

Through the Incarnation, the generosity and mercy of God have finally appeared among us - in the life of one who is the very expression of the Father's greatness. And so, from earliest times the Church's Christmas celebration has made reference the Epiphany, or 'Manifestation' of the Lord - symbolised in the story of today's gospel, but also realised in a special way in the Lord's baptism, and in the 'first sign' he worked at the marriage in Cana. It comes as no surprise, when we hear it read, to find that today's first reading from Isaiah has a very ancient association with this festival: 'Arise, shine out Jerusalem. The nations come to your light and kings to your brightness'. This passage - from the writings of the Isaian tradition from the period after the return from the exile - expresses a vision of Israel fulfilling its role as 'a light to the nations'. Sharing in the 'glory' (or incomparable greatness) of the Lord himself, the holy city will attract the wealth of the nations as the kings of the earth share in its rebuilding.



Opening their treasures they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh

This Old Testament text and its parallels (see Ps 72:10) may have inspired the story recounted by Matthew in today's gospel. It is possible that an unusual astronomical event may also have contributed to its inspiration, calling to mind the prophecy of Balaam, 'a star is emerging from Jacob' (Num 24:17). As it stands, the story is filled with symbolic meaning. The Magi represent the nations of the earth finding the Saviour of the world - in contrast to the scribes of Israel, familiar with the scriptures but not recognising their fulfilment; the gifts of the Magi are symbolic of the world's confession of faith in Christ - gold for royalty, frankincense for priesthood, myrrh for the one who is to die; notoriously ruthless Herod reminds us of earthly powers that obstruct the designs of God. We should note, especially, the significance of the words, 'going in they saw the child with his mother, Mary'. While Luke's narrative of Christ's conception and birth has Mary as its central figure, Matthew's account of the virgin birth is centred on Joseph. The words we have quoted, however, reflect the importance already given to Mary in the community that gave us Matthew's gospel.

The second reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians continues the theme of 'manifestation', as it takes us into the depths of Paul's vision of faith in Christ. For Paul, of course, God's dealings with the human family have come to a magnificent climax in what God has done for the world in Christ. As we read in the opening lines of the letter to the Ephesians, Paul interprets Christ's saving work as the revelation of a great 'mystery' - the real purpose God has had in mind since the beginning of creation: 'He has let us know the mystery of his purpose, to bring everything together under Christ as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth'. Through his ministry, Paul has seen the realisation of what is symbolised in the story of the Magi - the whole human race is called with old Israel, to share 'the same inheritance', to be 'parts of the same body', to share in 'promise' that the 'gospel' has brought to the world 'in Christ Jesus'.

John Thornhill sm
www.themmaseries.com

"They offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh." God asks us to give our lives. What treasures have been given to you to share with others in Christ's name?

If God is calling you to be a priest, religious or deacon, call Fr. Chris Lemieux
416-968-0997 vocations@vocations.ca www.vocationstoronto.ca

Readings ~ Isaiah 60.1-6 ~ Ephesians 3.2-3a, 5-6 ~ Matthew 2.1-12

PARISH

Mass Intentions This Week - January 4 to 10

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

	Intention(s):	Offered by:
Monday, 9am	✠ Jeremy Theret	Geraldine Sneyd
Tuesday, 9am	✠ Mirta Poce	Paul & Pat Matthews
Wednesday, 9am	✠ Ann Gallagher Formanek	Deidre Mungovan
Thursday, 9am	In Thanksgiving	Rob & Lori Litwin
Friday, 9am	✠ Dora Graas	Jim & Winnie Magee
Saturday, 9am	✠ Teresa DelPozo	Friends
5:15pm	✠ Michael Panak	The Kukiel family
Sunday, 8am	✠ For the needs of our parish and faithful parishioners ✠	
9:30am	✠ Gallon Sante	Luigi & Mario Possamai
11am	... of Daniella Servedio	
12:30pm	✠ Mary Biason	The family

Blessing of Bronze Door, Close of 75th Anniversary Year - Sat., Jan. 9, 5:15pm

Cardinal Collins will join us to celebrate Mass and bless our new bronze door. A reception will follow in the newly-refurbished parish hall. Make plans to attend this special event!

Building the Samaritan Church, Welcoming the Stranger - Jan. 12, 7:30pm@OLS

Renowned author, journalist, and founder of Romero House, Mary Jo Leddy will share her thoughts on the privilege of working with refugees and how we can become a good and joyful church as we expand our concern to include refugees. From her experience of living with and working with refugees for 25 years, Leddy will describe what she has learned about the promise and problems of becoming a Samaritan Church. Leddy is an adjunct professor at Regis College, and a Senior Fellow at Massey College.

Everyone is invited to attend this public event when Canadians are welcoming Syrian refugees to our country and learn how to become engaged in that welcome.

Update - St. Vincent de Paul Adopt a Family Program

A big thank you to the parishioners, OLS School classes (six of them!) and the 146th Toronto Pathfinder Unit of the Girl Guides of Canada (Ontario Council) who sponsored families. Thank you for sharing the Christmas spirit with our neighbours in need.



"Heavenly Father, make me swift to hear and ready to see; And thus the year I now begin a happy year will be." -Anonymous

COMMUNITY

Kolbe Eucharistic Mini-Retreat - Celebrate the Year of Mercy - Jan. 9, 2pm

Join us for a special Kolbe Eucharistic Mini-Retreat celebrating the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. We will have Eucharistic Adoration, prayer, and praise and worship. Father Jim Gauthier, S.F.M. will give an inspiring talk titled "St. Margaret Mary: An Apostle of God's Merciful Love." St. Brigid's Church, 300 Wolverleigh Blvd. For more information, call 416-696-8660 or visit www.kolbeapostolate.com

Lectio Divina with Cardinal Thomas Collins - January 10, 7pm



Archdiocese of Toronto

Lectio Divina ("divine, or sacred, reading") is the name given to a spiritual tradition among Christians over the last two thousand years. This form of prayer involves three distinct stages: a) reading a short scripture passage b) reflecting on the passage and c) a short period of silence. We begin with Vespers at 7pm, followed by Lectio Divina from 7:30-8:15pm. All are welcome to join in this special evening of prayer. During the extensive renovations at St. Michael's Cathedral, Lectio Divina will be traveling to parishes around the archdiocese. Visit www.archtoronto.org/lectio for a full listing of locations.

Infertility? Recurrent Miscarriage? We Can Help!

Are you suffering and don't know where to turn for elective treatments that are morally acceptable? We can help. FertilityCare Toronto, a ShareLife member agency, utilizes the Creighton Model FertilityCare System and Natural Procreative Technology to assist women (teens through perimenopause) and couples wishing to effectively manage their fertility in a natural way. Visit www.fertilitycare.ca



Journeys Worth Taking: Personal Stories of Faith - Thursdays, 7-9pm

Distinguished speakers will include Michel Cote, Prof. Stephen Scharper, Prof. Michael Attridge, Prof. Emerita Margaret Lavin, Susan Goncz, and Ted Schmidt, author. Join us on select Thursday evenings from January to June to hear some inspiring stories to enhance our own faith journeys. Church of St. Dominic, 625 Atwater Ave., Mississauga. Cost: \$40. Please call the church office at 905-278-7762 for a registration form or email dominicanseminars@gmail.com

An Intro to The Book of Revelation: God's Message of Hope in a Difficult Time



The symbolic language of the Apocalypse makes it one of the most difficult books of the Bible to understand. And yet, beyond so many images of "end of the world," there emerges a very coherent portrait of Jesus Christ, who stands in the midst of His faithful, offering a message of hope, comfort and consolation in a difficult time. The workshop, led by Msgr. Robert Nusca (Pastor of Holy Rosary Parish and Assoc. Professor of New Testament Studies at St. Augustine's Seminary), will offer an introduction to this "Last Book of the Bible," and help us to discover its message of hope for us today. Takes place on January 16 at St Augustine's Seminary, 2661 Kingston Rd., Scarborough. Cost is \$40 and includes lunch. Register at www.staugustines.on.ca or call 416-261-7207, ext. 235 or email ioft@sastoronto.org

From Ideas to Action: Advancing a robust housing agenda - Jan. 27, 9am

There is renewed optimism that policies to facilitate the elimination of homelessness are closer than ever. Now is the time to harness this enthusiasm to help bring about change. MultiFaith Alliance to End Homelessness [http://mfateh.ca/] represents people from many faith communities is a clear, creative and challenging public voice on housing and homelessness issues. This conference will bring together regular people, housing advocates and policy experts for an interactive discussion on ending homelessness. Conference seats are limited. Please RSVP your attendance to: http://mfatehconference.eventbrite.ca.