

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.



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

"On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid Him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, 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 you think God is calling you to ministerial service, contact Fr. Chris Lemieux, Vocations Director, Archdiocese of Toronto. 416-968-0997 vocations@vocations.ca www.vocationstoronto.ca

Readings ~ Isaiah 52:7-10 ~ Hebrews 1:1-6 ~ John 1:1-18

PARISH

Mass Intentions This Week – January 1 – January 8

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

	Intention(s):	Offered by:
Monday, 9am	✠ Fred Tofani	Diane & Bernard Dupuy
Tuesday, 9am	✠ members of Mahoney Family	
Wednesday, 9am	✠ Rosemary Cronyn	Margaret Tipping
Thursday, 9am	✠ Barbara Ann Regan Kennedy	Morgan family
Friday, 9am	✠ members of Grogan Family	
Saturday, 9am	✠ members of Quintela Family	
5:15pm	✠ Theresa Gihlavsky	Jeannette
Sunday, 8am	✠ For the needs of our parish and faithful parishioners ✠	
9:30am	✠ Antoinette Zimmerle	Jeannette
11am	✠ members of Goseco, Valencia & Feliciano Families	
12:30pm	✠ Richard Telewiak	Mary & Theresa Rickett

**A Happy and Blessed New Year to you and your family!
Pray for Peace in 2017!**

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

2017 Offertory Envelopes – We've mailed out the 2017 Offertory Envelopes. If you haven't received them, please place your donation in any envelope labelled with your name and address. Please 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. If you do not have assigned envelopes but wish to begin using them, please visit the parish office.

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, go to www.sorrows.ca to download the form.

Parish Registration – If you attend OLS parish regularly, please ensure that you are registered with the parish office. (Young adults who have completed their education should be registered as individuals.) Please also inform your previous parish that you have moved so they can remove you from their active records.

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School – Kindergarten Registration for Sept. 2017
Imagine the Possibilities: Junior Kindergarten in the Toronto Catholic District School Board provides children with a variety of learning experiences in a caring, faith based environment. Students develop a positive attitude about themselves and others, become more independent and responsible, develop self-regulation and social skills, and learn to solve problems.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board invites families with children born in 2013 to register for Kindergarten beginning Wednesday, January 18, 2017 at 10 a.m. EST.

Registration options: • Online: Parents will be able to complete their application online at, <https://soar.tcdsb.org/Login.aspx> • At the end of the on-line application, kindly select "Appointment" in order to book a convenient date/time with the secretary to present the required documents. Only those with a scheduled appointment will be processed. For more information please call the Board office at: 416-222-8282 ext. 5320 or 5314, or click on the following link www.tcdsb.org/kindergartenregistration

COMMUNITY

SHARELIFE - The Sharelife office has released a Report to Donors sharing the results of the 2016 campaign and demonstrating how your support has made a difference. Copies of the report are available at the back of the church or can be downloaded from www.sharelife.org.

Reminders for Sacramental Preparation

CONFIRMATION SESSION 2B meets on Sunday, January 22, 2017, 4-5:30pm or Wednesday, January 25, 2017, 7-8:30pm, Parish Hall.

FIRST COMMUNION CATECHISM FOR PARENTS meets on Sunday, January 22, 2017, 2-3pm or Thursday, January 26, 2017, 7-8:30pm, Parish Hall.

Children's Liturgy of the Word – The Children's Liturgy of the Word will resume on Sunday, January 8, 2017 at the 9:30am Mass. **Please note this Liturgy of the Word is adapted for our young parishioners, 4-10 years of age only.**

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 of the rosary followed by the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. All are welcome to join in prayer.

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.

Lectio Devina – The Reluctant Prophet of Repentance (Jonah 3:1-4:11)

Sunday, January 8, 2017, St. Michael's Cathedral.

We begin with vespers (evening prayer) at 7:00pm followed by Lectio Divina from 7:30pm-8:15pm. All are welcome. www.archtoronto.org

Christmas Concert: God is Born – Sunday, January 8, 2017, 5:00pm, Our Lady of Sorrows Church: European Christmas music including English and Polish Carols for voices, bells and instruments. Tickets: \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, children under 12 free. Call 647-774-6581 or Email: novisingerstoronto@gmail.com

Keeping the Faithful Connected – The goal of the National Catholic Broadcasting Council (NCBC) is to ensure that Catholics are able to experience the Mass each day when they are unable to attend their local parish. The primary way we enable this across Canada is through our Broadcast Partners at **Salt + Light Television**, VisionTV and yesTV. [The Daily TV Mass is now available Monday-Saturday **anytime** from **anyplace**.] Visit www.dailytvmass.com to find out more about how to stay connected with our faith. Call NCBC at **1-888-383-6277** for more information.

Friars' Student Writing Award - The Theme for this coming year is "Reconciliation – The love of Christ compels us" (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14-20). Deadline for entries is January 13, 2017. Students aged 14-18 read the Scripture passage and respond to the following in their essay:

As the Christian world reflects on the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation (1517-2017) and after reading 2 Corinthians 5:14-20, discuss the main obstacles to Christian reconciliation and ways to overcome them based on your own experiences.

Completed essays can be emailed to editor@catholicregister.org or faxed to 416-934-3409. All entries must include the student's full name, email address, phone number, and the name of their school on the front page of the essay. For further information call 1-855-441-4077.