catharines is the most beautiful...in all Canada, and we might go farther. It is designed in the old Irish ecclesiastical style — elegantly groined within, the arches springing gracefully from handsome pilasters which run up the side walls, one between each window". **Take advantage of the tax benefits on your 2019 Income Tax Return by making a donation before December 31st.** Visit www.saintcd.com/appeal and consider making a donation today. **Brochures are at the back of the church.**

Parish Calendar

- January 2020.....**
 Jan 1st..... Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God. Mass 10am
 Jan 1st.... World Day of Prayer
 Jan 9th..... Bingo resumes 7pm.
 Jan 15th..... St. Ann School Mass 9:30am
 Jan 15th..... Youth Ministry resumes 6:30-8:30pm.
 Jan. 15th.... Finance meeting 6:30pm
 Jan 18-25.... Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

2020 Offertory Envelopes: are in the church hall. Please note that there have been updates made to the offertory numbering system. **FOR THE YEAR 2020, PLEASE USE ONLY THE ENVELOPES ASSIGNED TO YOU FOR THAT YEAR.** This will ensure that donations are credited to the proper person. **If you do not find a box prepared for you, please phone the office.** Also, please do not begin using your new envelopes until the new year. Thank you!

Church Contributions: All Church donations for 2019 must be **received on the weekend of Dec 28/29, 2019** to be applied to your 2019 tax receipt. Please note though, that donation envelopes received on Dec 31st for the January 1st Feast of Mary the Mother of God will be applied to your 2020 tax receipt. Thank you for your cooperation.

Office Closure for Christmas: The Church Office will be closed from **Tuesday, December 24th, 2019 to Wednesday, January 1st, 2020.** Messages may be left at any time and will be checked regularly. **Regular office hours will resume on Friday, January 3rd, 2020.**

The 88th annual broadcast of Midnight Mass from the Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria will be available on Newstalk 610 CKTB at 11:30p.m. and at www.610cktb.com.

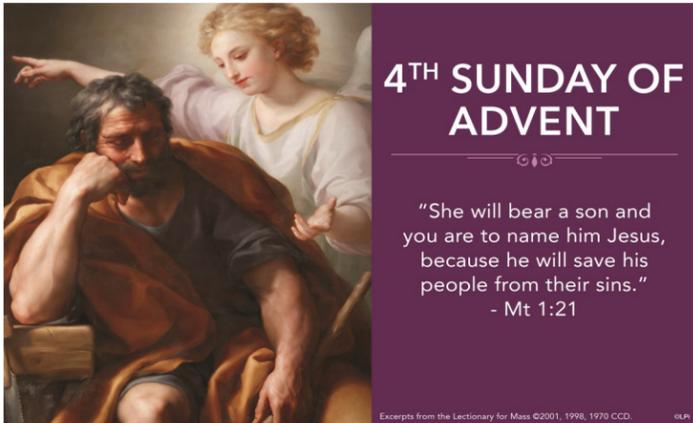
EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP - RECOGNIZE GOD IN YOUR ORDINARY MOMENTS—The Disruption of the Incarnation

One December, my oldest son informed us that he would be getting up early on Christmas morning to serve breakfast to homeless people at the nearby shelter. We are a good Christian family, but we never before had that tradition. Christmas had been always the same: go to Mass on Christmas Eve, get up early, open presents, and reflect briefly on the fact that the day was a birthday celebration for Jesus. But that year, my son threw a wrench into the plan. I can't say his siblings were too happy at first. When they woke up, he would be gone. It was bad enough that our family wasn't together at the crack of dawn on Christmas morning, but they would have to wait to open presents until his return. To them, it didn't seem like this was about serving the poor at all ... it was about my son making Christmas morning all about him! I couldn't be mad at my other children for feeling the way they did. It was a natural human response. When our routine is disrupted, we feel uneasy. When our expectations are not met, we feel a little cheated. When others stand in our way of happiness, even if they just delay it for a bit, we feel impatient. Of course, he went to the soup kitchen, and when he returned, everything unfolded as it usually does. And we were all proud of him.



Youth Ministry Fundraiser: Thank you to everyone who contributed baked goods and items for our Youth Ministry fundraiser on Dec 15th. A total of \$240.70 was raised to assist with expenses. A reminder that Youth Ministry will resume on Wednesday, January 15th from 6:30-8:30pm in the parish hall. We welcome Genevieve Broadley back from maternity leave who will resume coordination of this ministry. We encourage all youth in Grades 5-12 to attend.

Sunday, December 22nd, 2019



Sat. Dec 21	9-10am	Fourth Sunday of Advent Confessions
	4 -4:45pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Confessions
	5:00pm	✠ Tim Hunter (Diane & Ben Kooter)
Sun. Dec 22	9:30am	Missa Pro Populo
	11:00am	✠ Anthony Filbert (Lynda Filbert & Family)
Mon. Dec 23	9:30am	✠ Margaret Marshall (Mike & Anne Young)
	7-8pm	Holy Hour & Confessions
Tues. Dec 24	5:00pm	✠ Wally & Sophie Paterak (Christine Meyo & Family)
Wed. Dec 25	Midnight 10:00am	Christmas Day Masses Missa Pro Populo ✠ Victoria Blaszyński, Elaine & Bronson Pezanoski & Ray Kardas (Jay)
Thurs. Dec 26		Mass Cancelled
Fri. Dec 27	9:30am	✠ Martin Nenadovich (Rosemary & Steve Lastovic)
Sat. Dec 28	9-10am	Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
	4 -4:45pm	Confessions
	5:00pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Confessions Intentions of Vulcan & Arwen (Teresa Walters)
Sun. Dec 29	9:30am	Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph Missa Pro Populo
	11:00am	✠ Michael Bucci (Jake & Sherry Voogt)
Confessions from 9-9:20am before all weekday Masses.		
Offertory December 14th & 15th, 2019		
74 Envelopes	\$2,620.00	
Loose Collection	\$ 49.00	
Total Offertory	\$2,669.00	
Flowers	\$ 96.00	

