

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 to 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.

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.theemmausseries.com

John Thornhill is a Marist Father with an international reputation as a writer and lecturer in theology. He was a member of the International Theological Commission (appointed by Pope John Paul II), and the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC II). In 2007, The Australian Catholic University awarded John with its highest honour, Doctor of the University (Honoris Causa). In 2011, The ACTA made John a "Fellow of the Australian Catholic Theological Association" in recognition of his achievements "in the foremost ranks of Australian theologians". In recent years he has been giving lectures to parish audiences throughout Australia and in neighbouring countries. Fr. John's long and distinguished service as a world-ranking theologian began in the 1950s and has continued to his recent retirement. He continues to write, having lately completed a book on Christopher Dawson's metahistorical interpretation of history.

The Son of God was made manifest to the world through the visit of the Magi. Today, God's Son is brought into the world and is present to the world through His Church.

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



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

PARISH

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

Mass Intentions This Week — January 8 - 14

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

	Intention(s):	Offered by:
Monday, 9am	✙ Joseph Mario Clermont	Dan Kelly
Tuesday, 9am	✙ Ken Kucher	Marieta & Rey
Wednesday, 9am	✙ Mario Della Siega	Adrian Bulfon
Thursday, 9am	✙ Roy Brodsky	Michael Brennan
Friday, 9am	✙ Helen Conrath	family
Saturday, 9am	✙ Noling Cariaga	Kathleen Stanley
5:15pm	✙ Newton Vaz	Suzann Sutherland
Sunday, 8am	☞ Celebrated for the needs of all members of our parish family ☜	
9:30am	✙ Nicholas Ferik	Enedina Ferik
11am	✙ Bogumila Bakiera	family
12:30pm	✙ Christine Calderone	Maria & Sam Cusimano and family

2018 Sunday Missals — Sunday Missals are available on the book rack at the back of the church. Please place your \$3.00 payment in an envelope marked "Sunday Missal" into the offertory basket or drop it off at the church office. Parishioners are encouraged to prepare for Mass by reviewing the readings before coming to Mass and listening to the proclaimed Word of God during Mass. If you wish to bring your personal copy of the Sunday Missal to Mass, please write your name on the inside cover.

Reminders for Sacramental Preparation

RECONCILIATION SESSION 2 (Children Only) - Choose ONE of the following sessions to attend Sunday, January 21 (2:30pm-3:15pm) OR Monday, 22 (6:30pm-7:15pm). We meet in the parish hall.

Liturgy of the Word for Children — This program for young parishioners (4-10 years of age) takes place on Sundays at the 9:30am Mass. Please note that access to the hall is through the west glassed-in stairwell.

Phase II Renovation -The entire Cliveden south stairwell as well as the north exterior basement stairwell are closed during construction. Basement hall and washrooms can be accessed through the glassed-in stairwell on the west side of the church.

While access is limited, please contact the parish office if you wish to receive Communion at home.

Hearing Assist Headsets - Parishioners who have trouble hearing at Mass are welcome to



request a Hearing Assistance device from the ushers when they enter the church. They are available on a "first come — first served" basis. These headsets pick up the feed directly from our sound system and can be used with or without hearing aids.

Rosary — prayed daily prior to the 9am Mass. You are also welcome to join the Rosary Group at 2pm on Fridays in the Parish Hall.

Parish Administration

2018 Offertory Envelopes - Offertory envelopes for 2018 were mailed before Christmas. If you haven't received your envelopes yet, please place your donation in any envelope labelled with your name and address.

For the first few weeks, please write your name/address on the envelope so we can verify our records. Also, please make an effort to write the amount of your donation onto your envelope. This small step saves a great deal of time for the volunteer teams who process our weekly collections. **Thank you!**

Pre-Authorized Giving — The PAG program allows parishioners to request that a monthly total be transferred from their bank account to OLS Parish on the 20th of each month, for their regular Sunday offerings. If you would like to participate in this program, please contact the parish office for details.

"It is not enough not to harm our neighbour, we need to choose to do good, seizing the occasions for giving positive testimony that we are disciples of Jesus." — Pope Francis

COMMUNITY

Lectio Divina : Prudence and Common Sense (Sirach 8:1-19)

January 7, 2018 - St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica

Vespers (evening prayer) begin at 7pm followed by Lectio Divina from 7:30pm-8:15pm. All are welcome! Visit www.archtoronto.org/lectio.

Christ is Born: A Concert of Polish Christmas Carols

Sunday, January 7, 2018 at 4:00pm, Islington United Church

Presented by Novi Singers Toronto and Toronto Sinfonietta Instrumental Ensemble under the patronage of the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland and the Polish National Union of Canada, Branch 1. Tickets \$25.00 children under 12 free. For tickets and information call 647 447 6581. Visit www.novisingers.artspolonia.com

Prayer and Life Workshop - Wednesday, January 10, 2018 — 7 p.m., St. Timothy's Parish

The Prayer and Life Workshops are a series of sessions that help you learn and deepen your art of prayer. Sessions include prayer methods such as prayerful reading, prayer of surrendering, adoration, and contemplative prayer. The Workshop consists of 15 weekly sessions of 2 hours each, and a final one-day retreat. Instruction is free and all materials have a total cost of \$15. For more information and to pre-register call Chandra at 647-980-6800, or Pablo at 416-346-7580. Or send email to: ontario@toppil.ca. Also visit us on the web at toppil.ca/Ontario

World Day of Migrants and Refugees — Sunday, January 14, 2018



The theme announced by His Holiness Pope Francis for the 2018 World Day of Migrants and Refugees is "Welcoming, Protecting, Promoting and Integrating Migrants and Refugees." In his message, Pope Francis reminds us that "every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age..."

A special Mass commemorating the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees will be celebrated on Sunday, January 14, 2018 at 1 p.m. at the Good Shepherd Chaldean Catholic Cathedral. Bishop Kirkpatrick will be the homilist for this liturgy. A reception will follow with a number of dignitaries in attendance. All are welcome to attend!

Major relic of Saint Francis Xavier to visit the Archdiocese of Toronto — January 12 — 14, 2018

A first-degree relic of missionary Saint Francis Xavier is coming to the Archdiocese of Toronto, January 12-14, 2018. The forearm of the saint, permanently displayed at the Church of the Gesù in Rome, will be in Canada from December 29 — February 2, as part of a 14-city Canadian visit. The relic will be hosted by St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica (Jan. 12), St. Francis Xavier Church, Mississauga (Jan. 13) and Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Toronto (January 14). More information about the visit and a full schedule of events can be found at: www.cca.ca/relic



Walk-in Counselling Services

Catholic Family Services of Toronto offers walk-in counselling services at two locations. The single-session consultation is aimed at helping individuals, couples, or family clients address their concerns. No appointment required. Central office address: 1155 Yonge St. Suite 100, Toronto. Every Tuesday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Call 416 921 1163. North office address: 5799 Yonge Street. Suite 300, North York. Every Thursday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Call 416 2220048. Email info@cfstoronto.com.

The Liar by David Ives — Come and see Pierre Corneille's The Liar, Thursday, Jan. 11 at 8pm presented by the Village Playhouse in Bloor West Village in support of Royal York Road United Church Refugee Sponsorship Programme. Tickets - \$25. One performance only! For more details or call 416 231 9546.

Living With Separation and Divorce - Catholic Family Services of Toronto is offering a psycho-educational program for those dealing with the stress of the ending of a relationship. February 13 - April 3, 4:30pm - 6:30pm, 1155 Yonge St. Fee \$30 per session. Call Alpana Das 416 921 1163 x 2232 for info.