

HOLY FAMILY PARISH

12/16/2012 Third Sunday of Advent



1451 Strachan Road SE, Medicine Hat, AB T1B-4V3 Phone: 403-527-

6933 Fax: 403-526-2482

email: contact@holyfamilymh.ca

website: www.holyfamilymh.ca

Office Hrs: Monday to Friday - 8:30am to 4:30pm

Closed on Statutory Holidays

Calgary Diocesan: www.rcdiocese-calgary.ab.ca



Gospel Acclamation (Luke 4.18 [Isaiah 61.1])

Alleluia, Alleluia.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has sent me
to bring good news to the poor.

Alleluia.

Pastor - Rev. Philip Le

frphilip@holyfamilymh.ca

Associate Pastor -

Rev. Matthew Emmelkamp

fmatthew@holyfamilymh.ca

Deacons:

Rev. Mr. Robert Risling

Rev. Mr. Bill Schnitzler

Pastoral Care of the Sick

pager: 403-458-1445

Youth NET Ministry

medhatcatholicyouth@gmail.com

Medicine Hat Catholic Youth on Facebook

Mass Times

Saturday - 5:00 pm

Sunday - 8:30am, 10:30am & 6:00pm

Reconciliation: Saturday 3:00-4:00pm

CELEBRATE THE
SACRAMENT of RECONCILIATION

Every Wednesday in Advent

All Parishes of the Diocese of Calgary

In Addition to the Regular Parish

Schedule

DECEMBER 19th

7:30pm – 8:30pm



Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve. Monday, December 24, 2012

Mass at 5:00pm, 8:30pm & 10:30pm

Christmas Day, Tuesday, December 25, 2012

Mass at 8:30am & 10:30am

New Year's Eve, Monday, December 31, 2012

Mass at 5:00pm

New Year's Day, Tuesday, January 1, 2013

Mass at 8:30am & 10:30am

Welcome To Holy Family Parish

You have entered this church not as a stranger, but as a guest of God. Being a human, you enter this church as a creature of God; as a baptized person, you enter it as a son or daughter of the Father in Christ. This house of God is therefore your family home. Come in then with humility of mind, joy of heart and thanks on your lips. Acknowledge the Lord's presence in the Tabernacle and adore Him. Come in and pause in prayer in the midst of your busy life and its many worries. Be grateful for those who, for the Glory of God, built this place of worship with faith and sacrifice, and sanctified it with their songs and prayers.

Anyone who wishes to practice the Catholic faith by attending this church may consider this parish as his/her own parish. You simply need to register. Please indicate whether you are a new parishioner or have moved and are providing a new address. Thank you.

Name _____

Spouse _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____ Phone _____

Email _____



3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 15/16, 2012

First reading (Zeph. 3 :14-18). This is a call to rejoice because in spite of past infidelity of Israel the Lord will renew his loving relationship with his people. May he do the same for us this Advent.

Second reading (Phil. 4 :4-7). It's an extraordinarily cheerful message from a prisoner, is it not? It is provoked not by hysteria, but by tranquility; Paul's firm conviction that the Lord who is to come again is his present steadfast support.

Gospel (Luke 3:10-18). John the Baptist is blunt in spelling out some of the uncompromising demands of fellowship with Christ. The underlying tone of urgency and expectancy which the evangelist injects into the scene should find an echo in our personal attitude towards Christmas and the second coming of Jesus.

OPERATING FINANCES

(December 6-December 13, 2012)

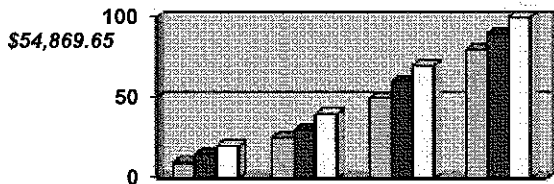
-Cost to operate our Parish (Budget)	\$16,500
-General Collections:	\$11,614
-Debt reduction (Mortgage)	\$10,265
-Total Collections:	\$21,849
-Exceed or (Shortfall)	\$5,379

Special Collections;

***Together in Action:.....	\$1,027
***World Missions:.....	\$23
***St Vincent de Paul:.....	\$1,306
***NET Ministries:.....	\$45
***CARO:.....	\$50
***Mission Mexico:.....	\$1,657
***Food Bank/Gift Sharing.....	\$50

TIA up to date: \$54,869.65/\$59,979.00 (91%)

Together In Action



Thank you for your generosity and support!

Upcoming Events in our Parish and Mass Intentions
The daily Mass may be canceled in the case of a funeral

SUN, DEC 16th – 3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- + Mass: 8:30am (Intention: Jack Guckert ☩)
- + Mass: 10:30am (Intention: Holy Family Parish)
- + Library: open after morning Masses
- + Junior Choir Practice: 3:00pm at Holy Family Parish
- + 4th Degree Knights of Columbus Christmas Supper: 5:30pm in the Holy Family Parish Hall.
- + Mass: 6:00pm (Intention: John W Schafer ☩)

MON, DEC 17th

- + Mass-9:00am (Intention: Mildred Martin Family)
- + Circle of Friends Charismatic Prayer Group: 7:00pm - St. Joseph's Home

TUES, DEC 18th

- + St Vincent de Paul Meeting: 4:00pm at St. Patrick's Church
- + Mass: 6:00pm (Intention: The Arango-Mejia Family) with St. Patrick's School
- + Reconciliation: 7:00pm – Several Priests will be here for your confession.

WED, DEC 19th

- + Mass: 9:00am (Intention: Patrick Corcoran)
- + Breakfast after Mass
- + Bible Study: 9:30am – Faith Room
- + Mass: 1:30pm – Sunnyside
- + Ministry to the aged: 3:30pm – Good Samaritans
- + Choir Practice for 6:00 Mass: 6:00 – Church
- + Reconciliation: 7:30 - 8:30pm

THURS, DEC 20th

- + Men's Prayer Group: 6:30am – Charity Room
- + Mass: 9:30am (Intention: Nick Eresman ☩)
- + Breakfast after Mass
- + Holy Hour: 6:00pm – Chapel
- + Choir Practice for 8:30 & 10:30 Masses: 7:00pm in the Church
- + Live In Prayer and Praise: 7:30pm in the Faith Room

FRI, DEC 21st

- + **Mass: 9:00am** (Intention: Lillian Lewans)
- + **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** After Mass until Noon
- + Breakfast after Mass
- + Ministry to the aged: 10:00am – The Wellington
- + **Mass: 10:00am** – Meadowlands

SAT, DEC 22nd

- + That Man is You: 8:30am – St. Patrick's Church Hall
- + **Reconciliation:** 3:00 – 4:00pm
- + Choir Practice for 5:00 Mass: 4:00pm – Church
- + Library: open before Mass
- + **4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
- + **Mass: 5:00pm** (Intention: Bonnie Huber ☩)

SUN, DEC 23rd – 4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- + **Mass: 8:30am** (Intention: Frank Gutfriend ☩)
- + 2 Baptisms at 8:30am Mass
- + **Mass: 10:30am** (Intention: Holy Family Parish)
- + 1 Baptism at 10:30 Mass
- + NO CHILDREN'S LITRUGY THIS MORNING
- + Library: open after morning Masses
- + Junior Choir Practice: 3:00pm at Holy Family Parish
- + **Mass: 6:00pm** (Intention: Finola O'Reilly ☩)

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

If you can spare an hour with the Lord...
 Tuesday: After 7:00pm Mass until 8:30pm
 Thursday: Holy Hour from 6:00pm to 7:00pm
 Friday: After 9:00am Mass until Noon

ADVENT BOOKLETS

To aid in your personal prayer and reflection during the Season of Advent we are offering 4 different publications in the greeting area for you by donation.

NEW SAINT JOSEPH SUNDAY MISSAL

The New St. Joseph Sunday Missal, Prayer book & Hymnal 2013 has arrived at Holy Family and is available for you to get. We are asking \$3.00 per copy. You can get yours today at the Hospitality Desk or if nobody is at the desk copies are available at the display rack and we trust that you will put the money in the cash box.

2013 SUNDAY MISSAL FOR YOUNG CATHOLICS

The Youth Missals are \$7.00 and can be purchased at HFP Office or at the Hospitality Desk

RECONCILIATION AND PENITENTIAL SERVICE

1. 1. During Advent, a priest is available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation at every Catholic church in the Diocese of Calgary, including Holy Family and St. Pat's, on Wednesday evenings from 7:30 to 8:30 pm (Dec. 19)
2. 2. Several priests will come for Penitential Service at Holy Family Dec. 18 at 7 pm. Everyone is welcome.

Come, sit in this chair—Rejoice in God's mercy!

The baptized are called to clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, feed the hungry, and set captives free. The sacrament of Reconciliation invites us to consider not only the sins we have committed but also what we have failed to do. From our comfortable vantage point it is easy to become indifferent to the suffering of others. Self-sufficiency and independence is an illusion because everything we have and are comes from God. Gratitude for our blessings reminds us to share and do more for others. As you consider your sins of omission, remember to also *rejoice in God's mercy*. In addition to the regular parish schedule, the sacrament of Reconciliation will be available at parishes throughout the Diocese of Calgary all the Wednesdays of Advent and Lent from 7:30 – 8:30pm. *Come, sit in this chair—Rejoice in God's mercy!*

Action: Apologize or make reparation for something you failed to do.

VACATION NOTICE

After Christmas, Fr. Philip will go to his homeland for a vacation. With your help, Fr. Matthew will be in charge. Fr. John Maes will offer certain weekend Masses.

POSTURE DURING THE COMMUNION

The first Sunday of Advent, Dec. 1, marked the first anniversary of our new translation of the Mass. We have done the transition very well as far as I am concerned. There is one thing I never mentioned in the changes. That is the posture during the Communion. Here is the directive from the Diocese of Calgary:

"The common posture of STANDING CONTINUES DURING THE COMMUNION PROCESSION AND SINGING OF THE COMMUNION SONG. This practice teaches us that Communion is a corporate action in which we together are drawn into the Eucharistic mystery and the life of the Trinity. Singing together helps us realize our communion together in the Risen Lord." Of course, if you cannot stand for any reason, you can sit or kneel. Thanks. Fr. Philip

SACRAMENT CLASSES

Sacrament classes will resume in January 12th and 13th. Have a safe and happy Christmas Season

NET TEAM

Unchained- Gr. 10-12

Join the NET team for the Unchained Christmas Party! Don't miss out, there will be lots of fun to be had! Sunday, Dec. 16th from 7pm to 9pm at Holy Family Parish! See you there!! Ugly Christmas sweaters and Santa Hats are welcome!

Jimmy, Ashley, Kyle, Matt, Sharon, Ian and Michelle say... "A Big Fat Thanks to all those who have been graciously supportive and encouraging to us and to the ministry. We are praying for all of you! Merry Christmas & We will see you in January!

JUNIOR CHOIR

5:00PM CHRISTMAS EVE MASS - Anyone Grade 3 and UP who would like to sing at Holy Family's 5:00pm Christmas Eve mass please call Sally at Holy Family Parish 527-6933. Practices is at **3:00pm Sunday December 16th & 23rd** at Holy Family Parish.

FROM THE LIBRARY

ADULT READING... A Coming Crist in Advent: Essays on the Gospel Narratives Preparing for the Birth of Jesus Christ. Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent & Christmas How to Read and Pray the Christmas Story An Adult Christ at Christmas: Essays on the Biblical Christmas Stories, Matthew 2 and Luke 2

JUVENILE READING... Getting ready for Christmas & The Jesse Tress

CHILDRENS READING... Angel! Angel! What do you See? Bartimouse and the Christmas Mystery The Best Gift of All The Brightest Star St. Nicholas - Veg DVD Silent Night - The Story of the First Christmas - DVD.

THE GREAT CANADIAN BARN DANCE

Featuring The Kunkel Family at Holy Family Parish. Saturday, April 13, 2013 is a Dance & Light Lunch for \$20.00 Tickets are available at the Holy Family Parish. This would be a great Christmas gift!

NEWCOMERS TO MEDICINE HAT

Medicine Hat has recently welcomed 28 newcomers from Mexico and 9 from Ireland and we are expecting 100 more from the Philippines. These families are in need of Kitchen Tables and supplies like dishes and cookware and Living Room Furniture. They are also in need of some warm coats. If you have items you would like to donate please call the parish office and we will get your information to the right people. Please **DO NOT BRING ITEMS TO PARISH.**

OFFERINGS ENVELOPES

If you have not picked up your envelopes yet, please pick yours up in the greeting area. If you do not currently have envelopes & would like some please contact the parish office.

REDCLIFF PARISHIONERS

If you come to the 10:30 Mass on Sundays there is a 90 year old gentleman that would really like to attend Mass but he has no transportation. If you think this is something you would be interested in helping out with please call the Parish office during regular business hours. 403-527-6933.

FINE ART PROGRAMS

Living Water College of the Arts, Derwent, Alberta, is offering three fine art programs next Summer. Gain artistic skill, spiritual formation, and intellectual insight.

Iconography (June 4 - 19): Learn how to use traditional materials and techniques while painting an icon of St. Michael the Archangel.

Sacred Choral Music (July 7 - 21): Become immersed in the timeless beauty of traditional church music from Mozart, Schubert and others, and learn the basics of liturgical gregorian chant. The Program benefits all participants, whether new to choral music or arriving as a soloist, and concludes with a concert at an Edmonton parish.

Youth Sacred Choral Music (July 14 - 21): Participate in Living Water's first youth program and learn music worth remembering. Age 12 and older.

Details are available at: www.livingwatercollege.com , 780-741-2488 or on Facebook (Living Water College of the Arts). A reduced rate for early applications. Contact: Nicole Dunn, nicole@livingwatercollege.com

FAMILY GIFT SHARING SUNDAY

On the first Sunday of Advent our parish was very generous. \$1834 worth of food was donated to the "Food Bank". \$2400 worth of toys were donated to the "Santa Claus Fund" and \$3300 in monetary donations were given to "Needs of the Poor". Thank you for caring about the people in our community who are in need. A blessed and Holy Christmas to everyone!

CHURCH BUS

THERE WILL NO BUS SERVICE FOR MASS ON CHRISTMAS DAY OR NEW YEAR'S DAY... WE ARE VERY SORRY FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE THIS CAUSES YOU.



CWL

Thank you to Circle 3 for hosting the CWL Christmas Bake Sale. Thank you to everyone who contributed baked goods and to everyone who bought the goods. You made the bake sale a great success.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Please sign-up for Christmas and New Year's Masses in the greeting area on the sheets provided on the bulletin board.

POWERPOINT & SOUNDBOARD

Please sign up for all the Masses you would like to work at this Christmas and New Year's. The sign-up sheets are at the control desk in the church. Thank-you for your continued service.

ALTAR SERVERS

Please sign-up for Christmas and New Year's Masses in the greeting area on the sheets provided on the bulletin board.

LIGHT WEIGH

Light Weigh is coming to Holy Family Parish. Would you like to learn how to overcome temptation and eat the foods you enjoy, while you grow closer to God and lose weight? *Prevention Magazine* chose **Light Weigh** because it met their criteria for a safe and healthy faith based diet program. New research shows, church based meetings increased people's weight loss. There are no weigh-ins. The Light Weigh Bible Study DVD series will have an **Orientation on Monday January 7, 2013 @ 7:00 pm in the Hope Room.**

ONE ROCK 2013 PRESENTS WORLD YOUTH DAY AT HOME

Mark your Calendar for **July 26th, 27th and 28th, 2013** for the Festival of the Century.

The Diocese of Calgary and the Archdiocese of Edmonton are commemorating their Jubilee Anniversaries in part at the One Rock Festival this year. Also, One Rock is presenting World Youth Day at Home with all the dioceses of the province. There are new and interesting **Pilgrimages**, a new **Venue** at Mt. St. Francis, new **Guest Artists and Speakers**. If you want to join our volunteer team please sign up at www.OneRock.ca.

INVITATION TO WRITE A TESTIMONY...

We invite you to share your faith filled story: why are you continuing to practice your faith; or why did you come back to the Church? Or what is your conversion story? What do you appreciate about your faith; you can write 250 words more or less for the bulletin, or just come to talk to a priest or a secretary and we will write them down for you. If you wish, you don't have to sign your real name.

TESTIMENT OF FAITH

My name is Joseph Lanz, I am telling this faith story of my wife, Doris Lanz, who passed away December 17, 2011.

We were living in Burnaby, BC, where our faith lives were changed on June 27, 1998; two Filipino ladies lent us a statue of Our Lady of Fatima, the blue Pieta Prayer Book and some Legion of Mary material. Doris became involved with The Legion of Mary. Doris read the Pieta Prayer Book cover to cover – Faith transformation took hold.

My wife, Doris, said these prayers every day starting in June 1998. She knew that she had a way to save her brothers, sisters, spouse and our son. Every day, Doris was up at 5:30am and started praying at 6:00am for 2 hours.

Forward to June 2011 – Doris was praying when she seemed to receive a message from Jesus: "Look at the cross; I suffered for you and mankind, can you now not suffer for me. In order for me to save your brothers, sisters and family – can you not suffer for me?" From that point on Doris suffered with her illness in silence. She never told me.

September 2011, we went to Vancouver to visit some of Doris's family and our son, Thane. On our drive back Doris was in some distress, I now know something was not right with her health.

October 30, 2011, Doris said "My work on earth is done, I'm going home."

December 10, 2011, I took Doris to emergency. At the hospital she was given her last rites.

December 17, 2011, Doris passed away. Jesus and his beloved Mother were there to lead her soul into eternal joy.

Besides the grace of God, in order to get to heaven, we must suffer.

Doris has 2 brothers and 4 sisters. All do not practice or have fallen away from the church. She alone with 1 older brother and 1 older sister had the same upbringing. They went to a convent school. They had to stay all week at the convent. They were ages 6, 7 & 8 years old. Doris was the only one who practiced her faith. Doris' mother told her it was her mission to keep praying for her brothers and sisters. Doris eventually prayed and offered her suffering for the salvation of her family and community.

"May her soul and the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy God, rest in peace."

Fr. Philip's

As a teacher, Ms. Jones was very curious about how each of her students celebrated Christmas. After asking many students and they all gave a classic answer: going to church, singing Christmas Carols, hanging our stockings and more importantly, opening gifts on Christmas Day. Realizing there was a non-Christian boy in the class and not wanting to leave him out of the discussion, she asked, "Now, Isaac Cohen, what do you do at Christmas?"

Isaac said, "Well, it's the same thing every year: "Dad comes home from the office. We all pile into the Rolls Royce, then we drive to his **toy factory**. When we get inside, we look at all the **empty shelves** and begin to sing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus". Then we all go to Hawaii for three weeks."

The crowds flocked to John the Baptist and asked the same question in a different way: what should we do (to welcome the Messiah)? Christmas is just 9 days away. We are joyfully waiting for the Lord to come to us. We rejoice to see the people preparing for the coming of the Lord as much as the audiences of John the Baptist did. John answered them in a practical way. He told them to do right things in their daily lives and to share things with those who had not: "**Whoever has 2 coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.**" These simple things seem to be very concrete but not easy to do. Most of us, after all, have a lot of "things," and money in the bank to buy more. It is interesting to think what would happen next if, adding a few more examples: those who have two cars should rush out upon this Sunday to find some poor immigrant family that cannot afford to buy a car and needs one badly to get to a job. One wonders what would happen if those who own a vacation house should quickly inquire about a homeless family who might be installed there. With some flights of imagination we might picture ourselves turning the clothes out of our closets, the food out of our freezers, furniture and valuables out of our homes, and finding ourselves surrounded by a very peaceful simplicity. According to the Baptist we would then be ready for the day of the Lord.

It is an interesting fantasy, but it does capture something of the magic if Christmas has any meaning for Christians. The figure of John the Baptist seems to say to us that if the full realization of Christ's coming to us continues to elude us, it may be because we are too busy defending our possessions, our privileges and our power against those who have nothing.

And if the thought of coming judgment is one that inspires fear more than hope, this in itself indicates where our choices lie in relation to God's kingdom. It may be necessary to make some very radical changes and renunciations before we find all our joy in the Lord.

Christmas is also the time to tell stories. First of all, we tell the story of Jesus: how and why and when he was born and in which conditions; then down to centuries, the Church and everyone may have a story of how we have experienced the celebration of Christmas. This week I will tell you my experience of Christmas' celebration when I first lived under the control of communist regime.

When the communists came to power in the country, they strongly disapproved of setting aside any special day for religious purposes for they're all atheists in theory. To show they meant it, they forbid any religious activity on Christmas Day and all people had to go to work.

All citizens obeyed the government but most Catholics, a minority in the country, defied the ban and went to church on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. As we were receiving Communion on Christmas Night, a large group of police broke in. They waited till the Mass was over then arrested all worshippers including babies and children. They took us to a community hall. The hungry babies and children cried. However, they didn't have enough rooms to imprison all of us, we were soon let go, except the pastor and parish council members.

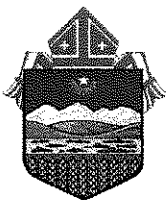
The pastor and parish council members were released one by one after serving from two to five years in what so-called re-education camps because of their sins of celebrating Mass on Christmas Night!

No one now, even the communists, is likely to try canceling Christmas again, but for many, perhaps, the real Christmas is already cancelled. Perhaps, the true cause for celebration of Christmas already has been forgotten.

Rejoice and be merry in songs and in mirth!
O praise our Redeemer, all mortals on earth!
For this is the birthday of Jesus our King,
Who brought us salvation-His praises we'll sing.

Cancellation or renewal, which will it be? Christ is at the center of Christmas (Mass for Christ) or anything else? Does John the Baptist have to tell us again: "*I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.*" (Lk 3: 17)

Maranatha, Come, Lord Jesus!



Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary

Announcements from the Catholic Pastoral Centre for
December 16th 2012, Third Sunday of Advent

Office of Liturgy

Christian Unity

The Week of Christian Unity takes place January 18 – 25, 2013. This year all Christians are asked to consider the prophet Micah's question: *What Does God Require of Us?* (Micah 6:6-8). The path of Christian discipleship involves walking the path of justice, mercy, and humility. The metaphor of walking has been chosen to link together the eight days of prayer because it communicates the dynamism which characterises Christian discipleship. Christians of all denominations are encouraged to engage in prayer with one another and for the unity of Christians during this week. The Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary is hosting an evening of worship for the week of Christian unity **January 24, 2013 at 7pm at St. Mary's Cathedral, Calgary.** Bishop Frederick Henry will be presiding and preaching. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Reconciliation: All Parishes in the Diocese of Calgary were encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation every Wednesdays during this Advent Season, in addition to the regular parish schedule. Wednesday **December 19th** from **7:30pm to 8:30pm** is the last day. Please visit <http://liturgy.calgarydiocese.ca>.

Social Justice Ministry

Syrian Crisis Relief Effort - The Holy Father has appealed for international efforts to assist Syrian refugees fleeing Syria and to encourage peace efforts in this region. See Vatican website at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/angelus/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_ang_20120729_en.html.

CNEWA - Canada, the Canadian Catholic Near East Welfare Association is collecting funds to assist refugees fleeing Syria. Our Diocese is accepting financial donations to assist Syrian refugee victims and all funds will be forwarded to CNEWA-Canada. Donations can be made as follows:

- by sending a cheque payable to your parish earmarked "Syrian Relief Effort"
- by sending a cheque payable to the Diocese earmarked "Syrian Relief Effort" and sent to the Pastoral Centre, 120 17th Ave S.W., Calgary AB T2S 2T2.

Religious Education Office

The Diocesan Religious Education Office will host a weekend **Level I – Part 1 Training Seminar on the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd** presented by the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Association of Canada. Level I deals with early childhood catechesis and invites the learner to discover and deepen their relationship with God, by exploring The Word of God, The Liturgy and many hands-on materials that initiate the first stages of contemplation. If you feel called to become a Catechist for pre-schoolers, join us for this formation process on **February 15th to 18th 2013** at the **Catholic Pastoral Centre** in Calgary. For more information and to register: Contact Rachel at 403-470-5668 or email rhuebert@gmail.com before Dec. 17th 2012.

Life and Family Resource Centre

Give a calendar to a friend for Christmas and support Project Rachel, the ministry of healing and reconciliation after an abortion experience. **The 2013 "A Song for Rachel" calendars are still on sale.** The calendars feature all churches that have hosted "A Song for Rachel" in the past, the feast days of the Catholic Church, and local events. Cost per calendar is \$15.00 or \$25.00 for two. Contact the Life & Family Resource Centre for orders at 403-218-5505.

FERTILITAS is a ministry for couples dealing with fertility issues. The next meeting is scheduled for **Monday, December 17 at 12:00 noon** at the **Catholic Pastoral Centre**. For more information or to register please contact Gabriele at 403-218-5504.

Calgary Catholic Medical Association: The next meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, January 12, 2013** at the **Catholic Pastoral Centre** in Calgary. Please contact gabriele.kalincak@calgarydiocese.ca if you would like to join.

The next **Transitions program** is starting on **Tuesday, January 29, 2013 at 7:00 pm**. This program is a support group for men and women who are newly separated and divorced. For more information contact the Life & Family Resource Centre at 403-218-5504 or gabriele.kalincak@calgarydiocese.ca.

The **Calgary Diocesan Marriage Preparation** program "For Better and For Ever", accepts all couples preparing for marriage. Smaller group settings allow us to focus on couples in one or more of the following circumstances: living together, previously married, beginning marriage with children, couples 45+, or those who wish to have their marriage blessed in the Church. For information and/or to register call the Life and Family Resource Centre at 403-218-5504 email lifeandfamily@calgarydiocese.ca. We only have a few spots left for the **next available program held on Jan 14 and Feb 1-2, 2013**.

Effective Co-Parenting: Putting Kids First is a 5-evening program for those parenting through separation or divorce. Co-parents should ideally not attend the series together, as this is an educational, not counseling, program. Topics covered include best practices for communication with a former spouse, and needs of children experiencing separation/divorce in the family with developmentally-appropriate ideas for every stage from infants/toddlers, through school-aged, to teens and young adults. Contact the Life and Family Resource Centre at 403-218-5504 for more information, upcoming dates, and/or registration.

Calgary HomeSHARE connects senior homeowners with adult homeseekers who assist 4-10 hours / week with simple household tasks in exchange for safe, affordable accommodation. Check FAQs at www.calgaryseniors.org for more information, phone 403-266-6200, or email homeshare@calgaryseniors.org for application forms.

Youth Ministry

One Rock 2013 presents World Youth Day at Home

Mark your Calendar for **July 26th, 27th and 28th 2013** for the Festival of the Century.

The Diocese of Calgary and the Archdiocese of Edmonton are commemorating their Jubilee Anniversaries in part at the One Rock Festival this year. Also, One Rock is presenting World Youth Day at Home with all the dioceses of the province. There are new and interesting **Pilgrimages**, a new **Venue** at Mt. St. Francis, new **Guest Artists and Speakers**. If you want to join our volunteer team please sign up at www.OneRock.ca.

WYD Rio - 2013. If you are planning to go to World Youth Day in Rio and would be interested to volunteer for the Social Media network in Rio please contact Mary Ann Donaleshen at maryann.donaleshen@calgarydiocese.ca or 403-218-5516 for further details.

St. Michael Catholic Church, Calgary

Job Opportunity for Custodian

St. Michael Catholic Community is seeking to hire a custodian. This is a full time opportunity (approx. 37.5 hrs a week) which may involve occasional evening and weekend work. Please submit your covering letter and resume to dquan@saintmichael.ca by December 21. For more information please contact Don Quan at dquan@saintmichael.ca or 403 249 0423 ext. 107.



Bringing Home the Word



3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT December 16, 2012

Handle God's People With Care

By Diane M. Houdek

The people coming to hear John the Baptist in Luke's Gospel live in a kind of exile from the community, but they, too, have heard the call to conversion. They are people who need to be encouraged, who need to be healed. They approach the desert prophet with a question, wanting to know if this message he preaches makes sense of their lives, wanting to know what it will demand of them. John handles them gently, compassionately. He is realistic without compromising his message. He understands that people grow slowly in faith, that they're easily frightened, easily discouraged.

Advent is a time of coming home, of reconciliation. When our lives are uncertain, we need to be able to hold

on to something. We're called home through simple traditions, through memories, through prayer. We're welcomed home by those who tell us the promise of the Good News again and again until we believe it. We need people who can stay with us in our confusion, people who can remind us of the promise, who can believe in us when we struggle to believe in ourselves. We need one another to help us discover the unique gifts we have to offer to a broken world and to a Church struggling to become God's promise to all people.

Many of the people who celebrate Advent and Christmas liturgies in our midst have fallen away from communities where they felt no welcome. Some have run from an image of a demanding, unbending, and unemotional God. Some have drifted from what at times seems like an institutional tangle of rules and rituals. We ourselves may be confused about what the Church and the Gospel ask of us.

We come hesitantly into the circle of the community. We come with questions and defensiveness. We're excited, yet apprehensive. We anticipate, but we also doubt. At times we're overwhelmed by fear. We need to hear the message John speaks to the soldiers and the tax collectors, the rich and the poor—a message of personal integrity and honest, human relationships. The soldiers and the tax collectors didn't

need to be told once more that they were part of an unjust and oppressive system. And we don't need to be told that our lives are chaotic, misguided, or sinful. We know this. We need to hear a realistic challenge to transform those lives to reflect the coming of the kingdom.

Just as John gently leads his disciples to conversion, Zephaniah speaks words of encouragement and reassurance to his people. He shows them a vision of God rejoicing over them, renewing them in love, singing joyfully because of them. This intensely personal and intimate awareness of God's presence in their lives tells them they have no further misfortune to fear, held as they are in God's love.

The conversion to which we are called is a change in attitude, an awareness of our fellow human beings as persons, not objects for exploitation. This will do more to bring about the kingdom than all the empty talk about salvation and being chosen, than all the spectacular feats of prayer, fasting, and other rituals. Be aware of your neighbor's needs and do all you can to live your life in such a way that the message of God's love can be heard.

The Lord is near to us—he is Emmanuel, God with us—and this gives us the integrity we need to live the promise according to our means. The Spirit of the Lord will lead us into the ways of the kingdom. ✚

SUNDAY READINGS

Zephaniah 3:14-18a

A prophet talks about God's blessings. The people will be full of joy and song.

Philippians 4:4-7

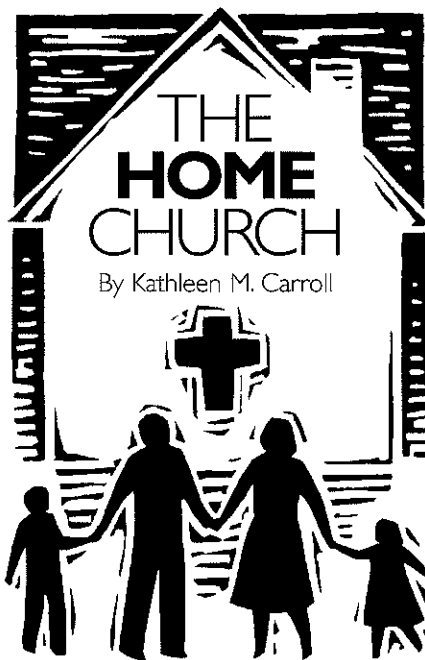
Paul urges us to rejoice because the Lord is near. We are to trust totally in him.

Luke 3:10-18

John the Baptist instructs the crowds on how they are to concretely prepare for the coming of the Messiah.


REFLECTION
QUESTIONS
QUESTIONS
REFLECTION

- What would you say to someone who hasn't felt God's love in their experience of church?
- How might you best describe what the Good News means in your life?
- What responsibility do we have to people who have felt betrayed or abandoned by the religious community?



THE HOME CHURCH

By Kathleen M. Carroll


Follow Francis

Francis lived the Gospel in a literal and uncompromising manner. One of the things that sets him apart even from many other saints was the way he embraced the message of Jesus and walked so closely in his steps that he ended up bearing the wounds of the crucifixion in his own flesh. But throughout his life, he felt and showed a deeply joyful attitude not only toward God but toward all of creation. And that, too, is part of what it means to live the Gospel to the fullest extent possible.

He emphasized to his followers that they were to examine their own lives rather than pointing fingers at others. In his Rule of 1223, the rule of life that still governs Franciscan life today, he said, "I warn all the friars and exhort them not to condemn or look down on people whom they see wearing soft or gaudy clothes and enjoying luxuries in food or drink; each one should rather condemn and despise himself."

Like John the Baptist preaching to the soldiers and tax collectors, like Jesus preaching to the sinners, Francis knew that the best way to bring people to God was to love them with divine love.

As today's Gospel shows, John the Baptist knew that spirituality was no one-size-fits-all affair. Each walk of life has its own temptations; each individual has his or her own weaknesses. While it is sometimes easier to see others' failings than our own, John's words give us a good starting point.

"Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none." Advent is the perfect time to sort through our excess belongings. Many of us are making room for the clutter that accompanies Christmas gifts. If we do so with a bit of foresight, we also might create a few much-appreciated gifts that could go to someone truly in need.

Sort through those less-loved, wrong-sized, or unflattering clothes, and make a gift of them to a local family, parish clothing drive, or charity resale shop. Buy a few extra grocery items when doing your holiday shopping and drop them off at a food pantry or make a gift basket for a neighbor or friend in need. While we're "making way" for the goodies we hope to find under the tree, we also can make way for the Lord in our hearts.


PRAYER

○ God,
fountain of all life and joy,
renew us by the power
of your Holy Spirit
that we may joyfully
keep your commands
and carry to all
the Good News of
the Savior, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

WEEKDAY READINGS

Monday	Gn 49:2, 8-10/Mt 1:1-17	Thursday	Is 7:10-14/Lk 1:26-38
Tuesday	Jer 23:5-8/Mt 1:18-25	Friday	Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/ Lk 1:39-45
Wednesday	Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Lk 1:5-25	Saturday	I Sm 1:24-28/Lk 1:46-56