

REFLECTION for the Fourth Sunday in Advent.

Fr. Don

This Thursday/Friday we will gather to celebrate Christmas. We celebrate the coming of our Messiah, the *'Word made flesh.'* The true message/hope/mercy of Christmas is that Jesus saved/redeemed humanity. That includes you, me, our friends, our enemies, it includes everyone. It was the dawning of the *communion of saints.*

With God, we are all unique and precious; we are much loved Children of God. As scripture tells us humanity was groaning/longing for a Messiah. The Old Testament prophets, right up to the time of John the Baptist, heralded His coming. Hope would be restored.

Jesus' Nativity/Incarnation remains for Christians the single greatest moment in human history. That 'Night of the Angels', that O Holy Night, in Bethlehem, is our starting place of hope.

The Divine came to live among humans and opened heaven's doors to all who believe. In our present world, where God is irrelevant to so many, we fall on our knees praising Jesus for the faith that inspires us to keep believing. Lord, may the *worries of this life* not overcome us and lead us to despair. Let our hearts and souls *'repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy.'*

As St. Paul writes in *Romans 8: 'We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

For us mere mortals this is a difficult task for we are filled with doubts and sinful inclinations. Thank God, we can look in the bible and find examples of holy men and women who can show us the way by being role-models. Such is the case as we hear the words of the Gospel today.

The Blessed Virgin Mary has just said YES to God. She accepted, though a virgin, to bear the Christ-child in her womb. This surely was unbelievably perplexing to her but she humbly subjected herself to God saying, ***Thy will be done.*** What exemplary faith she shows to us. She personifies humility. But her example does not stop there.

No, she shows her love for others, encouraging us to do likewise. During the Annunciation the angel Gabriel tells Mary that her relative Elizabeth is pregnant. To leave a legacy of Christian service and witness for us, what does Mary do? She goes quickly to help her cousin; to be of assistance. We are told that she spent a few months there helping in any way she could. And behold the goodness of the Lord manifests itself to her then and to us now.

Guess what happens when Mary gets to her cousin's house? God uses Elizabeth to confirm to Mary that the angel's message to her is indeed an act of God- she is to be the Christ-bearer.

What joy for Mary, and indeed what joy for us, when the child in her womb *leaps for joy.* This moment in salvation history confirms for us that good things given results in good things received. The merciful God repays manifold the good that we do for others. Mary is our witness.

Sacred Heart Parish

A Stewardship parish in love with Christ.

Parish Information

Parish Administrator: Fr. Don Leonard
Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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Liturgical Celebrations

Weekend Masses:
Saturday - 4:30 pm
Sunday - 11:00 a.m.

Masses this Week:
Wed-7 pm
(See schedule for Christmas)

Holy Hour of Adoration:
Third Sunday of each Month
2:00 p.m.

Reconciliation
Wed after Mass,
or by request

Marriages:
Six month notice is required.
A year's notice is recommended.

Baptisms:
Celebrated at Weekend Mass
after preparation session.

December 20, 2015
The Fourth Sunday of Advent

RECEIVED WITH THANKS Dec 12/13

Collection	\$1,564.45
Building Fund	45.00
Mass requests	30.00
Votive Candles	61.55
Pastoral Dues	200.00
St. Vincent de Paul	20.00

MASS INTENTIONS

Dec 21	No Mass
Dec 22	No Mass
Dec 23	Dennis Murphy/Wayne Frampton
Dec 24 (7)	+ Griffin Family
Dec 24 (9)	John McCarthy, Linda Elkins, Bernice Fitzgerald
Dec 25	Elsie, Jerome, and Dana Beales
Dec 26	Geraldine and Edward Bennett
Dec 27	Parish Community

MASS SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS

-Thurs, Christmas Eve at 7 pm and 9 pm,
-Friday, Christmas Day at 11 am.
-Saturday Dec 26 and Sunday Dec 27,
regular weekend Mass times at 4:30 pm and
11 am respectively

NOTE: The choir will be offering a Carol presentation beginning at 8:30 pm, prior to the Christmas Eve 9 pm Mass.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

On behalf of myself, the pastor, the Parish Council, and all our Committees, I wish you all a joyous, happy, and Spirit-filling Merry Christmas. Thank you for your support over the past year. May your families and homes all be filled with joy and peace this

Christmas of 2015 (it comes no more). Let us resolve to continue to support each other by our prayers and generous giving of our gifts and talents.

THANK YOU TO CHOIRS

The parish extends joyous thanks to the choirs for the beautiful and inspiring Christmas Carol Concert they offered last Sunday evening. Truly we have amazing talent among its members. It was evident to all of us who attended.

EXPRESSION OF OUR GRATITUDE

During this season of giving and receiving, Sacred Heart Parish and its pastor wishes to extend best wishes and heartfelt gratitude to all our volunteers- the Lectors, Choirs, Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Altar Servers, Gift Presenters, Catechists, , Counters, Committee members, Ladies Group, Men's Group, and all Parishioners who witness by their presence. Hopefully no one feels left un-thanked or un-appreciated. We are God's Family and are one in the Lord.

Pray to God that, during this festive Christmas Season and beyond, we may continue to serve one another with humility, love, and compassion. May God continue to bless our parish.

CONFIRMATION

Classes begin for reception of this sacrament in the New Year. We have some youth registered. If you know of any not

registered please inform them and their parents that the classes are being offered.

JUBILEE YEAR of MERCY

The Jubilee Year of Mercy formally began with the opening by Pope Francis of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. On Sunday, December 13th, 2015, the remaining six permanent Holy Doors as well as all of those temporarily designated in all of the Dioceses of the world will be opened. Our Diocese has two Holy Doors – one at the Cathedral in Corner Brook and one at the Basilica in Labrador City. *The faithful of the Diocese are invited to consider making a pilgrimage to one of the Diocesan Holy Doors during this Jubilee Year of Mercy.*

MARY'S KITCHEN

Immaculate Heart of Mary School is planning to offer a meal to the poor/hungry each Friday from 5-6 pm at the school. They are seeking volunteers to help them in this corporal work of mercy during this Year of Mercy. If you wish to help in this effort please phone the school

WEEKLY SESSIONS HONORING MARY

Our Liturgy Committee is planning to offer a four week series of presentations focusing on Holy Mary and the Rosary. Each session will be an hour or so long. It will feature Prayer, Hymns, a 15 min DVD on Mary's role in salvation history, and recitation of the Scriptural Rosary. Of course a tea/coffee

social is included. Full details will follow in the New Year.

BIBLE STUDY

We also hope to begin a Bible study group early in the New Year. If this is of interest to you and you plan to attend please let Fr. Don know over the Christmas period. By doing so, we can determine the level of interest and the best time to gather for this endeavour. This is an initiative of the parish in celebration of the Year of Mercy.

POPE FRANCIS ON 'WHAT IS CHURCH.'

'There are three key traits of a true Church- A Church that is truly faithful to the Lord must be humble, poor, and trusting in God. To be a humble Church or a humble person one must be prepared to say: "I am a sinner." Humility is not a pretense.

To be poor in spirit means that one is attached only to the riches of God. We must say no to a Church that is attached to money, which thinks only of money, or which thinks only of how to earn money.

To be Church is to always trust in the Lord that never disappoints. Our faith can only be sustained if we abandon ourselves solely to the mercy of God. In God we must trust.'

Meditate on these words and ask yourself: Is Sacred Heart Parish a true Church according to the Pope's three keys?

PRAYER FOR YEAR OF MERCY (say daily)

Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.