

As we prepare to celebrate the Lord's 'coming' at Christmas, our Advent liturgies invite us to a fuller appreciation of the great plan of God – a plan that will reach its climax with the inauguration of God's final Kingdom, in the 'second coming' of the Saviour. We read again from the final chapters of the Book of Isaiah. This amazing passage helps us to understand the wonder and joy with which the apostolic generation read the texts of the Old Testament, and recognised that they had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Their faith in Christ, they proclaimed, was 'according to the Scriptures' (Lk 24.27; 1 Cor 15.4 etc.) In this passage, the message of God's generous ways already finds a sublime and inspiring expression: 'Console my people, console them, speak to their hearts'; let the 'joyful messenger' proclaim God's presence in their midst; God will lead the exiled people home through the wilderness, in a new Exodus; Israel's God will be 'like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering the lambs in his arms'.



Prepare a way for the Lord

This Old Testament text provides the background for the gospel reading, which is the opening passage of Mark's gospel – 'the beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ the Son of God'. It is echoed by Mark, in his quotation from 'the book of the prophet Isaiah' (His quotation, in fact, combines two other Old Testament texts with the words from Isaiah). John the Baptist appears as the 'messenger' foretold. He 'prepares a way' for the Saviour, who – in his Paschal Mystery – will lead God's people in the final Exodus of God's great plan. He will prove himself a 'Good Shepherd' to a people 'harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd' (Mt 9.36). Mark's description of the Baptist – wearing 'a garment of camel skin' and living on 'locusts and wild honey' – presents him as another Elijah: the old prophet whose witness to the unique divinity of the God of Israel made him a legendary model of the prophet's role. John's 'baptism of repentance' prepared for the coming of the Saviour; and all generations of Christians have been inspired by his humble 'Advent' witness to the one who would 'baptise with the Holy Spirit' – 'I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals'.

2 Peter, from which our other reading comes – with its reference to the 'Second Coming' of the Saviour – is one of the last texts of the New Testament to be written. It reflects the mood of the early Church, as it comes to terms with the fact that they faced an indefinite wait before the Lord's promised return. Like them we must bow before the mystery of God's ways, maintaining an alert faith in the certain, but unknowable, final return of the Saviour. If we must look forward to our familiar world coming to an end – as foretold in the dramatic imagery of the prophets – we should not be frightened, because creation will be transformed in a 'new heaven and new earth', in which all the things we hold dear will be filled with the 'righteousness', or incomparable goodness, of God's ways.

John Thornhill sm
www.theemmausseries.com

John the Baptist is sent by God to prepare the way for His Son.
In our present time God sends priests, religious and deacons to prepare the people to receive His Son.

If you think God is calling you to a Church vocation, contact Fr. Chris Lemieux, Vocations Director, Archdiocese of Toronto
416-968-0997 vocations@archtoronto.org www.vocationstoronto.ca

Readings ~ Isaiah 40.1-5, 9-11 ~ 2 Peter 3.8-14 ~ Mark 1.1-8

PARISH

Mass Intentions This Week — December 11 - 17

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

	Intention(s):	Offered by:
Monday, 9am	✠ Matthew Vogtle	family
Tuesday, 9am	✠ Joseph Mario Clermont	Dan Kelly
Wednesday, 9am	✠ Mairead O'Hanlon	family
Thursday, 9am	✠ Robert Sutherland	family
Friday, 9am	✠ Elizabeth Montrichard	family
Saturday, 9am	✠ Lorraine Redmond	family
5:15pm	✠ Eugenia Cerra	Maria Arrigo and family
Sunday, 8am	☞ Celebrated for the needs of all members of our parish family ☜	
9:30am	✠ Patrick Guillemette	family
11am	✠ Nick Villani	L. Villani
12:30pm	✠ Enio Biason	family

Christmas & New Year's Schedule

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 23 — 5:15pm Vigil Mass
Sunday, December 24 — 8, 9:30 & 11:00am. No Mass at 12:30pm today.

Christmas Eve / Christmas Day ♦ Nativity of the Lord*

Sunday, December 24 — 5, 7, 11pm / Monday, December 25 — 8, 9:30 & 11am & 12:30pm

Feast of the Holy Family

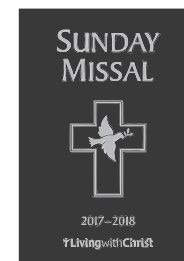
Saturday, December 30 — 5:15pm Vigil Mass
Sunday, December 31 — 8, 9:30 & 11am. No Mass at 12:30pm today.

New Year's Eve / New Year's Day ♦ Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God*

Sunday, December 31 — 5pm / Monday, January 1 — 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.

2018 Sunday Missals — There is a limited supply available on the book rack at the back of the church. Please place your \$3 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, please put your name on the inside cover.



OLS Advent All Day Confession — Saturday, December 16, 9:30am-5pm

Find your way back to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Priests will be available to hear confessions in the church from 9:30am-5:00pm. For alternate reconciliation opportunities, visit www.archtoronto.org/confession.

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.

Reminders for Sacramental Preparation

SUPPORT AND DISCUSSION SESSION (Parents only) meets on Sunday, December 10, 2:30pm-3:15pm OR Monday, December 11, 6:30pm-7:15pm.

CONFIRMATION SESSION 2A meets on Sunday, December 10, 3:45pm-5:00pm OR Wednesday, December 13, 6:45pm-8pm, Parish Hall. Note: Parents are asked to participate in the first 10 minutes of the meeting.

Gifts of Securities Can Help Everyone! — You can now support the Church using securities (stocks, mutual funds, bonds). You will not have to pay any capital gains on your securities gift and you will get a tax receipt for the full amount. Also you can divide up your gifts as you wish (e.g. Parish offertory or building fund, ShareLife, The Shepherds' Trust, St. Augustine's Seminary, special collections, etc.). For more information please contact the parish office at 416 231 6016 or the Development Office of the Archdiocese of Toronto at 416 934 3411. Visit www.archtoronto.org/development.

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.



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.

Victoria Scholars Concert, Sunday, Dec. 17, 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 \$30 regular \$25 senior/student.

Christmas Ornaments for Sale — The children of our parish will be selling Christmas ornaments and items they have prepared together with their families to raise money for a Catholic charitable organization. The sale will take place after the 11am and 12.30 pm Sunday Masses on December 17.

St. Leo's Church Bake Sale & Bazaar — Sunday, Dec. 10, 9am-1pm

Come join us for our annual bake sale and bazaar. Enjoy baked goods, holiday crafts, raffle & more.

Christmas Card Sale — We still have Christmas cards made by Msgr. Joe Shiels and Toronto Right to Life available. Drop by the parish office to purchase.

1. Cards made by Msgr. Joe Shiels - Packs of 6 for \$5.00 and 12 for \$10.00.
2. Toronto Right to Life Cards - \$8.00 per pack (tax included) / 10 cards per pack

Daily Advent Reflections - If you want to build in some time for prayer and reflection in the busy-ness of Advent, here are a couple of suggestions:

- Sacred Advent, based on the Sacred Space Writings of the Irish Jesuits (daily reflections) — www.loyolapress.com
- Best Advent Ever from Dynamic Catholic (short inspirational videos) — www.dynamiccatholic.com

Christmas in Islington: A Festive Community Celebration of Christmas Music Sunday, Dec. 10, 3:00pm — Islington United Church

Join us for this joyous Christmas tradition as we celebrate the season with music for choirs, orchestra, organ, handbells and YOU! Freewill offering. Please bring a Food Bank donation. Call 416 239 1131 for more information.

COMMUNITY