

Waiting can be a time of soul-searching. Today's liturgy invites us to ask ourselves whether we are ready to hear the call of the Saviour, whose birth we are preparing to celebrate. Helpless in Herod's prison cell, John the Baptist is puzzled and discouraged, as he faced a similar question. He has generously pointed Jesus out – as the one who was to bring the realisation of Israel's hopes; why, he asks through his messengers, is God's prophet now suffering in prison at the hands of an unprincipled tyrant; why has the mission of Jesus not brought the time of justice God's people long for?

The reading from Isaiah – a typical example of the message of hope announced by the prophets – helps us to understand why John is puzzled. This magnificent proclamation describes what can be looked forward to, as a New Exodus – a time of liberation, healing and boundless joy, as those who have been banished are brought back to Zion.

But this triumph of God is also described as a time of 'vengeance' and 'retribution'. Having for centuries lived in bitterness under a series of occupying powers, the nation's expectations emphasised this latter part of the prophets' message. They looked forward to a vindictive triumph that would crush their hated enemies. This heavily politicised interpretation of Israel's messianic hopes constituted one of the main obstacles to be overcome by Jesus, if he was to bring the people to enter into the inauguration of the final reign of God – about to take place in his own person.

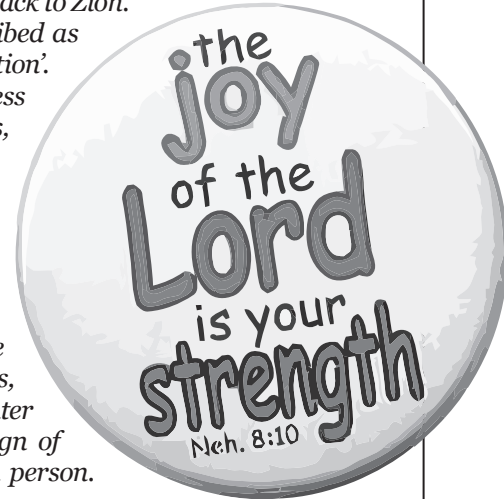
God's triumph was not to be the imposition of divine power. The coming of God's kingdom involves collaboration on the part of our human freedom – inspired and sustained by the example of Jesus, who gave the needy and the powerless a privileged place in all that he did in the name of his Father, and lived out the 'new commandment' of love he had proclaimed. Jesus replied to John's inquiry, therefore, by pointing to the 'messianic signs' foretold by the prophets. But to those included in today's reading from Isaiah he adds another from the later Isaian writings: 'the poor have the Good News preached to them'. In a sense, the divine authenticity of his mission is summed up fully in these words – words that have echoed down the centuries in the life of the Church. In the continuation of our gospel passage, Jesus points to the gospel values so heroically embraced by John – in his courageous witness and his detachment.

The message of Jesus to John is, 'Do not lose faith in me; open your generous heart to the ways of God that define Israel's faith, and you will recognise that I am truly the one who was to come'. Jesus taught, we know, that in the present era the 'coming of the kingdom' is hidden and mysterious, overturning our human expectations. Our reading from James echoes one of the parables of Jesus concerning the coming of the kingdom (Mk 4.26), as James encourages believers in his community to imitate the farmer's patience, as the hidden seed grows.

John Chornhill sm
www.theemmausseries.com

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." Are you one to be sent?

If you think God is calling you to be a priest, religious or deacon, contact Fr. Chris Lemieux, Vocations Director, Archdiocese of Toronto.
416-968-0997 vocations@vocations.ca www.vocationstoronto.ca



Readings ~ Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10 ~ James 5:7-10 ~ Matthew 11:2-11

Mass Intentions This Week – December 12 – December 18

Please join us as we pray for the following announced intentions...

	Intention(s):	Offered by:
Monday, 9am	✠ members of Grogan Family	
Tuesday, 9am	✠ Doris Vogtle	Nicki Law
Wednesday, 9am	✠ Cody Lados	family
Thursday, 9am	✠ Elizabeth Montrichard	family
Friday, 9am	✠ Lorraine Redmond	family
Saturday, 9am	✠ Nick Villani	L. Villani
5:15pm	✠ Enio Biason	family
Sunday, 8am	✠ Msgr. Ken Robitaille	parishioner
9:30am	✠ For the needs of our parish and faithful parishioners ✠	
11am	✠ Sam Arrigo	mother and brother
12:30pm	✠ Patrick Guillemette	family

Christmas & New Year's Schedule

Christmas Eve – Saturday, December 24 ☞ **Nativity of the Lord***

Vigil Masses at 5pm, 7:30pm, 11pm

Carols & music begins approximately 40 minutes prior to vigil Masses

Please note: there will be no confession on this day.

Christmas Day – Sunday, December 25 ☞ **Nativity of the Lord***

Regular Sunday schedule (8, 9:30, 11am, 12:30pm)

New Year's Eve – Saturday, December 31

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God*, World Day of Peace

Vigil Mass at 5:15pm

New Year's Day – Sunday, January 1

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God*, World Day of Peace

Regular Sunday schedule (8, 9:30, 11am, 12:30pm)

* Indicates a holy day of obligation. As Catholics, we are required to attend Mass on these special feast days.

2016-2017 SUNDAY MISSAL There is a limited supply available at the back of the church. Please place your \$3.00 payment in an envelope marked "Missal" into the offertory basket or drop it off at the church office.

Reminders for Sacramental Preparation

CONFIRMATION SESSION 2A meets TODAY, December 11, 4-5:30pm or Wednesday, December 14, 7-8:30pm, Parish Hall.

Children's Liturgy of the Word – This program is adapted for our young parishioners and takes place on Sunday during the 9:30am Mass. **Please note that this is for children 4-10 years of age.**

Rosary – prayed daily at 8:30am prior to the 9am Mass. The **Rosary Group** meets every Friday at 2pm in the Parish Hall and prays fifteen decades followed by the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. All are welcome to join in prayer.

SHARELIFE - Becoming the hands of Christ to those in need...

Many of us lead busy lives, where the time to be actively involved is not as available as we would like it to be. This is where ShareLife annual archdiocesan appeal, comes in. Through our support, we provide resources to over 40 agencies, informed by Catholic values, offering much needed programs and services to those both here in our communities and around the world.

Our agencies provide counseling to families in need, support children and youth, provide love and care for people with special needs, offer assistance to refugee and new immigrant families, and help to spread the Gospel in the greater world. ShareLife funded agencies also provide for the education of our clergy and hospital chaplaincy programs with the Archdiocese of Toronto.

Your generous contribution is greatly appreciated.

Victoria Scholars Concert, Sunday Dec. 18, 7:30pm Our Lady of Sorrows Church

Ring in the Yuletide with the Victoria Scholars as they present a concert of carols from Christmas past and present by composers from Canada and around the world. Join the Scholars for a festive and spirited celebration of seasonal music. Tickets available at the door: Regular \$30, Senior 65+ / Student \$25. Doors open at 7pm. Visit www.victoriascholars.ca

Gifts of Securities – A great option for all your church giving

If you have stocks or mutual funds that have appreciated, you're likely not keen on paying capital gains tax on them! Consider making them your offertory gift. You can also use securities to consolidate all your Church giving. If you make an annual gift to ShareLife, for example, we will arrange to have the parish credited with your gift. To learn more, call the Archdiocesan Development Office at 416-934-3411 or visit www.archtoronto.org/development

Pre-Theology of the Body - removing blocks, obstacles and -isms so we can hear the Gospel of the body! December 26-29, 2016, 9:30am-4:00pm, Pauline Books & Media, 3022 Dufferin St., Toronto. Pre-registration required. Call 416 781 9131.

St. Leo's Parish Advent Mass & Anointing of the Sick – Sunday, December 11, 2016 at 3:00pm. Call 416 251 1109 for more information.

Advent Retreat: Finding Hope in the Midst of Dark Times – Saturday, December 17, 2016 at 8:30am, St. Francis Centre, 208501 Highway 9, Caledon

Join the Franciscan Friars for a day of renewal, prayer and fellowship as they explore how God gives us hope in the midst of difficult times. A reflection on the theme will be followed by group discussion and sharing. Fraternal lunch, adoration, meditated rosary, confessions and Mass are also part of the day. Call Lina at 519-941-1747 or email admin@stfranciscentre.org

Lay Spiritual Formation – Saturday, January 7, 2017, St. Augustine's Scarborough Campus. An examination of factors that influence human nature and freedom led by Dr. Josephine Lombardi. For further details and registration go to www.staugustines.on.ca.

He is the Light of the World! Enrich your faith this Advent and Christmas with special programming throughout the season on EWTN. Attend Mass in Vatican City with Pope Francis, enjoy concerts from Europe and travel to the sacred sites of the Holy Land. Find EWTN in your area by visiting www.ewtn.com/channelfinder.