

# HOLY FAMILY PARISH



12/9/2012 Second Sunday of Advent

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

6933 Fax: 403-526-2482

email: [contact@holyfamilymh.ca](mailto:contact@holyfamilymh.ca)

website: [www.holyfamilymh.ca](http://www.holyfamilymh.ca)

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

Closed on Statutory Holidays

Calgary Diocesan: [www.rcdiocese-calgary.ab.ca](http://www.rcdiocese-calgary.ab.ca)



Gospel Acclamation (Luke 3.4,6)

**Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

**Alleluia.**

**Pastor - Rev. Philip Le**

[frphilip@holyfamilymh.ca](mailto:frphilip@holyfamilymh.ca)

**Associate Pastor -**

**Rev. Matthew Emmelkamp**

[fmatthew@holyfamilymh.ca](mailto: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](mailto:medhatcatholicyouth@gmail.com)

Medicine Hat Catholic Youth on Facebook

Mass Times

**Saturday - 5:00 pm**

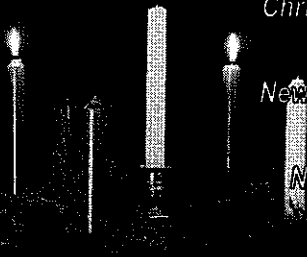
**Sunday - 8:30am, 10:30am & 6:00pm**

**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 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>

7:30pm - 8:30pm



## Christmas Mass Schedule

*Prayer* 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 \_\_\_\_\_



# 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 8/9, 2012

**First Reading (Bar. 5:1-9).** God's message to his Church: He bids us wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ. The prophet tries to describe to his contemporaries 'the thing that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.'

**Second Reading (Phil 1:3-6; 8-11)** Paul's remembrance of the Philippians leads to thanksgiving on their account: for the fervor with which they have accepted the gospel from the beginning. In his assurance of prayer for them he strikes the note of joy that will ring throughout the whole epistle. They have not only received the good news but have played their part in living and preaching the Gospel.

**Gospel (Luke 3:1-6).** The Baptist was the herald of Christ. Here Luke is plunging and firmly inserting the event into its historical context. Preparing a way for the Lord can well mean very radical changes in our life style.

## OPERATING FINANCES (November 29-December 6, 2012)

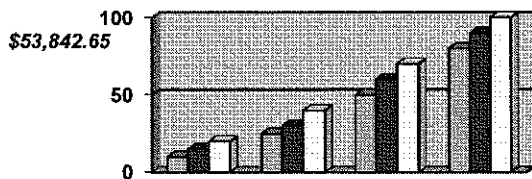
-Cost to operate our Parish (Budget)	\$16,500
-General Collections:	\$19,094
-Debt reduction (Mortgage)	\$24,502
-Total parish support:	\$43,596
-Exceed of (Shortfall)	\$27,096

Special Collections;

***Together in Action:.....	\$3449
***World Missions:.....	\$63
***St Vincent de Paul:.....	\$1,249
***NET Ministries:.....	\$110
***CARO:.....	\$200
***Catholic Education Sunday:.....	\$500
***Mission Mexico:.....	\$100
***Food Bank/Gift Sharing.....	\$3,380

TIA up to date: \$53,842.65/\$59,979.00 (90%)

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 9<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT MISSION MEXICO SUNDAY

- + PARISH BREAKFAST AFTER BOTH MORNING MASSES
- + **Mass: 8:30am** (Intention: Russ Quinn ☩)
- + CWL Bake Sale after Mass
- + 1<sup>st</sup> Communion/Reconciliation: 10:15am – Faith Room
- + **Mass: 10:30am** (Intention: Holy Family Parish)
- + 1 Baptism at 10:30 Mass
- + CWL Bake Sale after Mass
- + Library: open after morning Masses
- + Junior Choir Practice: 2:30pm – 4:30pm in HFP
- + Confirmation Class: 5:00pm – Faith Room
- + **Mass: 6:00pm** (Intention: Jackie Moser ☩)
- + CGL (Catholic Girls League) Bake Sale after Mass
- + Unchained Youth: 6:00pm Mass & in the Parish Hall

### MON, DEC 10<sup>th</sup>

- + **Mass-9:00am** (Intention: Theresa Kambeitz)
- + Circle of Friends Charismatic Prayer Group: 7:00pm - St. Joseph's Home
- + Light Up for Christ: 7:00pm in Holy Family Parish Hall

### TUES, DEC 11<sup>th</sup>

- + St Vincent de Paul Meeting: 4:00pm at St. Patrick's Church
- + **Mass: 6:00pm** (Intention: Emelia Feist ☩)
- + CWL Potluck Supper after 6:00pm Mass
- + **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: After Mass to 8:30pm**
- + **Penitential Service: 7:00pm at St. Patrick's Church**

### WED, DEC 12<sup>th</sup> OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

- + **Mass: 8:20am** at St. Francis School
- + **Mass: 9:00am** (Intention: Holy Souls in Purgatory ☩) with Notre Dame School
- + Breakfast after Mass
- + Bible Study: 9:30am – Faith Room
- + Ministry to the aged: 1:30pm – Sunnyside
- + Ministry to the aged: 3:30pm – Good Samaritans
- + Choir Practice for 6:00 Mass: 6:00 – Church
- + RCIA: 6:00pm – Pot Luck Christmas Supper in HFP Hall
- + Finance Meeting: 7:00pm in the Hope Room
- + **Reconciliation: 7:30 - 8:30pm**

## THURS, DEC 13<sup>th</sup> ST. LUCY, VIRGIN, MARTYR

---

- + Men's Prayer Group: 6:30am – Charity Room
- + **Mass: 9:30am** (Intention: William Hecker & Albert D'amour †) with Mother Teresa and St. Thomas Schools
- + Mother Teresa and St. Thomas Schools Church Walk at 10:30am
- + Mother Teresa and St. Thomas Schools Dinner at 1:30 in Hall
- + Rosary Guild: 130pm in the Charity Room
- + **Holy Hour:** 6:00pm – Chapel
- + Knights of Columbus #7325 Meeting: 6:30pm in the Hope Room
- + Knights of Columbus #7325 Social: 7:30pm in the Faith Room
- + Choir Practice for 8:30 & 10:30 Masses: 7:00pm in the Church

## FRI, DEC 14<sup>th</sup> ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

---

- + **Mass: 9:00am** (Intention: Donald Zahn †)
- + **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** After Mass until Noon
- + Breakfast after Mass
- + Ministry to the aged: 10:00am – The Wellington
- + Ministry to the aged: 10:00am – Meadowlands
- + Seniors Tea: 2:00pm in Holy Family Parish Hall
- + EQUIP: 7:00-9:00pm in Holy Family Parish Hall

## SAT, DEC 15<sup>th</sup>

---

- + 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
- + **3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
- + **Mass: 5:00pm** (Intention: Lena Koch †)

## SUN, DEC 16<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT

---

- + **Mass: 8:30am** (Intention: Jack Guckert †)
- + **Mass: 10:30am** (Intention: Holy Family Parish)
- + Library: open after morning Masses
- + Junior Choir Practice: 2:30pm – 4:30pm in HFP
- + 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Knights of Columbus Christmas Supper: 5:30pm in the Holy Family Parish Hall.
- + **Mass: 6:00pm** (Intention: John W Schafer †)

## 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

## RECONCILIATION AND PENITENTIAL SERVICE

---

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. 12 and 19)
2. Several priests will come for Penitential Service at St. Pat's on Tuesday Dec. 11 and at Holy Family Dec. 18 at 7 pm. Everyone is welcome.

### *Come, sit in this chair—Prepare the way of the Lord!*

When we go out to meet others we take care to put on the right clothes, wash our face, style our hair, and look our best. John the Baptist looked rough on the outside but the message of Jesus was heard through his words and actions. All who have been baptized have a responsibility to proclaim the Gospel and witness the Christian life. This Advent, consider not only your physical appearance but whether your words and actions set an example of Christian discipleship for others to follow. The sacrament of reconciliation is an opportunity to *prepare the way of the Lord* by preparing ourselves to be more authentic witnesses to the Gospel. 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—Prepare the way of the Lord!*

**Action:** *This week, go proclaim the Gospel with your actions. Become an agent of love; commit a random act of kindness.*

### POSTURE DURING THE COMMUNION

---

The first Sunday of Advent, Dec. 1, marks as 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



## LIGHT UP FOR CHRIST



A social evening hosted by the Knights of Columbus and the CWL on Monday 10 in the Parish Hall at 7:00pm. Christmas carolling followed by a reception. All Parishioners and Families Welcome

### 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.

### NET TEAM UPDATE

#### Equip Christmas Extravaganza – Gr. 6-9

Join the NET team for an awesome night of Christmas games and challenges that promise to be crazy and fun! Come out from 7pm- 9pm on Friday December 14th at St. Pat's Parish! Hope to see you there!

#### Unchained- Gr. 10-12

Let's ask what we can do to help! Join the NET team on Sunday Dec. 9th for the Wally Walk for the poor, a challenge to see how much food we can get for the food bank! 7pm-9pm! Meet at Holy Family Parish! Dress warm and bring a friend!

#### Parish-wide Adoration

Life can often get so busy, sometimes you just need time to reflect! Join us for an evening of prayer and Adoration, Tuesday Dec. 11th following 6 pm Mass at Holy Family Parish!

All are welcome!

## SACRAMENT CLASSES

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



### 4<sup>TH</sup> DEGREE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

The 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Knights of Columbus will be hosting their Christmas Supper – December 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 in the Holy Family Parish Hall.



### CWL

CWL Potluck Dinner is on December 11 after the 6:00pm Mass. Desserts will be provided.

#### How Can I Enrich my Faith

Would you like to join women from all across Canada in an organization that can foster and celebrate your Catholic Faith? The CWL is rooted in gospel values and calls you and all members to holiness through service to all people of God.

You are invited to join League sisters as you pray for one another and walk the gospel road together.

Special CWL occasions are often celebrated with the Eucharist. The CWL motto is "For God and Canada". Mary is honored as Our Lady of Good Counsel."

You are encouraged to deepen your spiritual understanding and study Catholic teachings – an important CWL initiative.

As a CWL member, you joyfully affirm that God's presence blesses every aspect of ordinary life including meetings, volunteer projects and celebrations.

Come Join Us! For more information call Rita at (403)527-7580

### 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 will begin 3:00 – 4:00pm Sunday December 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> at Holy Family Parish.

### REDISCOVERING CATHOLICISM

#### REDISCOVERING CATHOLICISM: THANK YOU

I would like to thank all of you who have attended the Rediscovering Catholicism sessions this year. You are my joy and inspiration! We will meet again with new sessions in February 2013. Fr. Philip

## **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!

## **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.

## **CHURCH BUS**

---

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

## **POWERPOINT & SOUNDBOARD**

---

For all PowerPoint and Soundboard people... 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.

## **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.

## **FAITH TESTIMONY**

---

Quite a number of years ago, before Easter as I was preparing myself for confession, I became restless and didn't know why. I had always tried to make a good confession, so wondered why I was troubled now. After much prayer and thought I remembered hearing about Padre Pio. He heard many confessions and knew whether the penitents were being honest. I prayed to him, and he gave me an answer.

What came to mind was that I felt the priest at that time always passed me by. Because of this, I tried to avoid him too. As soon as I could I made arrangements to meet with Father. Padre Pio had awakened me to realize that I had judged the man and instead I should love the priest. I asked Father to forgive me. We both embraced, and he said he was sorry too. If you want to make a good confession, pray to Padre Pio to inspire you.

If you would like to read about Padre Pio, you can find a lot on the internet. Pope John Paul II canonized him in 2002 as Saint Pio of Pietrelcina.

Saint Padre Pio pray for us.

## **MISSION MEXICO SUNDAY**

---

Mission Mexico is an outreach project of Catholics in the Diocese of Calgary. Our goal is to provide funding for microeconomics, education, health and human rights projects in one of the poorest regions of Mexico.

## **COOK SOUTHLAND FUNERAL CHAPEL**

---

THANK YOU TO COOK SOUTHLAND FUNERAL CHAPEL for their donation of the 2013 Calendars. If you did not get one; they are available in the greeting area. We ask that you only take 1 so all parishioners can get one. Thank You.

## Fr. Philip's

A priest died and was waiting in line at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him was a guy who was dressed in sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket, and jeans. Saint Peter addressed this guy, "Who are you, so that I may know whether or not to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?"

The guy replied, "I'm Joe Cohen, taxi-driver, of Noo Yawk City." Saint Peter consulted his list. He smiled and said to the cab-driver, "Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom." The guy went into Heaven with his robe and staff.

Next it was the priest's turn. He stood erect and boomed out, "I am Joseph Snow, pastor of Holy Family for the last 8 years."

Saint Peter consulted his list. He said to the priest, "Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom." "Just a minute," said the priest. "That man was a cab-driver and he got a silken robe and golden staff. And me? How can this be?"

"Sorry! Up here, we work by results," says Saint Peter.

"While you preached, people slept; while he drove, people prayed."

This week John the Baptist and the prophet Baruch take responsibility to preach and we cannot fall asleep when they are preaching. Supposed all of us, after this Sunday Mass, go out to different directions, some going North, some going South, some East, some West; as we go, we shout with a loudest voice, *"Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain, because the Lord is coming."*

What would the people think of us? They would think that we might be fanatic. Yet that is what the prophets Baruch and John the Baptist were doing. We might well wonder if Baruch and John took any pleasure or got any satisfaction out of the role they had to play. No doubt they felt called by God to this special task, but they must have felt uncomfortable saying things to people that they did not want to hear. The people in exile or under the Roman dominion might enjoy the first part of their message: "the Lord is coming." The Lord is coming, he will make the new Exodus; he will lead the people through the desert back to their homeland as Moses did in the past. No more exile; No more Roman dominion. But the second part: "you must repent and get ready for his coming," who wants to be told like that?

Yet that is what we are reminded of each Advent season. We are joyfully waiting for Christmas. We rejoice at the coming of the Lord. He is the Saviour for all. Often we do not want to be disturbed; yet there are some areas in our lives where we should be disturbed. The valley of lacking charity, love, and kindness should be lifted up. The mountain and hill of pride should be made low. The uneven ground of indifferences should become level. The rough places of selfishness should become a plain of care and compassion. Then we will see the salvation of the Lord.

With the birthday of Christ just a few weeks away, we hear the strong voice of John the Baptist: "Repent, for the Lord is coming." What is the connection between repentance and preparation for Christ's coming?

Go back to the time when John spoke those words. The chosen people of God were waiting for the Messiah, much as we are waiting for him to come at Christmas. The Lord has come to the real world. Ironically, the names St. Luke mentioned at the very beginning of his gospel such as Herod, Pontius Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, who should repent, but did not, and at the end, they killed the Saviour. Who were they? Here is some information:

- The fifteenth year of Tiberias is, likely, 27/28 AD.
- Pilate was the procurator 26-36 AD.
- Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great and Malthake, was the tetrarch of Galilee from 4 BC to 39 AD.
- Philip, son of Herod the Great and Cleopatra (not the famous Egyptian queen) was the tetrarch of territories Northeast of the sea of Galilee from 4 BC to 34 AD.
- Caiaphas was the high priest from 18 to 36 AD; he was a son-in-law of Annas who had been high priest from 6 to 15 AD. Annas' influence was very great (five of his sons and his son-in-law had been high priests) and that is why Luke can associate him with Caiaphas and speak of 'the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas' (cf. Jn. 18 :13-24; Acts 4 :6).

To repent means to feel sorry for what we have done or not done to the point of deciding to change. To repent means to take a new viewpoint, a new attitude. It includes a turning to God. All this we must do if Christmas is to mean what God wants it to mean for us. What are we doing that displeases God - Is it cursing, missing Mass, excessive drinking, anger, impurity, dishonesty, gossip? What are we NOT doing of the things that please God - talking to him in prayer, learning what he has told us in the Bible, making an effort to be thoughtful of others, helping the needy?

Doing what God does not want, not doing what God wants - these are the barriers that prevent Christ from coming to us in a special way at Christmas. Get rid of those sins, and we will be able to celebrate Christmas meaningfully.

For Catholics there is a special way of repenting - the Sacrament of confession or reconciliation. A true Catholic tries to use this means of repentance before Christmas, as we will do on Tuesdays 11 & 18 as well as Wednesdays Dec. 12 & 19. The Sacrament of reconciliation not only takes away our sins, it gives us special graces, helps us to avoid sin, and strengthens us to serve God more sincerely. Grace, mercy, forgiveness, and sorrow for sin - these are themes of the Holy Mass which offers to the heavenly Father the broken Body of Jesus and his blood, shed "so that sins may be forgiven."

***Maranatha, Come, Lord Jesus!***



# Bringing Home the Word



2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT December 9, 2012

## Our Encounters With the Divine

By Diane M. Houdek

Prophets don't come into our lives every day, and they don't always make the sort of impression that the biblical prophets must have made. But if we begin to understand how they experienced God, we might begin to see that even we ourselves have moments of prophetic insight.

Prophets are gifted with an intense personal awareness of God's love for his people. Their call both inspires and compels them to preach this word to those who will listen—and to those who close their ears. From the time a prophet hears the Word of God, the burning desire is to find the words that will express this eternal message to the people of one time and place.

### SUNDAY READINGS

#### **Baruch 5:1-9**

A servant of God announces the restoration of Jerusalem. The holy city will be a place of peace and prosperity.

#### **Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11**

Paul prays with joy that his converts will grow in love so as to be ready for Christ's glorious coming.

#### **Luke 3:1-6**

John the Baptist receives a prophetic call in the desert to prepare for the coming Messiah by administering a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin.

The Word of God was spoken to John, son of Zechariah, in the desert. He prepared himself not through the temple observances of his father the priest but through desert fasts and prayers. He came out of the desert preaching reform and conversion, telling all that the kingdom of God was at hand. Though his message might have seemed strange and radical to the people who heard him, it was much the same as the message preached by the great Hebrew prophets.

One of these prophets, Baruch, tried to stir the people out of their spiritual lethargy during their long exile in Babylon. He wanted them to live beyond their mourning, their passive longing for the old ways, the old days, their return to their homeland. He told them the Lord was near, the Lord was among them, the Lord would save them. Baruch encouraged the people on the strength of the covenant promise, the promise that had formed them and held them together as a people.

John the Baptist, of whom Jesus spoke of as the greatest of the prophets, desired nothing more than to tell people of the love of God. The call to be a prophet makes demands, asking one to risk everything for the Word. Through his long days and nights in the desert, John must have known the experience of being alone with only the whisper of God's Word in his heart.

When John found his message, he

clung to it: "Prepare the way of the Lord. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent and believe the good news." That message still rings true today. We know that in our world, in our families, in our own lives, the Good News of God's love often gets lost. We need to find ways to return to that word again and again. We need to find ways to share it with our loved ones. We need to let people know love is stronger than fear. We need to hold fast to our belief that God cares for our world, all appearances to the contrary.

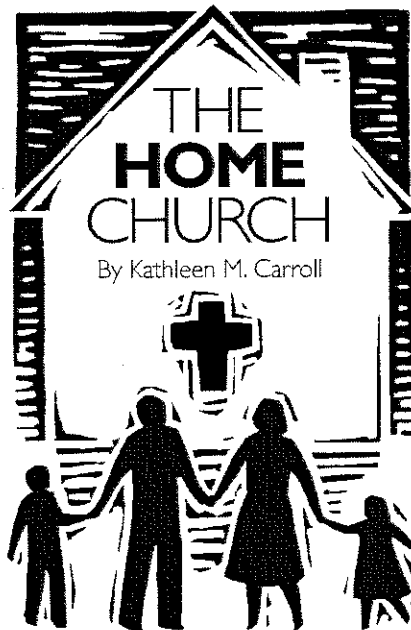
We might ask what mighty prophets like Baruch and John the Baptist have to do with our lives today. We find the answer in Paul's Letter to the Philippians. His unabashed love for his community and his joy in the way they have responded to God's Word comes through in every word. We need to be reminded to value the things that really matter—love, faith, justice, compassion. Paul's prayer for his community becomes ours today: "My prayer is that your love may more and more abound, both in understanding and wealth of experience."

The Lord is in our midst. We are called to share our stories of our encounters with the divine in our daily lives. We might think we're voices crying in the wilderness. We might be afraid people will call us foolish. But in our day, as in John's, the kingdom of heaven is indeed at hand. †

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- Who, in our time, has a prophetic voice?
- When have you felt so inspired by the Word of God that you had to share it with someone?
- Why do people often close their ears to today's prophets? What might motivate them to listen?



An old joke tells of a five-year-old boy who never spoke. His parents took him to doctors and specialists, but none could find a physical reason for the child's muteness. Then, one night at dinner, the boy threw his plate against the wall, and said, "I'm not eating this swill!" Far from being offended, his parents rejoiced to hear their son's voice for the first time. "Son, why have you never spoken in all this time?" they begged. Looking at them, the boy replied, "Up till now, everything was OK."

Today's Gospel describes John as one "crying in the wilderness." In the midst of family life, there is a lot of crying—from an infant's first efforts at communication to the two-year-old's "no" to the teenager's "I hate you," we hear it all. Unlike most of the complaints we hear, John's "crying" wasn't self-directed; he preached for the benefit of his listeners.

What sort of crying do we do? Do we bemoan every setback and inconvenience in our own lives, or do we lift our voices in defense of those who really need our help? This Advent might be a time to consider turning down the volume on our own complaints and turning up our voice of compassion.



## Follow Francis

St. Francis's sharper edges have been somewhat softened by time and the popular imagination. But he would have understood John the Baptist. Francis accepted somewhat reluctantly the pope's command to the Lesser Brothers to preach the Word of God as they wandered the street. Once he accepted that call, he didn't hesitate to call people to repentance. But he always tempered his words with the mercy and love of God.

"...We must bring forth therefore fruits befitting repentance (Luke 3: 8) and love our neighbors as ourselves. Anyone who will not or cannot love his neighbor as himself should at least do him good and not do him any harm. Those who have been entrusted with the power of judging others should pass judgment mercifully just as they themselves hope to obtain mercy from God. For judgment is without mercy to him who has not shown mercy (James 2:13). We must be charitable, too, and humble, and give alms...We lose everything which we leave behind us in this world; we can bring with us only the right to a reward for our charity and the alms we have give" (*Letter to All the Faithful*).


## PRAYER

God of infinite love,  
make straight a path  
for yourself  
in our hearts;  
bring low the mountains  
of our pride;  
prepare us to celebrate  
with ardent faith  
the coming of our  
Savior, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

## WEEKDAY READINGS

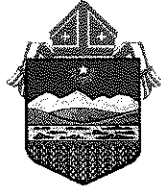
Monday Is 35:1-10/Lk 5:17-26  
Tuesday Is 40:1-11/Mt 18:12-14  
Wednesday Zec 2:14-17/Lk 1:26-38  
*Our Lady of Guadalupe*

Thursday Is 41:13-20/Mt 11:11-15 *Lucy*  
Friday Is 48:17-19/Mt 11:16-19  
*John of the Cross*  
Saturday Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Mt 17:9a, 10-13

Bringing Home  
the Word   
December 9, 2012

Copyright © 2012, Franciscan Media, 28 W. Liberty St., Cincinnati, OH 45202.  
Editor: Diane M. Houdek; Illustrations: Julie Lonneman.  
For licensing information, call 1-800-488-0488 or visit [BringingHomeTheWord.org](http://BringingHomeTheWord.org).  
All rights reserved. Distribution rights granted only to license holders.





# Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary

Announcements from the Catholic Pastoral Centre for  
December 9th 2012, Second Sunday of Advent

## Mission Mexico

**Mission Mexico Weekend: Dec 8/9.** Bishop Henry has again declared the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe as Mission Mexico Day in the Diocese of Calgary. Mission Mexico is an outreach project of Catholics in the Diocese of Calgary to marginalized communities in southern Mexico. In partnership with a number of accountable on-site agencies, we fund culturally sensitive, dignity-affirming initiatives in health, education and human rights. These have included construction of a high school, equipping computer labs and libraries, funding clean water and sanitation projects, underwriting adult literacy programs, and providing student bursaries. We are asking every parishioner in the diocese to contribute a loonie on Mission Mexico Day to support this missionary outreach. **At Masses on December 8-9 a special collection will be received for Mission Mexico.**

## Office of Liturgy

CELEBRATE THE SACRAMENT  
OF  
**RECONCILIATION**  
EVERY WEDNESDAY IN ADVENT

ALL PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF CALGARY  
IN ADDITION TO THE REGULAR PARISH SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 5, 12, 19  
7:30PM and 8:30PM

[HTTP://LITURGY.CALGARYDIOCESE.CA](http://liturgy.calgarydiocese.ca)

## 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 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:rhuebert@gmail.com). before Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> 2012.

## Life and Family Resource Centre

It is still time to get your **2013 “A Song for Rachel” calendar**. This lasting treasure featuring all churches that have hosted the event, the feast days of the Catholic Church, and local events, can be given as a Christmas gift to family and friends. Cost per calendar is \$15.00 or \$25.00 for two. Contact the Life & Family Resource Centre for orders at 403-218-5505.

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](mailto: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](mailto: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 Pro-Life** gives free educational programs to raise awareness of respect for all life. To continue spreading this important message we need your help. Please, support us by becoming a member and/or making a donation. Call 403-243-0691 or visit [www.calgaryprolife.com](http://www.calgaryprolife.com). Donations maybe made through PayPal.

### Youth Ministry

#### **One Rock 2013 presents World Youth Day at Home**

Mark your Calendar for **July 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](mailto:maryann.donaleshen@calgarydiocese.ca) or 403-218-5516 for further details.

### Charities and Development Ministry

On October 18, 2012 Bishop Henry hosted more than **625 friends** for the 13th Annual Bishop's Dinner at Commonwealth Centre. Over a delicious sit down dinner, these friends – parishioners from all over the Diocese, priests, religious, school administrators, teachers, trustees and business professionals – enjoyed Bishop Henry's inspiring keynote address on Christian citizenship and the musical talents of Familyah. Thank you to our generous guests and donors for making this special evening possible! **We are pleased to announce that our beneficiaries will split a total of \$35,000.** On behalf of Acadia Place, Bishop O'Byrne Housing for Seniors Association and Elizabeth House, **thank you for sharing your time and treasure with us!**

We would welcome your feedback on this year's dinner as well as past dinners as we prepare for the Bishop's Centennial Dinner in 2013. Please complete one of the following surveys before December 31, 2012.

If you have attended in the past five years - [www.surveymonkey.com/s/6D5NW88](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6D5NW88)

If you have never attended or it is has been more than five years -  
[www.surveymonkey.com/s/653G7NY](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/653G7NY)