

The Saviour has been born to us! The liturgies of the Christmas season invite us to reflect upon this basic truth of Christian faith: the eternal son has become one of us and shared our life experience. He grew up in a family; parental authority shaped his human development; at the age prescribed for Jewish youths, he attended the Passover festival with his parents; a self-reliant lad, he was presumed throughout a whole day to be somewhere else in the caravan returning from Jerusalem.

We speak of family 'bonds' and 'ties'. If they are not transformed into adult-to-adult relationships, as we grow up, these family ties can become a bondage that inhibits personal development. The story Luke hands on to us in today's gospel reminds us that, as his life choices were made, the relationship Jesus had with Mary and Joseph had to be transformed. The first reading from 1 Samuel recounts an old story of Samuel, the prophetic leader who anointed David as king. Despite similarities between this story and the story told by Luke – a family going up to Jerusalem, a child's destiny foreshadowed – there are significant differences. The Old Testament story is a legend that serves as an introduction to a collection of historical traditions in which Samuel plays a key role. If we recognise the hand of God in Samuel's young life of service in the temple, it does not come about through his own choice, but through that of his devout mother. Luke's story is closer to our common human experience – Mary has to come to terms with intimations of a decision that will lead Jesus to leave home to take up the life of a wanderer, carrying out the mission that will shape his life - and will ultimately lead to his death. She begins to know the 'sword' Simeon foretold would 'pierce her soul'.



I must be giving myself to the affairs of my Father

Jesus, as the liturgy of Christmas Day has reminded us, is 'the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart', come into the world to make the Father known. He grew up as a dutiful son of his human parents; but as he 'grew in wisdom' - through his contact with the faith traditions of his people - he knew in the mysterious depths of his human experience the call to identify with the great mission that had brought him into the world: 'Why are you looking for me? Did you not know that I must give myself to my Father's affairs?' Bringing us this brief narrative, Luke intimates what lies ahead. His gospel narrative moves towards its climax when Jesus makes his way to Jerusalem to meet his fate. Ultimately, it is 'after three days' that he is restored to his disciples as their Risen Lord.

As the bonds that unite parent and child mature, they are both blessed. In the background of Luke's story, we recognise the ongoing fidelity of Mary, as she came to accept and identify with the response of her Son, as the first of all his disciples. The second reading from the first letter of John chimes in with our reflections upon the shared life of the Holy Family. In the end, the mission of Jesus was to open the way to our sharing in his risen life, sharing all things with the Father – sharing in the family life of God, as it were. The choices he made, in the freedom he shares with us, can inspire us to make our life choices, knowing that each of us has a unique place in the Father's loving plan.

John Thornhill sm
www.themmasseries.com

Readings ~ 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28 ~ 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24 ~ Luke 2:41-52

PARISH

Mass Intentions This Week – December 28 to January 3

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

	Intention(s):	Offered by:
Monday, 9am	✠ Helen Roksa	Melba & Connie DeWitt
Tuesday, 9am	✠ Elizabeth Cascagnett	Marie Clark
Wednesday, 9am	✠ Arcangela Mastrullo	The family
Thursday, 9am	✠ Maureen Mustachi	Aline Wall
Thursday	Mary, Mother of God, World Day of Peace pray for peace and good health in 2016 – Happy New Year!	
5:15pm	✠ Donald Barrett	The family
Friday, 8am	☞ For the needs of our parish and faithful parishioners ☞	
9:30am	✠ Pasko Pavkovich	The family
11am	✠ members of the Valencia, Goseco & Feliciano families	Linda Feliciano
12:30pm	☞ For the needs of our parish and faithful parishioners ☞	
Saturday, 9am	✠ Mildred Freyer	Virginia DeWitt
5:15pm	☞ For the needs of our parish and faithful parishioners ☞	
Sunday, 8am	✠ Alphonse Bates	The family
9:30am	✠ Murielle Venne	The family
11am	✠ Elvyra Vosylius	L. Villani
12pm	✠ Brian Anderson	Mary Pat & Frank Kielty

Blessing of the New Bronze Door – Saturday, January 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!**

New Year's Schedule

New Year's Eve – Thursday, December 31 ☞ 9am – regular weekday Mass
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God*, World Day of Peace ☞ 5:15pm vigil Mass

New Year's Day – Friday, Jan. 1 – Mary, Mother of God*, World Day of Peace
 Regular Sunday schedule (8, 9:30, 11am, 12:30pm)

Saturday/Sunday, January 2/3 – Epiphany of the Lord
 Regular weekend schedule (Saturday vigil at 5:15pm, Sunday at 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.

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.

This presentation is supported by ECULINKS Etobicoke, an ecumenical organization that promotes faith-based social justice and outreach initiatives, and by the Dominican Institute of Toronto.

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.


Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. – 2 Corinthians 5:17

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

 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

Marriage Preparation Course in Keswick – April 7–May 12, 7–9pm

"A Doorway to the Sacred" is designed to walk couples through and understand the demands of a Catholic marriage. Couples will assess their understanding of marriage, consider new perspectives of marriage, discuss their expectations and plan for their future. Topics: sacraments; from "I" to "we"; communication; conflict resolution and forgiveness; intimacy; living our values and becoming parents; NaPro guest speaker; and the Sacrament of Marriage in daily life. Our Lady of the Lake Church, 129 Metro Rd. N., Keswick. The cost is \$100. For info, call 905-476-0097 or email parish@immaculateconception.on.ca