



# *The Divine Messenger*

*A Contact with Divine Infant Parish*

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## ***You are invited...***

If you do not attend church at this time but would like to renew your church connections, please call 613-824-6822 to discuss anything with Father Waldemar, Father Gaudet or Deacons Jeff, Stephen, Gerry, Jim or Phillip. We would love to hear from you!

## Dear Friends in Christ,

In this issue of our Divine Messenger you'll find two articles in preparation for our Lenten Retreat. First is our Holy Father's Apostolic Letter, instituting the Sunday of the Word of God and the second is Fr. John's introduction to the theme and the program of our Lenten Retreat. **Everyone is invited!**

In Christ,  
Fr. Waldemar

### "APERUIT ILLIS"

#### INSTITUTING THE SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

1. "He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Lk 24:45). This was one of the final acts of the risen Lord before his Ascension. Jesus appeared to the assembled disciples, broke bread with them and opened their minds to the understanding of the sacred Scriptures. To them, amid their fear and bewilderment, he unveiled the meaning of the paschal mystery: that in accordance with the Father's eternal plan he had to suffer and rise from the dead, in order to bring repentance and the forgiveness of sins (cf. Lk 24:26.46-47). He then promised to send the Holy Spirit, who would give them strength to be witnesses of this saving mystery (cf. Lk 24:49).

The relationship between the Risen Lord, the community of believers and sacred Scripture is essential to our identity as Christians. Without the Lord who opens our minds to them, it is impossible to understand the Scriptures in depth. Yet the contrary is equally true: without the Scriptures, the events of the mission of Jesus and of his Church in this world would remain incomprehensible. Hence, Saint Jerome could rightly claim: "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ" (Commentary on the Book of Isaiah, Prologue: PL 24,17B).

2. At the conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, I proposed setting aside "a Sunday given over entirely to the word of God, so as to appreciate the inexhaustible riches contained in that constant dialogue between the Lord and his people" (Misericordia et Misera, 7). Devoting a specific Sunday of the liturgical year to the word of God can enable the Church to experience anew how the risen Lord opens up for us the treasury of his word and enables us to proclaim its unfathomable riches before the world. Here, we are reminded of the teaching of Saint Ephrem: "Who is able to understand, Lord, all the richness of even one of your words? There is more that eludes us than what we can understand. We are like the thirsty drinking from a fountain. Your word has as many aspects as the perspectives of those who study it. The Lord has coloured his word with diverse beauties, so that those who study it can contemplate what stirs them. He has hidden in his word all treasures, so that each of us may find a richness in what he or she contemplates" (Commentary on the Diatessaron, 1, 18).

## Divine Infant Lenten Retreat

March 25–29, 2023,

Fr. (John) Yongli Chen and Fr. Waldemar Podlasz

### Fifth Sunday of Lenten: Launching the 2023 Lenten Retreat

The Resurrection of Jesus changed human history and the destiny of humanity once and for all. Therefore, on the fifth Sunday of Lent, Divine Infant Parish is launching a Lenten Retreat to better prepare our hearts for Holy Week and the Easter Triduum - a time when new life has been offered through Jesus' resurrection. As Pope Francis's Apostolic Letter "Aperuit Illis" states: *"The relationship between the Risen Lord, the community of believers and sacred Scripture is essential to our identity as Christians. Without the Lord who opens our minds to them, it is impossible to understand the Scriptures in depth. Yet the contrary is equally true: without the Scriptures, the events of the mission of Jesus and of his Church in this world would remain incomprehensible."*

Our retreat concentrates on learning to love the Bible, celebrating Sunday as the Word of God, and practising Lectio Divina. The triple theme helps us rediscover God's dialogical love that is expressed in the Bible. The hope is that, through this Lenten retreat – our liturgical celebrations and faith-filled reading of Sacred Scriptures (e.g. Lectio Divina) - we may mature spiritually and be better prepared to face life's challenges.

The retreat consists of three evening talks on March 27, 28 and 29. It concludes with a video presentation on Lectio Divina and the ceremony of the Enthrone-  
ment of the Bible on March 30.

- On Monday, March 27 and Tuesday, March 28, the presentations will be preceded by the Lenten Evening Mass at 7:00 pm. On these first two evenings, we invite you to appreciate how the Bible (scriptural readings) is at the heart of our liturgical celebrations. In the liturgy, God is the one who speaks to us first, and then to the Church, a Church that attentively listens and faithfully proclaims the word of God to the world with love and hope.
- On Wednesday evening, March 29, we invite you to the 7:00 pm Lenten Penitential Service to prepare our hearts for Holy Week and the Easter Triduum. During the service, we will reflect on how God's love is communicated in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Indeed, God is constantly calling us back and tirelessly calling us out of the darkness. And yet our sins have often prevented us from dialogue with God and responding to His love with grateful hearts.
- On Thursday morning, March 30, after the 9:00 am Mass, we will continue to explore the ways in

With this Letter, I wish to respond to the many requests I have received from the people of God that the entire Church celebrate, in unity of purpose, a Sunday of the Word of God. It is now common for the Christian community to set aside moments to reflect on the great importance of the word of God for everyday living. The various local Churches have undertaken a wealth of initiatives to make the sacred Scripture more accessible to believers, to increase their gratitude for so great a gift, and to help them to strive daily to embody and bear witness to its teachings.

The Second Vatican Council gave great impulse to the rediscovery of the word of God, thanks to its Dogmatic Constitution Dei Verbum, a document that deserves to be read and appropriated ever anew. The Constitution clearly expounds the nature of sacred Scripture, its transmission from generation to generation (Chapter II), its divine inspiration (Chapter III) embracing the Old and New Testaments (Chapters IV and V), and the importance of Scripture for the life of the Church (Chapter VI). To advance this teaching, Pope Benedict XVI convoked an Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 2008 on “The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church”, and then issued the Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, whose teaching remains fundamental for our communities. That document emphasizes in particular the performative character of the Word of God, especially in the context of the liturgy, in which its distinctively sacramental character comes to the fore.

It is fitting, then that the life of our people be constantly marked by this decisive relationship with the living word that the Lord never tires of speaking to his Bride, that she may grow in love and faithful witness.

3. Consequently, I hereby declare that the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time is to be devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God. This Sunday of the Word of God will thus be a fitting part of that time of the year when we are encouraged to strengthen our bonds with the Jewish people and to pray for Christian unity. This is more than a temporal coincidence: the celebration of the Sunday of the Word of God has ecumenical value, since the Scriptures point out, for those who listen, the path to authentic and firm unity.

The various communities will find their own ways to mark this Sunday with a certain solemnity. It is important, however, that in the Eucharistic celebration the sacred text be enthroned, in order to focus the attention of the assembly on the normative value of God’s word. On this Sunday, it would be particularly appropriate to highlight the proclamation of the word of the Lord and to emphasize in the homily the honour that it is due. Bishops could celebrate the Rite of Installation of Lectors or a similar commissioning of readers, in order to bring out the importance of the proclamation of God’s word in the liturgy. In this regard, renewed efforts should be made to provide members of the faithful with the training needed

which we can appropriately respond to God’s dialogical love - namely, the practice of Lectio Divina. Lectio Divina (comprised of Lectio, Meditatio, and Contemplatio) is an ancient form of faith-filled reading of the Bible that has been the living stream of God’s love, which quenches the thirst of the faithful and heals the souls of the wounded. The video presentation on Lectio Divina encourages us to read the Bible prayerfully. It helps us develop a passion for the word of God and respond to a world longing for God’s love, but finding it in the wrong places in their lives.

This Lenten Retreat is a joint effort for the spiritual benefit of this parish family. On a personal level, Fr. Waldemar and I have been planning this retreat for about three years - since the beginning of the 2020 Lenten season. In 2019, after Pope Francis issued the Apostolic Letter “Aperuit Illis” to institute the Sunday of the Word of God, we were struck by the urgency and profound richness behind this new feast - which is observed annually on the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time. To highlight the significance of the Sunday of the Word of God, Fr. Waldemar has commissioned a lectern to be made and has purchased a Bible for the Enthronement of the Bible Ceremony. The lectern and Bible will be revealed on Thursday morning, March 30, 2023.

My STL thesis concentrated on “The Implications of Luke 4:16–21 and Luke 24:45–49 for New Evangelization in light of *Verbum Domini*.“ Fortunately, my biblical studies have crossed paths with the late Pope Benedict XVI’s understanding of Sacred Scriptures as the Word of God. Immediately, I felt a duty to share Benedict’s legacy- specifically his profound appreciation of the Bible in the Eucharist celebration, upon which the feast of the Sunday of the Word of God is inspired. It became even more vital after his passing on December 31, 2022 – a time still fresh in our memory - to commemorate this faithful servant in the Lord’s vineyard.

Pope Benedict XVI pondered upon the Bible by drawing insight from Church Fathers like St. Augustine, Spiritual mystics like St. Bonaventure and modern interlocutors like Martin Buber - a prominent religious thinker of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In *Verbum Domini*, Benedict XVI proposed the model of God-human in the dialogue of love to address the ignorance of the Bible in modern times, and the disorientation of Sacred Scriptures in Catholic liturgical celebrations. He insists that liturgies - especially the Eucharistic celebrations— are the privileged setting for Sacred Scriptures to be proclaimed reverently, heard attentively, and reflected upon with the utmost care.

Concurring with Martin Buber, Benedict XVI believes that the fundamental structure of human history is written in a “grammar” of the God-human dialogue:

to be genuine proclaimers of the word, as is already the practice in the case of acolytes or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Pastors can also find ways of giving a Bible, or one of its books, to the entire assembly as a way of showing the importance of learning how to read, appreciate and pray daily with sacred Scripture, especially through the practice of lectio divina.

4. The return of the people of Israel to their homeland after the Babylonian exile was marked by the public reading of the book of the Law. In the book of Nehemiah, the Bible gives us a moving description of that moment. The people assembled in Jerusalem, in the square before the Water Gate, to listen to the Law. They had been scattered in exile, but now they found themselves gathered “as one” around the sacred Scripture (Neh 8:1). The people lent “attentive ears” (Neh 8:3) to the reading of the sacred book, realizing that in its words they would discover the meaning of their lived experience. The reaction to the proclamation of was one of great emotion and tears: “[The Levites] read from the book, from the law of God, clearly; and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, ‘This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep’. For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, ‘Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength’” (Neh 8:8-10).

These words contain a great teaching. The Bible cannot be just the heritage of some, much less a collection of books for the benefit of a privileged few. It belongs above all to those called to hear its message and to recognize themselves in its words. At times, there can be a tendency to monopolize the sacred text by restricting it to certain circles or to select groups. It cannot be that way. The Bible is the book of the Lord’s people, who, in listening to it, move from dispersion and division towards unity. The word of God unites believers and makes them one people.

5. In this unity born of listening, pastors are primarily responsible for explaining sacred Scripture and helping everyone to understand it. Since it is the people’s book, those called to be ministers of the word must feel an urgent need to make it accessible to their community.

The homily, in particular, has a distinctive function, for it possesses “a quasi-sacramental character” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 142). Helping people to enter more deeply into the word of God through simple and suitable language will allow priests themselves to discover the “beauty of the images used by the Lord to encourage the practice of the good” (*ibid.*). This is a pastoral opportunity that should not be wasted!

For many of our faithful, in fact, this is the only opportunity they have to grasp the beauty of God’s word and to

God who speaks first and then invites humans to attentively listen and faithfully announce the Word of God to the world. The Bible (or Sacred Scriptures celebrated in the Eucharist) is the prime example of God in His Love - expressed in the person of Jesus - who constantly invites us to enter into a dialogue with His Divine Love. For this reason, the Bible is not an object to be put under scrutinization with modern critical methods. Rather, it is a person—indeed Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The Bible is to be encountered and dialogued with as the Word of God through faith-reading of Sacred Scriptures. Therefore, Benedict XVI compares Jesus to the “solo” in a symphony that unites all voices in the Bible for salvation. The voices of various holy writers and prophets utter God’s ultimate love and mercy toward wounded humanity - which was rooted in the first sin of Adam and Eve.

In reverse, Jesus (the Last Adam), is the life-giving spirit that conquered death. He is the only one worthy to open the scrolls in the heavenly liturgy (1 Cor 15:45–9; Rev 5:1–14). Consequently, each celebration with Sacred Scriptures brings us back to Jesus’ ministry. At the beginning of his earthly ministry, Jesus opened the sacred scrolls to announce the Jubilee year of the eternal Redemption (Lk 4:16–21). At the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus opened the minds of the disciples to understand Sacred Scriptures before ascending to heaven (24:45). In a nutshell, Jesus is the “exegete” who permanently opens the Bible for us. Therefore, whether in our liturgical celebrations or in the faith-filled reading of Sacred Scriptures (e.g., Lectio Divina), we should always return to Jesus, who opens up the dialogue to converse with the Divine.

Significantly, Benedict XVI sees Mary (the New Eve), as the model to conceive and receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Mary, the model and archetype of the Church’s faith, leads the Church to prayerfully listen and generously say “yes” to the word of God. Mary is the Mother of the Church. Given that her life is entirely shaped by the word of God, our lives should also be transformed by His Word as we invite Christ to dwell in us. As St. Ambrose reminds us, “Every Christian believer must, in some way, interiorly conceive and give birth to the Word of God.” Thus, what took place for Mary, can daily take place in each of us, in the hearing of the Word and in the celebration of the sacraments.

Finally, we hope the Lenten Retreat and its triple theme will reinvigorate our longing for God’s love, especially the love expressed in Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection. Loving the Bible and celebrating the Word of God is not a personal preference. It is the divinely ordained way to enter into God’s dialogical love through Jesus Christ, for He is the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Him (Jn 14:6).

see it applied to their daily lives. Consequently, sufficient time must be devoted to the preparation of the homily. For many of our faithful, in fact, this is the only opportunity they have to grasp the beauty of God's word and to see it applied to their daily lives. Consequently, sufficient time must be devoted to the preparation of the homily. A commentary on the sacred readings cannot be improvised. Those of us who are preachers should not give long, pedantic homilies or wander off into unrelated topics. When we take time to pray and meditate on the sacred text, we can speak from the heart and thus reach the hearts of those who hear us, conveying what is essential and capable of bearing fruit. May we never tire of devoting time and prayer to Scripture, so that it may be received "not as a human word but as what it really is, the word of God" (1 Thess 2:13).

Catechists, too, in their ministry of helping people to grow in their faith, ought to feel an urgent need for personal renewal through familiarity with, and study of, the sacred Scriptures. This will help them foster in their hearers a true dialogue with the word of God.

6. Before encountering his disciples, gathered behind closed doors, and opening their minds to the understanding of the Scriptures (cf. Lk 24:44-45), the risen Lord appeared to two of them on the road to Emmaus from Jerusalem (cf. Lk 24:13-35). Saint Luke's account notes that this happened on the very day of his resurrection, a Sunday. The two disciples were discussing the recent events concerning Jesus' passion and death. Their journey was marked by sorrow and disappointment at his tragic death. They had hoped that he would be the Messiah who would set them free, but they found themselves instead confronted with the scandal of the cross. The risen Lord himself gently draws near and walks with them, yet they do not recognize him (cf. v. 16). Along the way, he questions them, and, seeing that they have not grasped the meaning of his passion and death, he exclaims: "O foolish men, and slow of heart" (v. 25). Then, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the Scriptures" (v.27). Christ is the first exegete! Not only did the Old Testament foretell what he would accomplish, but he himself wished to be faithful to its words, in order to make manifest the one history of salvation whose fulfilment is found in Christ.

7. The Bible, as sacred Scripture, thus speaks of Christ and proclaims him as the one who had to endure suffering and then enter into his glory (cf. v. 26). Not simply a part, but the whole of Scripture speaks of Christ. Apart from the Scriptures, his death and resurrection cannot be rightly understood. That is why one of the most ancient confessions of faith stressed that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas" (1Cor15:3) Since the Scriptures everywhere speak of Christ, they

enable us to believe that his death and resurrection are not myth but history, and are central to the faith of his disciples

A profound bond links sacred Scripture and the faith of believers. Since faith comes from hearing, and what is heard is based on the word of Christ (cf. Rom 10:17), believers are bound to listen attentively to the word of the Lord, both in the celebration of the liturgy and in their personal prayer and reflection.

8. The journey that the Risen Lord makes with the disciples of Emmaus ended with a meal. The mysterious wayfarer accepts their insistent request: "Stay with us, for it is almost evening and the day is now far spent" (Lk 24:29). They sit down at table, and Jesus takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it and offers it to them. At that moment, their eyes are opened, and they recognize him (cf. v. 31).

This scene clearly demonstrates the unbreakable bond between sacred Scripture and the Eucharist. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, "the Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she has venerated the Lord's body, in that she never ceases, above all in the sacred liturgy, to partake of the bread of life and to offer it to the faithful from the one table of the word of God and the body of Christ" (Dei Verbum, 21).

Regular reading of sacred Scripture and the celebration of the Eucharist make it possible for us to see ourselves as part of one another. As Christians, we are a single people, making our pilgrim way through history, sustained by the Lord, present in our midst, who speaks to us and nourishes us. A day devoted to the Bible should not be seen as a yearly event but rather a year-long event, for we urgently need to grow in our knowledge and love of the Scriptures and of the risen Lord, who continues to speak his word and to break bread in the community of believers. For this reason, we need to develop a closer relationship with sacred Scripture; otherwise, our hearts will remain cold and our eyes shut, struck as we are by so many forms of blindness.

Sacred Scripture and the sacraments are thus inseparable. When the sacraments are introduced and illumined by God's word, they become ever more clearly the goal of a process whereby Christ opens our minds and hearts to acknowledge his saving work. We should always keep in mind the teaching found in the Book of Revelation: the Lord is standing at the door and knocking. If anyone should hear his voice and open for him, he will come in and eat with them (cf. 3:20). Christ Jesus is knocking at our door in the words of sacred Scripture. If we hear his voice and open the doors of our minds and hearts, then he will enter our lives and remain ever with us.

9. In the Second Letter to Timothy, which is in some ways his spiritual testament, Saint Paul urges his faithful co-workers to have constant recourse to sacred Scripture.

The Apostle is convinced that “all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (3:16). Paul’s exhortation to Timothy is fundamental to the teaching of the conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum* on the great theme of biblical inspiration, which emphasizes the Scriptures’ saving purpose, spiritual dimension and inherent incarnational principle.

First, recalling Paul’s encouragement to Timothy, *Dei Verbum* stresses that “we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred Scriptures” (No. 11). Since the Scriptures teach with a view to salvation through faith in Christ (cf. 2 Tim 3:15), the truths contained therein are profitable for our salvation. The Bible is not a collection of history books or a chronicle, but is aimed entirely at the integral salvation of the person. The evident historical setting of the books of the Bible should not make us overlook their primary goal, which is our salvation. Everything is directed to this purpose and essential to the very nature of the Bible, which takes shape as a history of salvation in which God speaks and acts in order to encounter all men and women and to save them from evil and death.

To achieve this saving purpose, sacred Scripture, by the working of the Holy Spirit, makes human words written in human fashion become the word of God (cf. *Dei Verbum*, 12). The role of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures is primordial. Without the work of the Spirit, there would always be a risk of remaining limited to the written text alone. This would open the way to a fundamentalist reading, which needs to be avoided, lest we betray the inspired, dynamic and spiritual character of the sacred text. As the Apostle reminds us: “The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor 3:6). The Holy Spirit, then, makes sacred Scripture the living word of God, experienced and handed down in the faith of his holy people.

10. The work of the Holy Spirit has to do not only with the formation of sacred Scripture; it is also operative in those who hear the word of God. The words of the Council Fathers are instructive: sacred Scripture is to be “read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit through whom it was written” (*Dei Verbum*, 12). God’s revelation attains its completion and fullness in Jesus Christ; nonetheless, the Holy Spirit does not cease to act. It would be reductive indeed to restrict the working of the Spirit to the divine inspiration of sacred Scripture and its various human authors. We need to have confidence in the working of the Holy Spirit as he continues in his own way to provide “inspiration” whenever the Church teaches the sacred Scriptures, whenever the Magisterium authentically interprets them (cf. *ibid.*, 10), and whenever each believer makes them the norm of his or her spiritual life. In this sense, we can understand the words spoken by Jesus to his disciples when they told

him that they now understood the meaning of his parables: “Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old” (Mt 13:52).

11. Finally, *Dei Verbum* makes clear that “the words of God, expressed in human language, are in every way like human speech, just as the Word of the eternal Father, in taking upon himself the weak flesh of human beings, also took on their likeness” (No. 13). We can say that the incarnation of the eternal Word gives shape and meaning to the relationship between God’s word and our human language, in all its historical and cultural contingency. This event gives rise to Tradition, which is also God’s word (cf. *ibid.*, 9). We frequently risk separating sacred Scripture and sacred Tradition, without understanding that together they are the one source of Revelation. The written character of the former takes nothing away from its being fully a living word; in the same way, the Church’s living Tradition, which continually hands that word down over the centuries from one generation to the next, possesses that sacred book as the “supreme rule of her faith” (*ibid.*, 21). Moreover, before becoming a written text, the word of God was handed down orally and kept alive by the faith of a people who, in the midst of many others, acknowledged it as their own history and the source of their identity. Biblical faith, then, is based on the living word, not on a book.

12. When sacred Scripture is read in the light of the same Spirit by whom it was written, it remains ever new. The Old Testament is never old once it is part of the New, since all has been transformed thanks to the one Spirit who inspired it. The sacred text as a whole serves a prophetic function regarding not the future but the present of whoever is nourished by this word. Jesus himself clearly stated this at the beginning of his ministry: “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk 4:21). Those who draw daily nourishment from God’s word become, like Jesus, a contemporary of all those whom they encounter: they are not tempted to fall into sterile nostalgia for the past, or to dream of ethereal utopias yet to come.

Sacred Scripture accomplishes its prophetic work above all in those who listen to it. It proves both sweet and bitter. We are reminded of the words of the prophet Ezekiel when, commanded by the Lord to eat the scroll of the book, he tells us: “It was in my mouth as sweet as honey” (3:3). John the Evangelist too, on the island of Patmos, echoes Ezekiel’s experience of eating the scroll, but goes on to add: “It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter” (Rev 10:10).

The sweetness of God’s word leads us to share it with all those whom we encounter in this life and to proclaim the sure hope that it contains (cf. 1 Pet 3:15-16). Its bitterness, in turn, often comes

from our realization of how difficult it is to live that word consistently, or our personal experience of seeing it rejected as meaningless for life. We should never take God's word for granted, but instead let ourselves be nourished by it, in order to acknowledge and live fully our relationship with him and with our brothers and sisters.

13. Yet another challenge raised by sacred Scripture has to do with love. God's word constantly reminds us of the merciful love of the Father who calls his children to live in love. The life of Jesus is the full and perfect expression of this divine love, which holds nothing back but offers itself to all without reserve. In the parable of Lazarus, we find a valuable teaching. When both Lazarus and the rich man die, the latter, seeing the poor man Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, asks that Lazarus be sent to his brothers to warn them to love their neighbour, lest they also experience his torment. Abraham's answer is biting: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Lk 16:29). To listen to sacred Scripture and then to practise mercy: this is the great challenge before us in life. God's word has the power to open our eyes and to enable us to renounce a stifling and barren individualism and instead to embark on a new path of sharing and solidarity.

14. One of the most significant moments in Jesus' relationship with his disciples is found in the account of the Transfiguration. He goes up the mountain with Peter, James and John to pray. The evangelists tell us that as Jesus' face and clothing became dazzlingly white, two men conversed with him: Moses and Elijah, representing respectively the Law and the Prophets; in other words, sacred Scripture. Peter's reaction to this sight is one of amazement and joy: "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah" (Lk 9:33). At that moment a cloud overshadows them, and the disciples are struck with fear.

The Transfiguration reminds us of the Feast of Tabernacles, when Ezra and Nehemiah read the sacred text to the people after their return from exile. At the same time, it foreshadows Jesus' glory, as a way of preparing the disciples for the scandal of the Passion: that divine glory is also evoked by the cloud enveloping the disciples as a symbol of God's presence. A similar transfiguration takes place with sacred Scripture, which transcends itself whenever it nourishes the lives of believers. As the Apostolic Exhortation Verbum Domini reminds us: "In rediscovering the interplay between the different senses of Scripture it becomes essential to grasp the

passage from letter to spirit. This is not an automatic, spontaneous passage; rather, the letter needs to be transcended" (No. 38).

15. Along our path of welcoming God's word into our hearts, the Mother of the Lord accompanies us. She is the one who was called blessed because she believed in the fulfilment of what the Lord had spoken to her (cf. Lk 1:45). Mary's own beatitude is prior to all the beatitudes proclaimed by Jesus about the poor and those who mourn, the meek, the peacemakers and those who are persecuted, for it is the necessary condition for every other kind of beatitude. The poor are not blessed because they are poor; they become blessed if, like Mary, they believe in the fulfilment of God's word. A great disciple and master of sacred Scripture, Saint Augustine, once wrote: "Someone in the midst of the crowd, seized with enthusiasm, cried out: 'Blessed is the womb that bore you' and Jesus replied, 'Rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it'. As if to say: My mother, whom you call blessed, is indeed blessed, because she keeps the word of God. Not because in her the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, but because she keeps that same word of God by which she was made and which, in her womb, became flesh" (Tractates on the Gospel of John, 10, 3).

May the Sunday of the Word of God help his people to grow in religious and intimate familiarity with the sacred Scriptures. For as the sacred author taught of old: "This word is very near to you: it is in your mouth and in your heart for your observance" (Dt 30:14).

*Given in Rome, at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, on 30 September 2019, the liturgical Memorial of Saint Jerome, on the inauguration of the 1600th anniversary of his death.*

## FRANCISCUS



## News from St. Francis of Assisi School

By Jennifer Conway

After a fun-filled Christmas break, staff and students returned to school on January 9th, ready to connect with each other, to learn new skills and to participate in exciting adventures. Throughout the months of January and February, we also had to make a number of adjustments, when weather played a role in our daily activities, and school buses were cancelled. Throughout all the challenges, the St. Francis community worked, learned and prayed as we continued to find joy in each and every day. Here are some of the activities we took part in during these past two months.

### Growing in Faith

On Shrove Tuesday, we enjoyed a pancake luncheon. On Ash Wednesday, we gathered as a school community to reflect on the meaning of Lent and to think about how we will renew our relationship with God through prayer, fasting and almsgiving during the next 40 days. During Lent, we will continue our faith journey to Easter, as we participate in a number of discussions and prayer activities, including the Stations of the Cross.



### Celebrating Special Days

On January 16, we celebrated United in Black Day when we wore black shirts and learned about the role Black people have shown through their courage, leadership and creativity, as they make positive changes in our world. Many of us spent time learning all about the Lunar New Year - and the fact that this year is the Year of the Rabbit. We listened to the news on February 2, to hear if the groundhog saw his shadow and worked on a variety of groundhog activities. Bell Let's Talk day gave us an opportunity to reflect on the importance of mental health and strategies we can use in support as when we are unsure or sad. Kindness Week, (February 13-17) brought joy to others as we did something nice for

someone, said something nice to someone and reached out to someone. Valentine's Day was another opportunity to bring joy and kindness through our actions and classroom "heartfelt" activities. On February 15, Flag Day, we had the opportunity to reflect on an important day in our Canadian history and show our pride in being Canadians. During February we also had the opportunity to welcome members of the St. Peter CHS Black Student Association into our classrooms as they read books celebrating Black excellence. February 22 was Pink Shirt Day. That day we wore pink shirts and participated in discussions and activities about bullying and cyberbullying.

### Having Fun

Throughout these past two months, in addition to putting forth a good effort as we learned new skills and concepts, we found time for fun activities too. On sunny winter days, time was spent outside as we built snow structures and went sledding and snowshoeing. On February 7, we participated in a School Wide Bingo, which is one way we build school spirit. Some of our Grade 5 and 6 students were at St. Dominic's School, taking part in the Board badminton tournament on February 14 and February 28.



On February 16, there were lots of joyful sounds as we got our faces Painted and took part in a Dance-a-Thon. From February 27-March 3, we participated in STEAM Week activities.

### Looking Ahead

As winter comes to an end, we are looking forward to all that March will bring: St. Patrick's Day, the beginning of spring – and of course, our winter break. Soon after that, we will enter the joy-filled season of Easter. We can't wait to see what unfolds as our year continues!



## The Healing Mass

By Amy Hall and Bev deMontigny

"Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord." (James 5:14)

For those who attended the Mass at our parish on Saturday, February 11 (the Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes), these words of St. James became a wonderful lived experience! On that day, the World Day of the Sick, Fr. Waldemar, Fr. Steven and Fr. John offered the Anointing of the Sick to the elderly, to those dealing with chronic illness, to those facing serious health concerns and/or preparing for upcoming surgeries.



Without a doubt, the Sacrament was a tremendous blessing for all who received it, granting them healing in body, mind or spirit and renewed courage, patience and peace in the midst of their struggles and afflictions. Prayers were also offered for those who care for, accompany, and assist the sick and suffering in our community, and in our world.

In his homily, Fr. Waldemar shared some of Pope Francis' message for this day entitled "Take Care of Him." These words were taken from the gospel account of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). The Holy Father invited all of us to reflect on the fact that "it is especially through the experience of vulnerability and illness that we can learn to walk together according to the style of God,

which is closeness, compassion, and tenderness." In his Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis exhorts us not to be indifferent to the suffering of those around us, for such indifference leads to loneliness and abandonment of the sick, when it only "takes a moment of our attention, of being moved to compassion within us, in order to eliminate it."

Fr. Waldemar also noted that the sick and suffering themselves play a pivotal role in calling forth true compassion within us, and within our broader society. If we heed their cries for loving, tender care and accompaniment, we will, together with them, help steer our society away from a culture of death to embrace life in all its stages, from conception to natural death. And we will all be the richer for it!

Following the Mass, we gathered in the parish hall for a light lunch, provided by the Pastoral Care Team and a few other parishioners. It was a time of good food and good fellowship, enjoyed by all - especially since we haven't been able to gather for a meal like this since the pandemic began. From beginning to end, from the Rosary to the hall clean up, we truly felt the many blessings poured out upon us and our parish community by Our Lord Jesus, and Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes. May God be praised for His generosity and goodness to each of us!!

### The Village of St. Bernadette

I've travelled far, the land and the sea  
Beautiful places I happened to be.  
One little town I'll never forget  
Is Lourdes, the village of St. Bernadette.

Down to the grotto I followed in song  
Pilgrims all weary from journeys so long,  
Rich and the poor, the strong and the lame.  
Thousands all praising the sweet lady's name.

There like a dream this wonderful night  
I gazed at the grotto aglow in the night.  
A feeling divine swept over me there  
I fell to my knees as I whispered the prayer.

Now I am home I'm happy to be  
Telling of places I happened to see.  
One little town I'll never forget  
Is Lourdes, the village of St. Bernadette.

Ave Ave Ave Maria  
Ave Ave Ave Maria!

Author Unknown



## **Jesus Delights in Speaking to Us.**

By Iris Mell

Last August, I attended our parish's new event, *The Presence* for the first time. I arrived that day with the hope of spending some time with Jesus.

As I picked up the prompts to help enter into prayer, one question stood out to me: "Jesus, what's on your heart?" This question struck me. I realized at that moment that I was avoiding speaking with God. I wasn't talking to Him, I was talking at Him. I was approaching prayer like a transaction. When God did not intervene on my timeline, I started being distracted in prayer. Subtly, I had started operating from the lie that I had to figure out everything by myself. I knew in my mind that God is good, but I was not experiencing His fatherly closeness to my worries. Like an orphan, I functioned as if I needed to solve my problems, and those of the people around me, by myself.

This prompt question changed the direction of my gaze. I stopped looking inward for a second and looked at him. Jesus, what's on your heart? As Adoration started, this face-to-face time with Him, I asked Him this very question. I was expecting God to speak about things that pain His heart that are also on the news. But that's not what He had in mind. That night, He showed me His heart for the people I worry about. He showed me that His heart was also breaking for the people I do not know how to help. What a consolation to know He loves them and cares for them more than I do. But more than that, He reminded me that He was there this whole time. I have a loving Father who deeply cares for me.

I was reminded on that day that the Creator of the universe sees my worries and cares for them.

"See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me." (Isaiah 49:16) What brings me anxiety, fear, and sorrow is continually before Him. He does not forget his children.

This is what God had in mind for me that night. Come talk to Him at the next *The Presence*. He wants to speak to you.



## **Madonna Care**

By Dolores Cyr

There isn't much to report as our volunteer time at Madonna Care will be wrapping up soon as Madonna Care will be closing their doors. The proposed time for that is in May.

However, we continue to visit on a weekly basis to entertain the residents with a sing-along, we bring Communion every second week to assist Father Steve who celebrates Mass once a month. The residents, their families and staff are always happy to see us and the feeling is mutual. We've come to know many residents on a first name basis so it's with a heavy heart that we will soon be saying goodbye to everyone.

As a faith community, we must keep the residents, their families and the staff in our daily prayers. We trust that God will guide the residents to new residences and they in turn will come to enjoy their new surroundings.



## From Fast to Feast: A Lenten Reflection

By Fr. Yongli Chen,  
(originally written in February 2020)

What motivates me to write this reflection is twofold. First, Mrs. Margaret Heuthorst (Parish Secretary of Divine Infant) recently asked me about one of my homily notes on fasting. She wanted a copy for further reflection and to share with her children. Secondly, the scriptural readings on fasting (particularly, Isaiah 58:1-14, Matthew 9:14-15 and Luke 5:27-32) are inspiring and deserve some in-depth reflection. Therefore, after some consideration, I decided to publish it in our Divine Messenger for anyone interested.

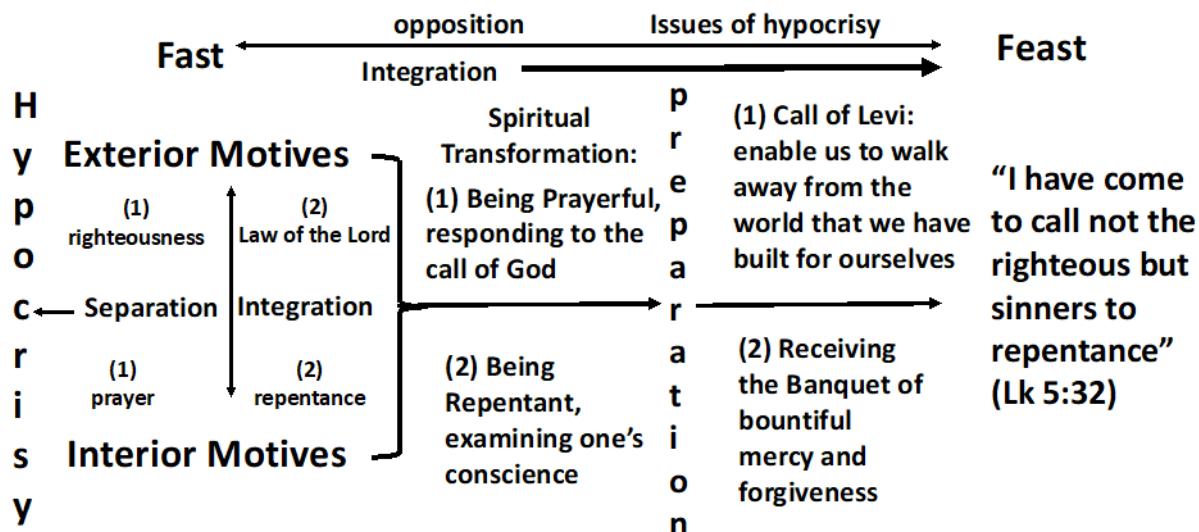
In the Gospel of Matthew 9:14-15, when the disciple of John asked Jesus why he and his disciples did not fast, Jesus replied in a very peculiar way. He deflects the question of fasting by introducing the scene of feasting at the wedding banquet - the total opposite of fasting. We often read this passage in light of the Great Banquet (Matthew 22:1-14, also Luke 14:15-24). However, I think we have too quickly concluded this passage with a theological insight into the Great Banquet at the end of time. Jesus challenges John's disciples to expand their understanding of fasting. Why do you fast? And what is the endgame of your fasting? These two questions are relevant to our understanding and practice of the Lenten fast. I will elaborate on each point in light of the daily scriptural readings prescribed for Feb. 28 and 29, 2020. (Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> texts are selected from Isaiah 58:1-9a and Mathew 9:14-15; Feb. 29<sup>th</sup> readings are chosen from Isaiah 58:9b-14 and Luke 5:27-32).

### I. Why do we fast? Fast as a spiritual transformation Isaiah 58:1-14

By challenging the disciples of John, Jesus keenly points out that hypocrisy can creep into any human action if one separates the exterior motives from the interior ones (see the illustration below). It does not matter if those acts are done for religious fasts or feasts. Isaiah sharply criticizes the hypocrisy that has crept into the spiritual fast among his contemporaries. He said, "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice? Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist" (Isaiah 58: 3-4a). Isaiah noticed that people exaggerated their postures ("bow down the head like a bulrush") and "dressed up" their fasting in sack-cloth and ashes. Their exterior motives had overshadowed the spirit of fasting. They began to lead others **into** thinking that they were fasting. And worse yet, they "tricked" themselves **into** believing that they were doing a fantastic job of abstaining.

The hypocrisy of their religious fast was that they had abandoned the interior motives of fasting by continuously undermining the practice of righteousness and forsaking the ordinance of the Lord. Isaiah pointed out in 58:2 that the interior motives for fasting ought to be (1) practicing righteousness and (2) observing the law of the Lord. A spiritual and fruitful fast needs to integrate both the exterior and interior motives. In chapters 58-59, Isaiah highlighted that the spiritual transformation begins with (1) praying to respond to God's call and (2) reproaching oneself to see the errors of one's way of life. When a fast incorporates the exterior and interior motives, one can make this spiritual transformation on the way to a feast.

1Feb 28, texts selected from Isaiah 58:1-9a and Matthew 9:14; Feb. 29, readings are chosen from Isiash 58:9b-14 and Luke 5:27-31.



## II. What is the endgame of our fasting? Fast as a preparation for the Eucharistic Feast and The Great Banquet

In the Gospel of Luke 5:27-32, Jesus called Levi (St. Matthew) to follow him. In Isaiah, fasting focused on refraining oneself from sustenance, the necessities for existence. Here, Jesus called Levi to realize that fasting should go beyond just the provisions of life. Fasting ought to enable us to walk away from the world (e.g. social status, connections, and power) that we have been trying so hard to build for ourselves and our loved ones. We have been literally willing to surrender to the world around us. Sometimes, we have been glad to surround ourselves with such a world for comfort. The lesson here is not calling all of us to literally abandon our jobs, livelihoods, and favorite things to do. Instead, it calls us to take a moment to separate ourselves from the world we have been building for ourselves. To focus our attention on the inner world that screams for nourishment and longs for rejuvenation.

After being called and responding to the call, Levi threw a great banquet for Jesus. However, it was not the happy ending of the story. When the Pharisees and their scribes complained about Jesus behavior of consorting with a public sinner, Jesus showed Levi the most valuable lesson in this life: a spiritual fast by walking away from everything we know is the only preparation for entering the great feast of God's bountiful mercy. Jesus responded to the complaint: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick do; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32).

To conclude this reflection, I would like to tie it to the practice of fasting on a daily and weekly basis. The Lenten fast is not the only time when the Church calls us to practice abstinence. The fast before the Eucharistic celebration (the Mass) is the "mini" practice of the Lenten fast. Also, the penitential rite, "I confess to Almighty God ..." and the individual confessions are the spiritual transformations that are the necessary consequence of each fasting. Catholic fasting is always considered a **preparation** for the feast. The Lenten fast prepares us for the Easter Feast that celebrates Jesus' life and resurrection. And each fast before Eucharist is a small step to the Easter celebration and each Easter to the Great Banquet. In this Lenten season, let us avoid the traps of hypocrisy in our fast and abstinence. Let us integrate our exterior and interior mo-

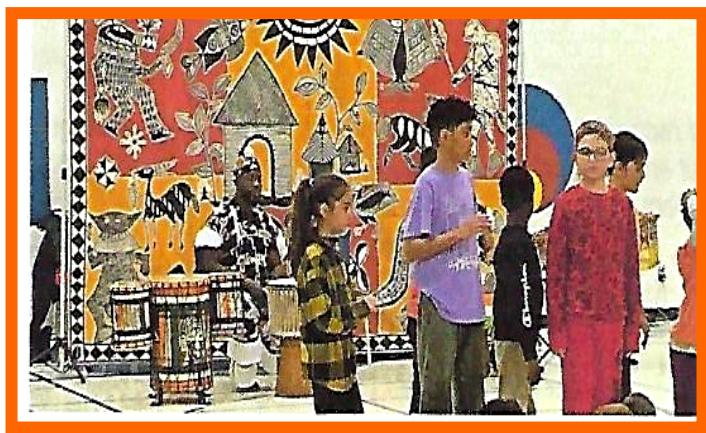
tives as a spiritual transformation and the necessary preparation for the feast of God's mercy and forgiveness.



## Divine Infant School

By Tara Gamache

On February 13th, 'Celebrate Africa' Masabo MASC performers came to our school for an in-person show! These hereditary West African master musicians and dancers filled the air with soaring melodies and driving rhythms as the ancient arts of West Africa were brought to life. This performance was a feast of traditional stories, dance and stunning musicianship. We have some spirited dancers in our school. It was a FANTASTIC show!



**You Say, God Says Bible Verses**

You say: "It's impossible."  
 God says, All things are possible.  
 (Luke 18:27)

You say: "I'm too tired."  
 God says, I will give you rest.  
 (Matthew 11:28-30)

You say: "Nobody really loves me."  
 God says, I love you.  
 (John 3:16 & John 3:34)

You say: "I can't go on."  
 God says, My grace is sufficient.  
 (II Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 91:15)

You say: "I can't figure things out."  
 God says, I will direct your steps.  
 (Proverbs 3:5-6)

You say: "I can't do it."  
 God says, You can do all things.  
 (Philippians 4:13)

You say: "I'm not able."  
 God says, I am able.  
 (II Corinthians 9:8)

You say: "It's not worth it."  
 God says, It will be worth it.  
 (Romans 8:28)

You say: "I can't forgive myself."  
 God says, I forgive you.  
 (I John 1:9 & Romans 8:1)

You say: "I can't manage."  
 God says, I will supply all your needs.  
 (Philippians 4:19)

You say: "I'm afraid."  
 God says, I have not given you a spirit of fear.  
 (II Timothy 1:7)

You say: "I'm always worried and frustrated."  
 God says, Cast all your cares on ME  
 (1 Peter 5:7)

You say: "I don't have enough faith."  
 God says, I've given everyone a measure of faith.  
 (Romans 12:3)

You say "I'm not smart enough"  
 God says, I give you wisdom.  
 (I Corinthians 1:30)

You say: "I feel all alone."  
 God says, I will never leave you or forsake you.  
 (Hebrews 13:5)

**This Lent.....**

Give up complaining....focus on gratitude.

Give up pessimism ....become an optimist.

Give up harsh judgements....think kindly thoughts.

Give up worry....trust Divine Providence.

Give up discouragement....be full of hope.

Give up bitterness....turn to forgiveness.

Give up hatred....return good for evil.

Give up negativism....be positive.

Give up anger....be more patient.

Give up pettiness....become more mature.

Give up gloom....enjoy the beauty that is all around you.

Give up jealousy....pray for trust.

Give up gossiping....control your tongue.

Give up sin....turn to virtue.

Give up giving up....hang in there!!!!

***Are you ready for Easter now?***

## Update on the Settlement and Integration of the ABO Saad Family

By Guy Savard and Eric McKay

With roughly a half year having now elapsed since the arrival of our dear Syrian Abo Saad family, we are pleased to build on what was reported in the November 2022 issue of the Divine Messenger. The family has made excellent progress in a short time, mainly regarding their proficiency in English and their employability here.

### English as a Second Language (ESL)

The fastest way to settle and integrate into a new country is to learn the language(s) most people speak at home and at work. For Canadian newcomers and permanent residents (e.g. resettled refugees), good English language skills facilitate accessing key services, connecting with new people or community resources, finding jobs and seamless integration.

Federal Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) and provincial English as a Second Language (ESL) language classes are available free of charge, to provide newcomers with communication skills from beginner to advanced levels, according to the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBs\*). Classes are also available covering a range of topics including social, economic, job specific, etc. Classes are available throughout the day at different locations, as well as on-line.

\* See Note at end of article for more detail regarding the CLBs.

### Language Education: Accomplishments of the Abo Saad Family

As refugees in Lebanon in 2020, the Abo Saads were eager to learn English, and thus decided to undertake ESL classes while awaiting their resettlement to Canada.

Soon after their arrival in Ottawa, George and Rita subscribed to an on-line ESL program taken at home, on a near daily basis, while waiting to be formally assessed by the Government of Canada LINC Assessment Centre. A mere five months after their arrival in Ottawa, on February 2, 2023, George and Rita were assessed by that Centre. They were rated at the CLB Levels 2 and 3 respectively and placed in CLB 3-4 level classes.

To support their daily life and learning schedules, George and Rita chose different, although complementary, programs:

- George is undergoing the LINC 3 course at the Ottawa Technical Secondary School (OTSS) offered by the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) on Donald Street. The course is attended in person (Monday to Thursday) and online on Fridays.
- Rita opted to attend an ESL on-line program, offered by Le Carrefour Ottawa of the “Conseil des écoles publiques de l'est de l'Ontario” (CEPEO). This allows Rita to be at home and take care of their 5 year old daughter Joumana, accompanying her to the school bus, being at home when needed (e.g. sickness, days off from school).

Joumana and her 4 year old cousin, Tia Alhurira, both attend the same class at Divine Infant elementary school. They benefit from the school's bilingual program that offers English classes and will eventually expose both of them to the French instructional program offered to all students.

### Potential and Forthcoming Employment

George is benefitting from the English language competencies he gained in Syria and Lebanon and is continually acquiring in Canada. In addition, his professional education and work experience will be an asset to potential employers. For example:

- Academic Year 2009-2010: Technical Institute of Banking and Financial Sciences (Damascus University). Granted a technical diploma in economics and commerce, specializing in financial markets. Diploma Certificate available in Arabic and an Affidavit from the Translation Agency of Ontario (TAO) available.
- 2014-2020: Lebanese Restaurant “Shtrumpf Salad Bar & Grill” - served in 3 branches (Beirut, Dbayeh and Jounieh) - first as kitchen staff, prior to becoming Kitchen Team Leader. English Letter of Reference available.
- 2012-2013: Warehouse supervisor at the Massouh Group – a leading manufacturing aluminum company in Damascus (Syria).

## Transportation: G1 Driver Training

George and Rita are registered for their G1 licence and are taking lessons/classes with qualified G drivers, including Alhurira family members and friends or associates.

## Conclusion

With half the one year settlement journey now completed, the Abo Saad family is well on its way to becoming well-settled and integrated into their new Canadian way of life. With their continued hard work and the progress with their English language abilities, our parish can be proud of how this family has rallied and responded to the efforts made by the parish community to prepare them for employment and future success in their new surroundings.

*Dear Lord, You know what it means to be a refugee. Let us be those people who bring comfort, food and water, and an encouraging word to those fleeing for their lives. Help us to remember your words, "whatever you did unto these people who are the least of my brothers or sisters, you did it unto me." (Matthew 25:40, 45)*

**Note:** The CLB benchmarks describe 12 levels of ability in each of four different language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The three stages in the CLB - each consisting of four benchmarks – begin with Stage I basic language ability (Level 1 to 4), and progress to Stage II for intermediate (Levels 5 to 8) and Stage III for advanced (Levels 9 to 12) language abilities.



Rita Jiji and George doing their exercises



Jiji and cousin Tia celebrating the New Year



# HOLY WEEK & EASTER



## 2023 SCHEDULE

### WE JOURNEY TOWARDS EASTER

PENITENTIAL SERVICE - Wednesday, March 29 at 7:00pm

CHRISM MASS - Tuesday, April 4 at 5:00pm, Notre Dame Cathedral

### EASTER TRIDIUM

#### Holy Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>

Mass of the Lord's Supper – 7:30pm  
11:30 pm— Liturgy of the Hours and  
reposition of the Blessed Sacrament

#### Good Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>

Stations of the Cross by the Youth – 10:00am at the church

Liturgy of the Lord's Passion – 3:00pm

The church will remain open for private veneration of the Cross

Stations of the Cross led by the Clergy – 8:00pm

#### Holy Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup>

Blessings of food baskets – 11:00am

Easter Vigil – 8:00pm

#### Easter Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>

Masses at 8:00am, 9:30am, 11:15am and 2:00pm

*There will be no Mass on Holy Saturday at 5:00pm or on Easter Sunday at 5:00pm*

*There are no Confessions during Easter Triduum (Holy Thursday –Easter Sunday)*

## Need some direction for your Lenten Resolutions? Pope Francis is offering it in three words: Pause, See and Return.

The season of Lent is a favourable time to remedy the dissonant chords of our Christian life and to receive the ever new, joyful and hope-filled proclamation of the Lord's Passover. The Church in her maternal wisdom invites us to pay special attention to anything that could dampen or even corrode our believing heart.

We are subject to numerous temptations. Each of us knows the difficulties we have to face. And it is sad to note that, when faced with the ever-varying circumstances of our daily lives, there are voices raised that take advantage of pain and uncertainty; the only thing they aim to do is sow distrust. If the fruit of faith is charity – as Mother Teresa often used to say – then the fruit of distrust is apathy and resignation. Distrust, apathy and resignation: these are demons that deaden and paralyze the soul of a believing people.

Lent is the ideal time to unmask these and other temptations, to allow our hearts to beat once more in tune with the vibrant heart of Jesus. The whole of the Lenten season is imbued with this conviction, which we could say is echoed by three words offered to us in order to rekindle the heart of the believer: pause, see and return.

*Pause* a little, leave behind the unrest and commotion that fill the soul with bitter feelings which never get us anywhere. Pause from this compulsion to a fast-paced life that scatters, divides and ultimately destroys time with family, with friends, with children, with grandparents, and time as a gift... time with God.

*Pause* for a little while, refrain from the need to show off and be seen by all, to continually appear on the "noticeboard" that makes us forget the value of intimacy and recollection.

*Pause* for a little while, refrain from the deafening noise that weakens and confuses our hearing, that makes us forget the fruitful and creative power of silence.

*Pause* for a little while, refrain from the attitude which promotes sterile and unproductive thoughts that arise from isolation and self-pity, and that cause us to forget going out to encounter others

to share their burdens and suffering.

*Pause* for a little while, refrain from the emptiness of everything that is instantaneous, momentary and fleeting, that deprives us of our roots, our ties, of the value of continuity and the awareness of our ongoing journey.

*Pause* in order to look and contemplate!

*See* the gestures that prevent the extinguishing of charity, that keep the flame of faith and hope alive. Look at faces alive with God's tenderness and goodness working in our midst.

*See* the face of our families who continue striving, day by day, with great effort, in order to move forward in life, and who, despite many concerns and much hardship, are committed to making their homes a school of love.

*See* the faces of our children and young people filled with yearning for the future and hope, filled with "tomorrows" and opportunities that demand dedication and protection. Living shoots of love and life that always open up a path in the midst of our selfish and meagre calculations.

*See* our elderly whose faces are marked by the passage of time, faces that reveal the living memory of our people. Faces that reflect God's wisdom at work.

*See* the faces of our sick people and the many who take care of them; faces which in their vulnerability and service remind us that the value of each person can never be reduced to a question of calculation or utility.

*See* the remorseful faces of so many who try to repair their errors and mistakes, and who from their misfortune and suffering fight to transform their situations and move forward.

*See* and contemplate the face of Crucified Love, who today from the cross continues to bring us hope, his hand held out to those who feel crucified, who experience in their lives the burden of failure, disappointment and heartbreak.

*See* and contemplate the real face of Christ crucified out of love for everyone, without exception. For everyone? Yes, for everyone. To see his face is an invitation filled with hope for this Lenten time, in

order to defeat the demons of distrust, pathy and resignation. The face that invites us to cry out: "The Kingdom of God is possible!"

*Pause, see and return.* Return to the house of your Father. Return without fear to those outstretched, eager arms of your Father, who is rich in mercy (cf. Eph 2:4), who awaits you.

*Return* without fear, for this is the favourable time to come home, to the home of my Father and your Father (cf. Jn 20:17). It is the time for allowing one's heart to be touched... Persisting on the path of evil only gives rise to disappointment and sadness. True life is something quite distinct and our heart indeed knows this. God does not tire, nor will he tire, of holding out his hand (cf. Misericordiae Vultus, 19).

*Return* without fear, to join in the celebration of those who are forgiven.

*Return* without fear, to experience the healing and reconciling tenderness of God. Let the Lord heal the wounds of sin and fulfil the prophecy made to our fathers: "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek 36: 26).

*Pause, see and return!*

### God Grant Us Hope And Faith And Love

HOPE is for a world grown cynically cold,  
Hungry for power and greedy for gold.

FAITH to believe when within and without  
There's a nameless doubt.

LOVE that is bigger than race and creed,  
To cover the world and fulfil each need.

God, grant gifts of faith, hope and love -  
Three things this world has so little of.

For only these gifts from our father above  
Can turn man's sins from hatred to love!

H.S.R.

### Shepherds of Good Hope

By Allan Harvey

The Shepherds of Good Hope format for the volunteer schedule has changed. Volunteers may register for any of the four shifts on any Sunday in July or August.

Breakfast is served from 6:30 am to 8:30 am and needs 3 volunteers. Lunch is served from 8:30 am to 1:15 pm and 8 volunteers are needed. Five volunteers are needed for supper from 1:15 pm to 5 pm. An evening slot serves clients from 5 pm to 9 pm and 5 volunteers are required.

Sign-up days will be from late May until the middle of June.

For more information, please call Allan Harvey at 613-824-8632.



## Divine Infant Church Schedules

### Check

#### Regular

#### **Weekday Mass Times :**

- Monday 7:00 pm\*
- Tuesday 7:00 pm
- Wednesday 9:00 am
- Thursday 9:00 am
- Friday 9:00 am
- First Saturday 9:00 am\*

Note: On Statutory Holidays Masses are at 9:00 am

#### **Sunday Masses**

- Saturday 5:00 pm
- Sunday 8:00 am
- Sunday 9:30 am
- Sunday 11:15 am
- Sunday 5:00 pm

#### **Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction:** Every

Wednesday after the 9:00 am Mass. (9:30 am)

First Friday after the 9:00 am Mass (9:30 am)

#### **Confession Times:**

Saturday & Sunday, 4:15-4:45

Weekdays, 1/2 hour before Mass

By appointment

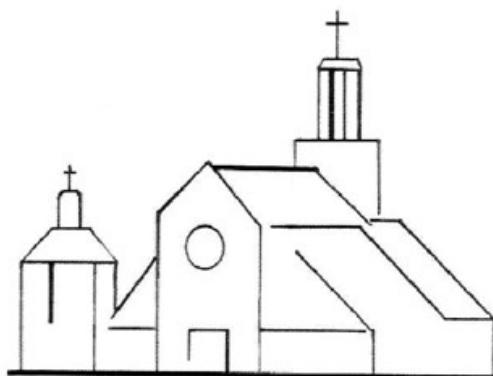
#### **Recurring Weekly Events:** (Some activities are cancelled due to pandemic and others may be cancelled.)

**RCIA**, Wednesday, 7:00-9:00 pm, Hall, **Youth Programs**,

**DI-JYN**, Fridays, 7:00-9:00 pm, Hall

**DI-SYN**, Sundays, 7:00-9:00 pm, Hall

Please check our parish website ([www.divineinfant.on.ca](http://www.divineinfant.on.ca)) for the latest updates or contact our Youth Ministry at ([diyouthministries@gmail.com](mailto:diyouthministries@gmail.com)) for the latest information regarding the Junior and Senior Youth Group meetings at the parish.



## Twelve Short Inspirational Stories

1. Today, I interviewed my grandmother for part of a research paper I'm working on for my Psychology class. When I asked her to define success in her own words, she said: "Success is when you look back at your life and the memories make you smile."

2. Today, I asked my mentor - a very successful business man in his 70s what his top 3 tips are for success. He smiled and said: "Read something no one else is reading, think something no one else is thinking and do something no one else is doing."

3. Today, after my 72-hour shift at the fire station, a woman ran up to me at the grocery store and gave me a hug. When I tensed up, she realized I didn't recognize her. She let go with tears of joy in her eyes and the most sincere smile and said: "On 9-11-2001, you carried me out of the World Trade Center."

4. Today, after I watched my dog get run over by a car, I sat on the side of the road holding him and crying. And just before he died, he licked the tears off my face.

5. Today at 7 am, I woke up feeling ill, but decided I needed the money, so I went into work. At 3 pm I got laid off. On my drive home I got a flat tire. When I went into the trunk for the spare, it was flat too. A man in a BMW pulled over, gave me a ride, we chatted, and then he offered me a job. I start tomorrow.

6. Today, as my father, three brothers and two sisters stood around my mother's hospital bed, my mother uttered her last coherent words before she died. She simply said, "I feel so loved right now.

we should have gotten together like this more often."

7. Today, I kissed my dad on the forehead as he passed away in a small hospital bed. About 5 seconds after he passed, I realized it was the first time I has given him a kiss since I was a little boy.

8. Today, in the cutest voice, my 8-year old daughter asked me to start recycling. I chuckled and asked, "Why?" She replied, "So you can help me save the planet." I chuckled again and asked, "And why do you want to save the planet?" "Because that's where I keep all my stuff." she said.

9. Today, when I witnessed a 27-year old breast cancer patient laughing hysterically at her 2-year old daughter's antics, I suddenly realized that I need to stop complaining about my life and start celebrating it again.

10. Today, a boy in a wheelchair saw me desperately struggling on crutches with my broken leg and offered to carry my backpack and books for me. He helped me all the way across campus to my class and as he was leaving he said, "I hope you feel better soon."

11. Today, I was feeling down because the results of a biopsy came back malignant. When I got home, I opened an e-mail that said, "Thinking of you today, if you need me, I'm a phone call away." It was from a high school friend I hadn't seen in 10 years.

12. Today, I was travelling in Kenya and I met a refugee from Zimbabwe. He said he hadn't eaten anything in over 3 days and looked extremely skinny and unhealthy. Then my friend offered him the sandwich he was eating. The first thing the man said was, "We can share it."



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