

ST. ANSELM'S PARISH

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PARISH STAFF

Fr. Thomas Moore, Pastor

Deacon Daniel McPhee

Barrig Hayward, Administrative Assistant

Goody Cabral, Music Director & Cantor

Aloysius Chan, Organist



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Mass Intentions for Week

** THIS IS A TWO-WEEK BULLETIN **

Wednesday, December 27th, 8:15 a.m.

Jo Kostovcik

Requested by Mel Kostovcik

Thursday, December 28th, 8:15 a.m.

Deceased Members of the Aust Family

Friday, December 29th, 8:15 a.m.

Freeman D'Silva

Requested by Christopher, Aubrey & Melanie D'Silva

Tuesday, January 2nd, 8:15 a.m.

Jeannette Valeriotte

Requested by the Family

Wednesday, January 3rd, 8:15 a.m.

Catherine Allen

Thursday, January 4th, 8:15 a.m.

For the Intentions of Lucy Brennan

Requested by Morning Mass Parishioners

Friday, January 5th, 8:15 a.m.

For the Intentions of Ida Filippi

Requested by the Family

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Christmas - Nativity of the Lord

Sunday, December 24th

4:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m.

Monday, December 25th

9:00 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

Feast of the Holy Family

Saturday, December 30th

5:00 p.m. (Concessions 4pm)

Sunday, December 31st

9:00 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

Mary, Mother of God

Sunday, December 31st

5:00 p.m.

Monday, January 1st

11:00 a.m.

There will be no weekday morning Mass on Tuesday, December 26th.



Thank you to all parishioners who support the offertory and building fund through monthly pre-authorized giving or with weekly contribution envelopes.

Your donations are responsible for keeping your church going 365 days a year.

Please let us know if you have moved so we may issue your 2023 receipt to the correct address.

IMPORTANT TAX INFORMATION

** Any donations received up to 4pm on Sunday, December 31st (including at the 9am and 11am Masses that day) will be credited toward your 2023 tax receipt. Donations received after 4pm on December 31st, (including at the 5pm Vigil Mass that evening) will be considered 2024 donations. In accordance with CRA regulations, donations submitted by Canada Post must be postmarked by Canada Post by December 31, 2023 to be eligible for a 2023 tax receipt. Thank you for your support of the parish. **

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Our gathering of children during the 11:00am Mass is taking a short break for the holidays. We will be back as of Sunday, January 14th. Thank you to Fernanda and her team of helpers for heading up this ministry.

Annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Prayer Service 2024

Sunday, January 21, 2024, 4 p.m. ET

Venue: St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Cathedral (455 Ferrier St., Markham, Ont. L3R 5Z2)

Theme: "You shall love the Lord your God... and your neighbour as yourself." (Luke 10:27)

Join Archbishop Francis Leo and a wide representation of Christian leaders to pray for the restoration of full visible unity willed by Jesus Christ for the Church. This event is jointly organized by the Office for Promoting Christian Unity and the Greater Toronto Area Council of Christian Churches.

The parish office will be closed during the holidays but voicemail and email will be checked on a regular basis. All urgent matters will be dealt with, and all other messages will be returned by Tuesday, January 9th.

As this is a two-week bulletin, Fr. Moore and the parish staff would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their warm Christmas wishes. We wish the same for you and your families. The next bulletin will be out on January 6th/7th.

Merry Christmas and all the best for 2024!

A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

Isa 52:7-10 Ps 98

Heb 1:1-6 John 1:1-18

CHRISTMAS HOPE



Some communities celebrate in a very poignant way the mystery of the coming of our God into flesh and blood and time and space in order to save humankind from sin and death. The same wood they use to fashion the crèche at Christmas is taken apart and restructured into a cross at Easter. From the

crèche, believers journey through the liturgical year until they come full circle to the cross at Holy Week and Easter; this is the journey that Jesus made, and this is the journey that has led us home to God. There is no false sentimentality here. Whoever sees the infant in the Christmas crèche also looks upon the crucified adult Christ. Christmas and this journey from crèche to cross belong to those who recognize the real presence of God in their lives and in the world. Such people understand that God is really present — not simply once upon a long time ago and far away, but here and now. This ever-present God inhabits humble hearts and knows the turmoil and struggles within. This present God supports every human effort at being transparent so that something of God's goodness shines in every believer to offer hope to others.

Isaiah had this kind of transparency. He urged his fellow exiles to raise their heads above their present difficulties and look with hope to the God who was by their side through it all. His words of comfort and encouragement reach out to us across the centuries and the generations, calling each of us out of those places of exile where we hide from God, from life and from one another. We are here, but not completely; we are engaged with others, but not without reservation. Have pretended to be talking on your cell phone so we can avoid personal interaction with others? We sometimes want to disengage so we might not risk being hurt or used or worn out, but the reality of today's feast demands otherwise. Today, as every day, our God is calling and texting and communicating, in every way possible, the assurance that God is with us!

This assurance empowers us to be present to others as God is to us, in crèche-moments as well as in cross-moments.

In the second reading on Christmas morning, the author of Hebrews explores the wonder of God's presence with us, tracing God's ongoing conversation with humankind to its beginnings. In times past, the divine presence was made known through the prophets. In the fullness of time, God became present and began to speak the language of human existence in Jesus. He communicated God's compassion and forgiveness not in bolts of lightning or claps of thunder, not in fire or in earthquake, but with a human voice.

In today's Gospel, the fourth evangelist describes the wonder of this reality with unmatched eloquence. The Word who is God became flesh to live among us. On one of the last Christmases of his life, Oscar Romero, the martyred archbishop of San Salvador, shared with his people his appreciation of God's presence in the world: "Today, we recall that God's reign is now, in this world, and that Christ has inaugurated the fullness of time. Christ's birth attests that God is now marching with us in history — that we do not go alone, and that our aspiration for peace, for justice, for a reign of divine law, for something holy, is far from earth's realities. Nevertheless, we can hope for all these things, not because we human beings are able to construct that realm of holiness which God's holy words proclaim but because the builder of a reign of justice, of love and peace is already in the midst of us" (*The Violence of Love*, The Plough Pub. Co., Farmington, Pa.: 1988). It is as if Romero is speaking to the world today and brings to us the reminder that God is with us. Emmanuel is here. If each of us could truly grasp this inscrutable mystery and live our lives accordingly, this world could not help but be transformed. This process of transformation began in the crèche and climaxed on the cross. May the joy, hope, peace and love that mark this Christmas Feast fill each one of us and allow us to share the gifts of this day in all that we do and all that we say. Happy Christmas!

*May the blessings
of this Holy Season
be with you always.*

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