

SACRED HEART OF JESUS PARISH PRESS

Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish

Advent 2015



ADVENT: A TIME OF NEW BEGINNINGS AND HOPE

On November 29th Catholics around the world began a new liturgical year. The Season of Advent marks the beginning of a new Church Year. The word “advent” comes from the Latin word “adventus”, which means “coming.”

According to the General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, “Advent has a twofold nature. It prepares us for Christmas, when we recall Christ’s first coming among us, and it is also a time when we look forward to His second coming at the end of the ages.

The Season of Advent is divided into two parts. From the First Sunday of Advent until December 16th the Church’s focus is on the final (or second) coming of Christ. When this happens, Christ will come not as a tiny child in swaddling clothes, but as King of Glory.

From December 17th until December 24th the Church’s focus is on remembering Christ’s first coming into the world some two thousand years ago. Here we recall as St. John reminds us, “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” This is the miracle and mystery of Christ – the Son of God becomes human and lives with us.

The balancing of these two foci are clearly seen in the gospel selection for each of the four Sundays of Advent:

- On the first Sunday we hear of the return of Jesus at His Second Coming,
- On the second Sunday we hear of John the Baptist’s call to conversion,
- On the third Sunday we hear of the relationship of John the Baptist to Jesus
- On the fourth Sunday we hear of Mary and the events leading to the birth of Jesus.

The Season of Advent is a wonderful opportunity for the followers of Jesus to grow in their lives of faith and their friendship with the Lord Jesus. This is a season of watching, waiting, and preparing our hearts. But what are we watching, waiting and preparing for? It is not a thing or an event, but rather it is a person - the person of Jesus Christ who is the Son of God and the Son of Mary! This is whom we prepare for! This is whom we wait! As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said, “we are saved by hope and hope has a name: Jesus! It’s no wonder we join the ancient Church in singing ‘O Come, O Come Emmanuel.’”

I pray that you and your family will make time to watch, wait and prepare for the coming of Christ, not only at Christmas, but each day. To help you, may I recommend using an online advent calendar. It is an innovative way to make the good news of the gospel alive using the new social media. I invite you to check it out at www.xt3.com/advent/index.php

STAYING IN TOUCH

Our website also has a host of other useful information and links. Check out the website at www.sacredheartofjesusparish.ca

If you would like to receive the weekly e-bulletin simply email frjohn@ntl.sympatico.ca to stay in touch with all the latest news and events.

Check our facebook page at www.facebook.com/sacredhearttimmins and stay up to date on the latest happenings in the Parish.

PENANCE SERVICE

We will be hosting our annual Advent Communal Penance Service on **Sunday, December 20th 3:00 P.M.** in the Church. There will be a short prayer service and afterwards Bishop Poitras and I will be available for individual confessions. Come and be reconciled with God this Advent!

THE GIFT OF BAPTISM

I want take a few moments to highlight the meaning and gift of the Sacrament of Baptism in our lives today. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, provides a beautiful description of what Baptism does for each of us:

Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism, we are freed from sin and reborn as sons (and daughters) of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church, and made sharers in her mission (1213).

What a wonderful gift Jesus gave us in the Sacrament of Baptism! In addition to these spiritual benefits, there are also some very practical benefits in receiving the Sacrament of Baptism, whether as a child or later in life as an adult.

In receiving the Sacrament of Baptism, one then has the opportunity to receive the other sacraments of the Church. These other sacraments aid us on our journey of faith and help us to be the followers of Christ that we are called to be.

In addition, later in life one who has received the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation can be asked to be a godparent for another child's baptism or be a sponsor at the time of someone's confirmation.

Another of the practical benefits of baptism is access to publically funded Catholic Education in the Province of Ontario. According to provincial legislation, at minimum, one parent must be baptized as Roman Catholic to guarantee enrolment of their son or daughter in a Catholic School. In Southern Ontario, many Catholic Boards also require that the student be baptized before he / she is enrolled in a Catholic School.

Sadly, given the large number of students in our Catholic Schools today who are not baptized, this may prevent them from having their children enrolled in a Catholic School in the future.

If you would like to learn more about the Sacrament of Baptism, please contact the Parish Office. In the new year we will be offering a preparation course for parents who wish to have their child baptized.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

To celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, we will be celebrating special Masses to mark this sacred day. Masses will be celebrated on **December 24th at 5:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M.** Mass will be celebrated on **Christmas Day at 10:00 A.M.** All are welcome to join us for this sacred celebration.

NEW YEAR'S SCHEDULE

To celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, and to begin the new year, we will be celebrating a special New Year's Eve Mass on **December 31st at 5:00 P.M. and New Year's Day Mass on January 1st at 10:00 A.M.** Catholics are reminded that this is a holy day of obligation. All are welcome.

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Why not join us for Mass this weekend? Mass times are Saturday at 5:00 P.M. and Sunday at 10:00 A.M. (with children's program for JK to Grade 3 students). We look forward to having you join us and take a moment to introduce yourself to me at the door.

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