

Today's liturgy brings together readings from very different backgrounds, as it gives expression to the Advent message of hope.

The prophetic vision of Isaiah reflects his familiarity with the king's court in a period of dramatic international developments in the region. He links the fulfillment of God's designs for the nation with the rule of a new David (Jesse is the father of David) whose rule will contrast with that of many of David's unworthy successors. He will be filled with the gifts of the 'spirit of the Lord', ruling with wisdom and integrity, and showing himself a forthright champion of the oppressed and the poor of the land. The peace established by his rule is graphically portrayed as like a new paradise - as the whole country is 'filled with the knowledge of the Lord' and lives according to God's ways. For those who know the blessings brought by the true 'Son of David', the themes of the Christmas celebration that awaits us at the end of our Advent preparation are not difficult to recognise.



Prepare a way for the Lord

The gospel reading from Matthew reminds us that our hope in the promises of God brings with it a challenge. John the Baptist was honoured by Jesus as the embodiment of the prophetic tradition of Israel. It has been pointed out that, in the cultural traditions of the world, there is no parallel to old Israel's acknowledgment of its failures before the God of the covenant. And it was the prophets who - like a conscience of the nation - challenged the people and their leaders with their unfaithfulness. Scholars tell us that Matthew's gospel - from which our readings for the coming year will come - was produced by an early Christian community in dispute with former Jewish associates who cannot accept the claims of Christian faith. This helps us to understand the sharp edge given to the words of Jesus against 'the scribes and Pharisees' (see ch.23), and the strong words of the Baptist in today's gospel. Jesus was impatient with the complacent exclusivism of these groups. We know, from contemporary records, that they tended to believe that being 'children of Abraham' assured them a sharing in God's promises. John too challenges this complacency: 'Do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father".' In the best prophet tradition, his language has a frightening intensity. The axe is already 'laid to the roots of the trees'; without their own 'good fruits' they will be lost.

Writing to the Romans, Paul has a similar message. Jewish converts must follow 'the example of Christ Jesus', in the tolerance and generosity they show, as they recognise in the Church's embracing of 'the pagans' what God foretold in the promises of 'the Scriptures'.

Our hope is boundless in its expectations; but we must play our part in the generous designs of God.

John Thornhill sm
www.theemmausseries.com

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" Could God be calling you to consecrated life in order to help our world truly "prepare the way of the Lord"?

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

Readings ~ Isaiah 11.1-10 ~ Romans 15.4-9 ~ Matthew 3.1-12

PARISH

Mass Intentions This Week — December 5 — December 11

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

	Intention(s):	Offered by:
Monday, 9am	✠ Giuseppe Gesualdi	family
Tuesday, 9am	✠ Donald Barratt	family
Wednesday, 9am	... of Peter Ryan	family
Thursday, 9am	✠ Alessandro & Concetta Patullo	family
Friday, 9am	✠ members of Mahoney Family	
Saturday, 9am	... of Robert Tighe	Kevin & Marie Reilly
5:15pm	✠ Mary & Frank Ferkul	Anne Pohole
Sunday, 8am	✠ Elias & Helen Poworoznyk	Chris & Bill Cord
9:30am	✠ Mairead O'Hanlon	family
11am	✠ Matthew Vogtle	family
12:30pm	✠ Yong Tjan	family

Shared Christmas Collection for those in need — THIS WEEKEND, December 3/4, 2016

Our annual *Christmas Gift for the Poor* collection benefits the work of the Canadian Food for Children and The Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Please make all cheques payable to Our Lady of Sorrows. Donations will be divided equally between the two charities. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

2016-2017 SUNDAY MISSAL There is a limited supply available at the back of the church. Please place your \$3.00 payment in an envelope marked "Missal" into the offertory basket or drop it off at the church office.

Reminders for Sacramental Preparation

CONFIRMATION SESSION 2A meets on Sunday, December 11, 7-8:30pm or Wednesday, December 14, 7-8:30pm, Parish Hall.

OLS ADVENT ALL DAY CONFESSION - Saturday, December 10

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

A **COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICE** will take place during the All Day Confession from 12:30pm-1:00pm to assist in prayerfully preparing to participate in the healing sacrament of reconciliation. All are welcome.

Christmas & New Year's Schedule

Christmas Eve — Saturday, December 24 ☞ **Nativity of the Lord***

Vigil Masses at 5pm, 7:30pm, 11pm

Carols & music begins approximately 40 minutes prior to vigil Masses

Please note: there will be no confession on this day.

Christmas Day — Sunday, December 25 ☞ **Nativity of the Lord***

Regular Sunday schedule (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.

COMMUNITY

Society of St. Vincent de Paul 'Adopt a Family' — Help in all possible ways

All year 'round our volunteers serve people who can barely afford life's necessities. For these families, Christmas gifts for the children and a festive meal are simply impossible. You can change that by adopting a family and sharing your Christmas spirit. To help, please contact carolmurray@rogers.com or call 647 770-4805 by **Monday, December 5**. Tax receipts available.

Children's Liturgy of the Word — This program is adapted for our young parishioners and takes place on Sunday at the 9:30am Mass. **Please note that this is for children 4-10 years of age.**

Rosary — prayed daily at 8:30am prior the 9am Mass. The **Rosary Group** meets every Friday at 2pm in the Parish Hall and prays fifteen decades followed by the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. All are welcome to join us in prayer.

SHARELIFE - Becoming the hands of Christ to those in need . . .

We are called to be the hands of Christ to those in need. For some, this may mean providing a place to stay for and supporting an elderly relative, volunteering at a food bank, or supporting a parish Out of the Cold or outreach programs.

Your support of the ShareLife appeal has touched the lives of thousands of people both here and around the world. In this Christmas season, we thank our parish communities for all that they do to support the work of ShareLife agencies through the year. Together we are indeed fulfilling the Gospel value to 'love another as I have loved you.'

Lectio Divina Tonight — The Great Prayer of Repentance (Psalm 51)

Sunday, December 4, 2016, 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

Advent Mass of Comfort and Light, Monday, Dec. 5 - 7 p.m. at Precious Blood Church

"Christmas is a time when we most poignantly experience the loss of a loved one. We invite you to attend Mass of Comfort and Light." For more information, please call New Beginnings at 416-921-1163 ext. 2227 or 2235.

Vocation Discernment Retreat — Friday, December 9, 2016, 7pm to Sunday, December 11 to 1pm.

Interested? Email vocations@archtoronto.org

St. Leo's Parish Advent Mass & Anointing of the Sick — Sunday, December 11, 2016 at 3:00pm.

Call 416 251 1109 for more information.

He is the Light of the World! Enrich your faith this Advent and Christmas with special programming throughout the season on EWTN. Attend Mass in Vatican City with Pope Francis, enjoy concerts from Europe and travel to the sacred sites of the Holy Land. Find EWTN in your area by visiting www.ewtn.com/channelfinder.

Homeless in a Manger: Celebrating 30 Years of Out of the Cold - Dec. 11, 6pm

St. Patrick's Church, 131 McCaul St. invites you to join them for Prayer and Reflection in this 30th year of Out of the Cold in Toronto. We remember our brothers and sisters who call the streets their home and with whom we are called to reach out with compassion, faith, hope and love, as inspired by the coming of Christ, who was born homeless in a manger.