

Our Parish COMMUNITY

December 21, 2025

Fourth Sunday of Advent (A)

Isaiah 7:10-14 / Romans 1:1-7 / Matthew 1:18-24



The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus.”

MATTHEW 1:20-21



Close Enough!

MIGUEL DULICK

It is the fourth Sunday of Advent. When Christmas is this close, one takes that final leap. Isaiah is centuries from Christmas, but he cannot wait! He sees the “sign” as clear as day: “the young woman, pregnant and about to bear a son” (Isaiah 7:14). And how about that Son! None other than “Emmanuel” himself—God-With-Us! Paul, too, is bursting at the seams! Inspired by what he calls “the obedience of faith” (Romans 5), he is excited to see the gospel thriving even among the Gentiles. For him, the “Spirit of holiness” is a gift offered to all—Christmas every day, you might say.

Speaking of “obedience of faith,” Joseph is the perfect example. The word “obey” comes from the same root as “to hear,” and Joseph has almost supernatural ears! Matthew, the former tax collector, tells “how the birth of Jesus Christ came about” in today’s gospel reading like a bookkeeper—the Holy Spirit in Column A, Joseph in Column B, with Mary in the middle. But when an angel whispers to Joseph at night, his dream comes true: “he took his wife into his home.” Everything is set for Emmanuel!

So, the Bible is brimming with Christmas, that is, “God-With-Us,” from end to end. And when a virgin can conceive, are any of us exempt from “birthing” Jesus in our midst? Even when a “happy holiday” seems impossible in the midst of war or violence or poverty, when our ears hear only silence, let’s sing Christmas carols every day! ●



SCAN TO
LEARN ABOUT
AUTHOR
MIGUEL
DULICK

Reflect

How am I at listening? Can I find new insights in old stories that I think I know so well?

Welcome to The Good Shepherd Pastoral Unit



St. Bernard's, 43 Botsford St., Moncton, NB E1C 4W9

Phone: (506) 857-0425 Email: sbhf@rogers.com

Parish Office hours:

Monday to Friday @ 9 AM – 12 PM & 1 PM – 4 PM

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED: Dec. 24-28, 31, 2025 and Jan. 1, 2026.

Re-opens Friday, Jan. 2. Phone messages will be checked for emergencies.



St. Vincent's, 63 Charlotte St., Sackville, NB, E4L 2Y5

Phone: (506) 536-1460 Email: stvince@nbnet.nb.ca

Office hours: Monday & Thursday @ 10 AM - 2 PM

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED: Dec. 25, 2025, through Jan. 1, 2026, inclusive

Re-opens Friday, Jan. 2. Phone messages will be checked on a regular basis.



St. Clement's, 14 Church St., Port Elgin, NB E4M 2C9

Phone: (506) 538-2262 Email: stclement.stbartholomew@gmail.com

Office hours: call office to verify

The Good Shepherd Pastoral Website:

gsmoncton.ca

Facebook page:

facebook.com/gsmoncton

The Good Shepherd Pastoral Unit

St. Bernard's Parish Staff

Priest Administrator	Fr. Damian Nwachukwu	sbhf@rogers.com
Assistant Priest	Fr. Carlos Jacinto	sbhf@rogers.com
Pastoral Associate / Liturgy	Maricel Rubio	sbliturgy@gmail.com
Office Administrator	Genevieve Alo	sbhf@rogers.com
Bookkeeper	Linda Arsenault	bookkeepersbgsp@gmail.com
Catechetical Coordinator	Lorella Dunnett	Lorella_st.bernards@hotmail.com

St. Vincent's Parish Staff

Parish Secretary	Lorraine Horyl	stvince@nbnet.nb.ca
Catechetical Coordinator	Cathy Crinnion	ccrinnion@yahoo.ca

St. Clement's Parish Staff

Parish Secretary	Pam Van Egmond	stclement.stbartholomew@gmail.com
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St. Bernard's Sacrament of Reconciliation regular schedule

Prior to Weekday Masses: Monday to Friday: 8:30 – 9:20 AM.

Saturdays: 10:00 AM; First Friday of the month: 8:00 – 9:00 AM.

St. Bernard's

Mark Your Calendar

Carmelites	2 nd Saturday of the month: 9:30 AM
Prayer Group	2 nd Saturday of month & last Saturday of month after 25 th @ 7PM
RCIA meeting	2 nd & 4 th Saturday of each month: 10 AM to 12 noon
CWL meeting	February 15, 2026

Session	Sunday: Year 1-2-3 @ 9:15 AM Year 4-5-6 @ 12:15 PM	Tuesday: Years 1-2-3 @ 6 PM	Wednesday: Years 4-5-6 @ 6 PM
#8	January 04, 2026	January 06, 2026	January 07, 2026
#9	January 18, 2026	January 20, 2026	January 21, 2026
#10	February 01, 2026	February 03, 2026	February 04, 2026

St. Bernard's Faith Formation Schedule

Confirmation Preparation Schedule

Session	Sunday: 2 PM - 3:15 PM
January 04, 2026	Session #4 – Gathering in the hall
February 01, 2026	Session #5 – Gathering in the hall
Holy Communion Preparation for Children Schedule	
Session	Sunday: 2 PM
January 18, 2026	Hall/Church
February 08, 2026	Hall/Church

St. Bernard's CWL

CWL 2026 Membership Dues.

Reminder to members that our 2026 membership dues are payable to National Office by **Dec. 31st**. If paying by cheque, please make your cheque payable to St. Bernard's CWL. **Please do not place dues in the church collection baskets.** If any member wishes to have her dues picked up, please call **Donna Shaw on 506-382-0503**. Thank you for helping us meet our **Dec. 31st** deadline.

Advent Mitten Tree

While items may be donated all year, it is particularly important during the cold winter months to be able to share **warm hats, mitts/gloves, scarves and socks** with those in need of all ages. We deliver these to the **Pregnancy Center, Headstart, schools and shelters** as well as to outreach programs for those living outside. These may be left at the main entrance of the church or be placed on the **Mitten Tree** set up by the elevator during the Advent season. Thank you in advance for your kindness.

Syrian Refugee Family

It is with great joy that we share the news that **Noura and Charbel** arrived in Moncton on November 14 to join other family sponsored by our parish in the past. Since 2018, we have provided updates in the bulletin, but there were times when it was unsafe for us to communicate publicly about Noura's situation and location, as police and military were arresting refugees. As a Christian Syrian, with the civil unrest this past decade, Noura has been in great peril and dealt with religious persecution. She was often on the run throughout the Middle East, hiding that she was a Syrian Christian to avoid the risk of arrest. We will be telling more of Noura's story in the new year. She now begins English literacy training, has enrolled her son in school and is learning about the community. Based on our Settlement Agreement, we are responsible for Noura and Charbel for the first year they are here. That is why you see that **donations to the Syrian Fund** continue to be collected, requested and recorded in the parish bulletin.

Thank you for your prayers and support.



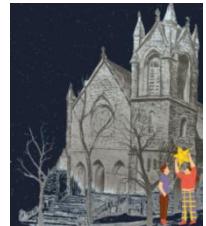
St. Bernard's Simbang Gabi 2025

Dear Friends,

The Filipino Community of the Archdiocese of Moncton invites everyone to join in our **Simbang Gabi** celebrations. **Simbang Gabi**, a Tagalog phrase that literally means “**Evening Mass**,” is the Filipino traditional novena Masses offered for nine consecutive evenings before Christmas Eve. It is a spiritual journey for Filipinos, a time of reflection, devotion, and anticipation as we prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Centred on the Eucharist, the **nine Masses honour the Blessed Mother Mary**, who carried Our Lord Jesus in her womb for nine months. How is it different from a daily Advent Mass? On Simbang Gabi Masses, the priest wears white festive vestments, and the Gloria is sung.

We invite you to **St. Bernard's Church** from **December 14th to the 23rd at 7:00 PM** for these evening Masses, which will be celebrated in English, with hymns beautifully led by the Filipino choir. Please note, our parish's regular **daily and weekend Mass schedules will remain unchanged**, with these nine special evening Masses added for the season. We would be deeply honored to have you join us in these celebrations.

With blessings,
Fr. Carlos Jacinto



The Good Shepherd Pastoral Unit Christmas & New Year's Mass Schedule

Wednesday, December 24, 2025 – Christmas Eve

St. Bernard's	5:00PM, 8:00PM & 10:00 PM (please note: no 9:30 AM Mass)
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St. Clement's	4:00 PM
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St. Vincent's	6:00 PM
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Thursday, December 25, 2025 - Christmas Day

St. Bernard's	11:00 AM (please note: no 9:30 AM Mass)
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Wednesday, December 31, 2025 – New Year's Eve

St. Bernard's	4:00 PM (please note: no 9:30 AM Mass)
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Thursday, January 1, 2026 – New Year's Day

St. Bernard's	11:00 AM (please note: no 9:30 AM Mass)
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St. Clement's	11:00 AM
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St. Vincent's	9:00 AM
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Remembering our Deceased Family & Friends with Christmas Flowers & Wreaths

Once again, this year, you are invited to make monetary donations for our Christmas floral arrangements in memory of deceased loved ones. All monies contributed will be used to purchase flowers that will decorate our church throughout the Christmas season. If you would like to donate funds for **Christmas flowers and Wreaths** in memory of a loved one, you may do so by completing the information below & placing it with your donation in a plain envelope. That envelope can be put into the collection basket at mass or dropped off at the parish office during regular office hours. Names will be in the Christmas bulletin. **Thank you to all those who donate to this yearly project.**

Indicate parish:	St. Bernard's	St. Clement's	St. Vincent's
In Memory of:			
Donated by:			
Address:			
\$ Amount		Envelope # (if applicable)	

St. Vincent's

ST. VINCENT'S OFFICE HOURS – Please be advised that St. Vincent's Parish Office will be closed from **December 25, 2025, to Thursday, January 1, 2026, inclusive**. Reopening on Friday, **January 2, 2026**. In case of an emergency, please leave a message on the office phone 506-536-1460. Voice mail messages will be checked periodically during the office closure. As well, email messages will be checked on a regular basis. May you enjoy a safe and happy Christmas with family and friends!

2025-2026 SUNDAY MISSAL – Due to high demand, the parish office has received a request for additional 2025-2026 Sunday Missals. Please contact **Lorraine at the parish office 506-536-1460 or stvince@nbnet.nb.ca** if you wish to receive a 2025-2026 Sunday Missal. Cost will be **\$5.25 per Missal**.

PRE-AUTHORIZED DEBIT PROGRAM – Thank you to the many parishioners who have financially supported St. Vincent's during the past year. An easy way to donate is through the **Pre-Authorized Debit system**. Enrollment cards are available at the entrance to the church or by contacting **Lorraine at the Parish Office 506-536-1460 or stvince@nbnet.nb.ca**.

JOIN OUR PARISH CHOIR – ALL ARE WELCOME! – For info, please contact **Karen Olscamp, kolscamp@live.com, or 506-536-3050**.

ROSARY – You are invited to join a group of faithful parishioners who gather to pray the Rosary in St. Vincent's chapel every Thursday at 10:00 a.m.

PARISH CALENDAR – Please consult the calendar at the entrance to the church for upcoming events.

SACKVILLE FOOD BANK - If you are able, please contribute non-perishable food and/or toiletry items to our local Food Bank. The donation basket is located on the right-hand side of the entrance to the church. In addition, please note that a **new thrift store** has opened at **18 Lorne Street** and is accepting donations of household items, clothing, etc. All proceeds are forwarded to the Sackville Food Bank.

FAITH FORMATION at St. Vincent's

The Rite of Enrollment was celebrated with the Confirmation candidates at Mass on November 30th, which starts a special journey to deepen their faith and relationship with Jesus! Let us pray for and with these youth, their sponsors, their parents, and their catechists.

The Faith Formation schedule is as follows (location is St. Vincent's Hall):

Jan 4th, 2026, at 10am	Primary group session (gr. 1-3)
Jan 11th, 2026, at 10am	Primary group sessions (gr. 1-3)

Sacramental preparations:

Confirmation gatherings (service to others: January to April and beyond)	January 11th, February 1st, February 22nd, March 15th, March 29th, April 5th (gatherings start at 6:30pm) Confirmation at Mass on April 12, 2026
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For questions and inquiries, please contact Cathy Crinnion at ccrinnion@yahoo.ca

St. Clement's

Thank you to all the bakers and ladies who helped organize the sweet plate fundraiser. 120 plates were prepared and we raised **\$2185**. Special thanks go to Jan Legere who organized the fundraiser.

INVITATION: Let us fully embrace the final weeks of the Ordinary Jubilee 2025

Throughout this year, we have celebrated the 2025 Jubilee under the theme Pilgrims of Hope, responding to Pope Francis' calls to rekindle hope in our world. This Jubilee year has offered a unique opportunity to obtain the Jubilee Plenary Indulgence, a powerful expression of God's infinite mercy, inviting us to live forgiveness and grace in a deeply transformative way.

To allow the greatest number of faithful to obtain the Jubilee indulgence, it may be received during the Sunday Masses of the 4th Sunday of Advent, on **December 20 and 21**, in every parish of the diocese, by those who fulfill the required conditions: sacramental confession (on the same day or within two weeks before or after the Mass), reception of Holy Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Roman Pontiff and of the Church.



Finally, the Holy Year will conclude with a solemn bilingual diocesan celebration, gathering priests around the Archbishop, on **December 28 at 2:00 p.m.**, at Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral. Priests will be available starting at **1:15 p.m.** for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This celebration will be the final opportunity to obtain the Jubilee Indulgence.

I personally invite you and warmly encourage you to join us for this special moment that unites us with the worldwide community. This Eucharistic celebration is an opportunity to give thanks to the Lord for all He has accomplished throughout this year of prayer and conversion. Truly, hope does not disappoint!

+ Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R.

+Most Rev. Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Moncton



Office for Evangelization & Catechesis
Trevor Drosbeck - 857-4879 or adultfaith@diocesemoncton.ca
Karen LeBlanc - 387-4198 or youth@diocesemoncton.ca

COFFEE FOR CAREGIVERS, is an opportunity for fellowship with others providing care for an adult spouse, family, or friend with needs. Please join us as we gather on the following dates: **January 8th and 22nd at Holy Family Church Hall at 2:00 pm.** Contact **Mike Jeffries 506-851-1271** or **Karen at 506-387-4198**. Everyone is welcome.

Senior's Connect. Welcome to Senior's Connect. Our next gathering will take place on **January 15th at 10:30am, at Holy Family Parish Hall at 52 Falkland Street Moncton**. This month we will learn about Funeral planning both at funeral homes and in churches. Questions? Contact Karen LeBlanc at 387-4198 or email youth@diocesemoncton.ca.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

A grace offered with "The Star Flowers of Saint Thérèse": After Masses this coming weekend (**December 27 and 28**), we will distribute the new prayer booklet in our parishes; a diocesan initiative to pray for the missionary renewal of our Archdiocese. The proposed path also opens up the grace of a plenary indulgence, received in sacramental life and daily offerings, according to the tradition of the Church. Together, let us weave a simple and luminous network of prayer in the school of Saint Thérèse. Your donations will be greatly appreciated and will be used to print the booklet.

St. Bernard's Marriage Apostolate — Marriage Enrichment Activities

This winter we're offering two opportunities for couples to reconnect and be renewed.

1) Love & Respect — 10-Week Zoom Video Study

Thursdays, 7:00 PM (AST) • Jan 8 – Mar 12, 2026, • Online

Facilitators: Joe & Deb D'Ettore

Based on Dr. Emerson Eggerichs' bestselling program, Love & Respect unpacks the biblical insight of Ephesians 5:33, that she most deeply desires love and he most deeply needs respect, and gives practical tools to improve communication, break the "crazy cycle," and build an "energizing cycle" of grace at home.

- Registration: **\$10/couple** (includes electronic workbook + Zoom invite)
- Miss a night? Sessions are recorded so you can catch up later.
- Register: Email atvnonno@gmail.com

2) Marriage Enrichment Retreat @ Villa Madonna (Rothesay, NB) "Love that Reflects Heaven:

Encountering God in Our Marriage"

Feb 13–15, 206 (Check-in Fri 5:30 PM; Check-out Sun after lunch)

Speakers include Joe & Deb D'Ettore, Fr. Carlos Jacinto, and guests.

Retreat highlights: inspiring talks, couple reflection & prayer, Mass, Confession, Spiritual Direction, Renewal of Marriage Vows, Valentine's celebration, and fellowship with other couples.

- Early Registration (by Dec 15): **\$200/couple**
- Standard (Dec 16 onward): **\$250/couple**
- Includes: Two nights' accommodation, all meals, and retreat materials
- Limited spots, register now: atvnonno@gmail.com

Thanks to our generous donors for helping keep costs low. Questions?

Email: atvnonno@gmail.com.

Come be refreshed, because your marriage matters!



*A time to mourn...
sincere sympathies to all who mourn the loss of a loved one.*

Oscar Jacinto, Emmett Leger, Normand Melanson, Bernard McCourt, Gregory Murphy,
Len & Perry Wickham, Gisele Landry, Yolanda Tristan, Emilio Famatid, Peter Leger & Paul LeBlanc



*Ecclesiastes 3
Under every season there is a time...A time to heal...*

St. Bernard's

Peter Quach	Conrad Coughlan	Paul & Alma Melanson	Rosemarie Villariasa	Romualdo Mesias
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St. Clement's

McGraw Family	Sharon Wall	Lorraine Doiron	Ron Drisdelle
Erika Doiron	Margaret Schriver	Cullen Flood	Elaine Black

St. Vincent's

Alvin Bernard	Vince Wood	Leone Campbell	Kathy Mattatall
Art Chase		Barb DeWitt	Leonard Burke

And those who have died:

Mass times / Intentions:

St. Bernard's

Mon.	Dec 22	9:30 AM	Anniv. Late Alma Barrieau	David Barrieau
Tues.	Dec 23	9:30 AM	Deceased relatives of Conrad Coughlan	Conrad Coughlan
Wed.	Dec 24	5:00 PM	Late Connie Willden	Celine Berube
Wed.	Dec 24	8:00 PM	Rick O'Brien	Wife Shirley O' Brien
Wed.	Dec 24	10:00 PM	Late Paul Gaudet	Jacinto Family
Thurs.	Dec 25	11:00 AM	Late Marie Godin	Helene & Brian Gallie
Fri.	Dec 26	9:30 AM	Late Chuck Kinney	Jessie & Peter
Sat.	Dec 27	4:00 PM	Anniv. Late Heather Beleski	Roger Bastarache
Sun.	Dec 28	11:00 AM	Late Gerhard Advincula & Leticia Advento	Advincula & Advento

St. Clement's

Sun.	Dec 21	11:00 AM	Heather Murphy	Patsy Murphy
Sun.	Dec 28	11:00 AM	Special Intentions	Joanne Carroll

St. Vincent's

Sun.	Dec 21	9:00 AM	Irene Bourque	George & Family
Wed.	Dec 24	6:00 PM	Mom Mary Jane Richard	Daughter Marie Wood
Sun.	Dec 28	9:00 AM	For the People	
Thu.	Jan 1	9:00 AM	Vince Reinsborough	Conrad Coughlan
Sun.	Jan 4	9:00 AM	Late Irene LeClair	Florence Gaudet

OFFERINGS

St. Bernard's Offerings: December 14, 2025 - Online portions to be reported later.

Reg Envelopes	\$5512	Spanish Mass	\$308.20	Loose	\$795.50	Christmas Flowers	\$615
Moncton Archdiocese	\$10	Christmas Boxes	\$33.5	For the Poor	\$40	Karing Kitchen	\$5

Christmas	\$900	Capital Expenditure	\$435
St. Clement's offerings: December 14, 2025			
Envs	\$1150	Capital Funds	\$500
St. Vincent's offerings: December 14, 2025			
Reg Envs	\$1255	Loose	\$20
Christmas Flowers	\$215	Christmas Offering	\$20
<i>Thank you for your generous and continued support!!!</i>			



<i>In Memory of</i>	<i>Donated By</i>
<i>Charles (Chuck) Kinney, Carrol Family: Alice, James, Walter, Mabel & Kathleen</i>	<i>Jessie & Peter Kinney</i>
<i>Cornelia de Winter, Terry & Gerry Gulliver</i>	<i>Peter & Monique Gulliver</i>
<i>Deceased Family Members</i>	<i>Jim & Dorine White</i>
<i>Deceased members of the Carter & Flanagan Families</i>	<i>Roy & Dee Dee Carter</i>
<i>Deceased members of the Hanson Family</i>	<i>Sherry Hanson</i>
<i>Donald Wood</i>	<i>Jeanne Wood</i>
<i>Eleanor Beck</i>	<i>David & Lise Watts</i>
<i>Frank-Rose & Jeanette Arsenault, Harmon & Gladys, Bob Fogarty</i>	<i>Bill & Bernice Fogarty</i>
<i>George & Zella O'Dell</i>	<i>Richard & Donna Shaw</i>
<i>Gillis & Trites Family Members</i>	<i>Patricia Trites</i>



Christmas Flowers & Wreaths
2025



<i>In Memory of</i>	<i>Donated By</i>
<i>James & Mary Fahey, Ernest & Margaret Fahey, Harry & Greta Fahey</i>	<i>James & Sharon Fahey</i>
<i>Janice Cormier</i>	<i>Norma Cormier</i>
<i>Jim Beek</i>	<i>Marie Beek</i>
<i>John Hay and his wife Emily & Family</i>	<i>Brenda Hay</i>
<i>John Joseph (J.J.) Murphy</i>	<i>Michaela, Adam, Noah, Lorraine & John</i>
<i>Kay & Louis Boudreau, Sam & Erma Ermen, Jeff Ermen</i>	<i>Sam & Donna Ermen</i>
<i>Late Heather Beleski</i>	<i>Roger Bastarache</i>
<i>Late Maureen Coyle</i>	<i>Madge Lund & Family</i>
<i>Laura & Arthur Eveleigh, Mary & Nelson Green Sr., Donna Green</i>	<i>Mary & Nelson Green</i>
<i>Lester Rossiter</i>	<i>Melda & Family</i>
<i>Louise & Florence McKinley, Ann Breault, Ben & Olezine Arsenault</i>	<i>Robert & Helen McKinley</i>
<i>Minnie Burnett, George & Verna Perry</i>	<i>Ross & Sharon Burnett</i>



Christmas Flowers & Wreaths
2025



<i>In Memory of</i>	<i>Donated By</i>
<i>Mom & Dad: Edna & Charles LeBlanc, Dorothy & Joseph Goosney</i>	<i>Paul & Vivian LeBlanc and Family</i>
<i>Pasquine Lobo, Eliza Dsouza</i>	<i>Dsouza Family</i>
<i>Ralph, Florence and Peter Fahey</i>	<i>Family</i>
<i>Roy C. Hopper</i>	<i>Juanita Hopper</i>
<i>Ruby & James Furlong</i>	<i>Phyllis Allain</i>
<i>Sebastian Michaud</i>	<i>Jeannine Michaud</i>
<i>Sid Wright</i>	<i>Mellie Wright</i>
<i>The Deceased Members of the O'Brien & Scott Families</i>	<i>Michael & Joanne Scott</i>
<i>The Pitre, Keenan & Loubert Families</i>	<i>Edward & Sherran Pitre</i>
<i>The Stephen Family: Peter, Lanne, Gail</i>	<i>Dianne Stephen</i>
<i>Thomas & Elizabeth Clements & Family</i>	<i>Doug & Noreen Martin</i>
<i>Toma Mae Clark and Arsenault Family members</i>	<i>Linda & Moe Arsenault</i>

"IS OUR BLESSED MOTHER CALLING YOU?"

**March 16th to 27th:
Pilgrimage to Medjugorje with Spiritual Chaplin**

Father Danny Wilson Charlottetown Diocese

Group Leaders: Rhonda-Lynn Cormier and Lori Currie.

Cost: **\$3,299.00** — includes airfare and all airport taxes from Halifax (flights from other airports and the USA can be arranged with adjusted pricing), twin accommodation, daily breakfast and dinner, and a professional local guide.

Single room supplement: \$350.00 if available

For bookings or more information, please contact
Rhonda-Lynn at 902-448-3660.



Dear Padre,

I went to confession, and then, months later, my priest was removed for alcoholism and theft. Is my confession still worthy?

Your confession is not dependent on the worthiness or the unworthiness of the priest. Your confession is made to Jesus; the priest is a witness who pronounces the words of absolution that Jesus intended in the sacrament. “From the moment that a sacrament is celebrated in accordance with the intention of the Church, the power of Christ and his Spirit acts in and through it, independently of the personal holiness of the minister” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1128).

The question of the efficacy of the sacrament and the unworthiness of the minister who performs the sacrament in the name of the Church is not new. During the time of persecution, in the early centuries of the Church, some people, including priests and bishops, avoided martyrdom by offering the required oblation to Caesar. Later, they repented and returned to the Christian community, a community that included the surviving family and friends of the men and women who were martyred. The question was asked, and with some animated energy, “How could these ministers who sinned to save their own lives now represent the Church?” The answer, arrived at with patience and discernment, is that the minister is only the representative of the sacrament, not the source of the sacrament. Jesus is faithful, even when his ministers have been unfaithful. ●



Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV



I think it is important for all of us to learn how to listen more, to enter into dialogue. First and foremost, with the Lord: always listen to the word of God. Then also listen to others, to know how to build bridges, to know how to listen without judging, not closing the doors [and] thinking that we have all the truth and no one else can tell us anything.

HOMILY, ROME, MAY 11, 2025

Monday	Thursday	Saturday
December 22 <i>Advent Weekday</i> 1 Sm 1:24–28 Lk 1:46–56	December 25 <i>The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)</i> Is 52:7–10 Heb 1:1–6 Jn 1:1–18 or 1:1–5, 9–14	December 27 <i>St. John, Apostle and Evangelist</i> 1 Jn 1:1–4 Jn 20:1a, 2–8
Tuesday		
December 23 <i>Advent Weekday</i> Mal 3:1–4, 23–24 Lk 1:57–66		
Wednesday	Friday	Sunday
December 24 <i>Advent Weekday</i> 2 Sm 7:1–5, 8b–12, 14a, 16 Lk 1:67–79	December 26 <i>St. Stephen, the First Martyr</i> Acts 6:8–10; 7:54–59 Mt 10:17–22	December 28 <i>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph</i> Sir 3:2–6, 12–14 Col 3:12–21 or 3:12–17 Mt 2:13–15, 19–23

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.