



The Birth of the Infant Jesus in a Cave in Bethlehem



Christmas Novena for Dec 24
Meditation 9: Discourse for Christmas Night

Since the Roman emperor's edict said that everyone was to enrol in his own country, Joseph and his wife, Mary, departed for Bethlehem. The trip took four days, traveling over mountainous roads in the cold of winter wind and rain. Think of how much the Blessed Virgin must have suffered on that journey.

As soon as they arrived, the time of her delivery was at hand, so Joseph went around the town looking for lodging where Mary could give birth to her child. But, because they were poor, they were driven away by everyone, even from the inn where poor people were normally sheltered. So they left the town and found a cave. As Mary entered, Joseph protested, saying, "My dear wife, how can you spend the night in this cold, damp place? Can't you see that this is a stable for animals?" But she answered, "Joseph, this shed is the royal palace where the Son of God chooses to be born."

And since the time for the birth had arrived, the Holy Virgin was in prayer. Suddenly the cave became brilliantly lit, as if by the sun or a star, and the Son of God came forth into the world as a tender infant, crying and trembling with cold. The first thing Mary did was to adore him as her God. Then she held him to her bosom, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes that she had brought along. Finally, she laid him on a little straw in the manger. That is how the Son of the eternal God chose to be born for love of us. A saint once said that those who love Jesus Christ most ought to kneel at the

feet of the Holy Child and, in spirit, perform for him the same service as the beasts in the stable at Bethlehem who warmed him with their breath. We should warm him with our sighs of love.

Prayers & Reflection

O tiny Infant! I would not be so bold as to lie at your feet, except that you yourself have invited me to come near. My sins have caused you to cry so many tears while in your stable at Bethlehem. But since you have come to earth to forgive repentant sinners, please forgive me, also. I regret with all my heart having ignored you so often.

You give so many great graces to everyone on this holy night. Bring peace to my soul and to the world. The one gift I ask this Christmas is the grace to love you forever with my whole heart. In flame me, Lord, with your love!

I do love you, O God, who has become a mere child for me. Never let me stop loving you. Mary, my mother, God will do all things you ask in prayer. Pray to Jesus for me.

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Nativity Poem by St Alphonsus To the Infant Jesus

O King of Heaven! From starry throne descending,
Thou takest refuge in that wretched cave;
God of bliss I see Thee cold and trembling,
What pain it cost Thee fallen man to save!

Thou, of a thousand worlds the great Creator,
Dost now the pain of cold and want endure;
Thy poverty but makes Thee more endearing
For well I know tis love has made Thee poor.

I see Thee leave Thy Heavenly Father's bosom,
But whither has Thy love transported Thee?
Upon a little straw I see Thee lying;
Why suffer thus? Tis all for love of me.

But if it is Thy will for me to suffer,
And by these sufferings my heart to move,
Wherefore, my Jesus, do I see Thee weeping?
Tis not for pain Thou weapest, but for love.

Thou weapest thus to see me so ungrateful;
My sins have pierced Thee to the very core;
I once despised Thy love, but now I love Thee,
I love but Thee ; then, Jesus, weep no more.

Thou sleepest, Lord, but Thy heart ever watches,
No slumber can a heart so loving take;
But tell me, darling Babe, of what Thou thinkest,
" I think" he says, " of dying for Thy sake"

Is it for me that Thou dost think of dying!
What, then, O Jesus! can I but love Thee ?
Mary, my hope! If I love him too little,
Be not indignant, love him thou for me.

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December 25, 2017



The Nativity of the Lord

From Advent to Christmas... Blessings for a Happy, Holy Season

Dear Friends & Parishioners,

From all of us in the Redemptorist community, a happy and holy Christmas to you! It does seem strange to celebrate the last Sunday of Advent and Christmas Masses on the same day. The next time Christmas will fall on a Monday is in 11 years... what a relief! Today, we will light the fourth Advent candle for the last time at the Sunday 11am Mass and then we will turn on the lights of the holiday wreaths inside the church for the evening Masses to welcome our blessed Lord.

Although this Advent season has been short, it has been intense. There was an Advent reflection by our choirs, novenas and a penitential service to prepare our hearts. We also put our time, energy and financial resources into reaching out to the community around us. There was an outstanding response of gifts for the underprivileged families of Strathcona Community School. In early December, the Door is Open team prepared and served food to the homeless of the Eastside, and last week, the Knights of Columbus and OLPH Youth headed out to the Kitsilano Community Centre to serve breakfast and hand out care packages to the drop-in visitors of that establishment.

It was heartening to see these initiatives and the response of the parish to them. Christmas stirs within us a longing to do things we think about all year long but never get around to! It would be great if we could extend this spirit of giving into the New Year and plan more outreach projects for those in need. This Christmas, let us ask our Blessed Mother to fill our homes with the spirit of joy and generous giving which she so graciously exemplifies.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R



Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord. - Psalm 96

MASSES & SERVICES

Saturday: 5pm
(Anticipated Mass)
Sunday: 9am, 11am & 5pm
Monday – Wednesday 8am
Thursday Mass/Novena:
8am & 7pm
Friday, Saturday, Holidays:
9am
(Fridays in July & August:
8am)
Reconciliation
Saturday: 4-4:45pm
Adoration
Saturday 9:30-10am
Library Hours
Sunday: 10-10:45am, 4:30-5pm

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm

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Pastor
Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R.
Associate Pastor
Joseph Horo, C.Ss.R.
Office Manager
Virginia Fong
Pastoral Coordinator
Bertilla Watanabe
Bookkeeper
Corinna Siy
Youth Ministry Coordinator
Theresa Barao

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Olfphchurchvancouver

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NEWS & NOTICES

Sunday Offering Envelopes: Your 2018 Sunday Offering Envelopes are available for pick-up this weekend in the church foyer. If your box of envelopes is not there or if you are new to the parish, please contact the office. Please do not use 2017 envelopes (or envelopes from previous years) after December 31, 2017. Thank you!

St. Alphonsus Christmas Novena: We finish the Christmas Novena this weekend Dec 23 & 24 after Communion. The Novena Prayer is on the back page. Please have your bulletin handy!

Christmas Office Hours: During Christmas week, the parish office will only be open on Thursday Dec 28 from 9am-4pm.

OLPH School Open House: Wednesday Jan 10, 2018 7pm-8pm. Application packages will be available at the school that day.

OLPH School Christmas Break: December 23 – January 7, 2018.

Winter Institute 2018: The Winter Institute is a day dedicated to ministry training and faith formation courses, including courses on writing and sharing your testimony; sexual orientation and identity; and classroom management among others. Join us on Saturday, Jan. 27, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Holy Cross Regional Secondary, Surrey. Registration is \$40 on or before Jan. 22 (\$20 for half-day course). For course descriptions and registration, visit rcav.org/oc-winter-institute.

World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2018: Mass will be celebrated on Sunday, Jan. 21 at 2:30 p.m. at St. Patrick's Parish, Vancouver, by Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, for the 6th year in our Archdiocese. A celebration of different cultural traditions will follow Mass. Visit rcav.org/wdmr or send us an email at wdmr@rcav.org for more details.

Project Advance: The last day for Project Advance donations is December 28 as the office will not reopen till January 2, 2018. Please make a prayerful consideration towards giving to this year's Appeal. Thank you!

Archbishop's Annual Mass for Life: "May we defend it and promote it from conception to its natural end." Join us as we celebrate life on Thursday, Dec. 28, at Holy Rosary Cathedral, Vancouver. Rosary begins at 11:30 a.m. and Mass is at 12:10 p.m. Reception to follow in the Cathedral Hall. If you would like to donate finger foods for this reception, it would be much appreciated. Details at rcav.org/event/annual-mass-life-2017

Development & Peace Membership Drive: This year is the 50th anniversary of the formation of Development & Peace. To celebrate our jubilee, we are offering free membership!

Be at the heart of change, become a member to:

- Learn about injustice and what you can do about it.
- Take concrete actions in solidarity with the poorest and most vulnerable people of the Global South.
- Join a dynamic cross-Canada movement for global peace and justice.
- Speak out! When we act together, change is possible.

Sign up online at www.devp.org or email Deirdre Webster for more info, dmswebster@gmail.com.

Ordination of Guy Zidago: The Archdiocese of Vancouver joyfully announces the ordination of Guy Zidago to the Sacred Order of the Diaconate through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit by Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB. You are cordially invited to celebrate with us on Friday, Dec. 29, at 7 p.m. at Holy Rosary Cathedral. Light refreshments to follow in the Cathedral Hall.

Parenting Ministry: Making Sense of Anxiety in Children and Youth: Dr. Gordon Neufeld sheds light on the problem of the escalating level of anxiety in our children and paves the way for natural interventions to get to the root causes as opposed to just managing symptoms. Although the focus is on children, the material will benefit anyone suffering from anxiety. St. Ann's Family Group invites parents and caregivers to this course on Thursdays, Jan. 11, 18, 25, and Feb. 1 from 7 - 9 p.m. Cost is \$30/person. Register to reserve your spot. For more details, email stannsfamilygroup@gmail.com or visit rcav.org/event/making-sense-of-anxiety

Stewardship Reflection

"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" - LUKE 1:28

Faith is a gift from God. Take time in silence and thank Him for all the gifts He has given you. Try to set aside any anger or resentment you have and really open your heart to receive the gift of God's mercy and forgiveness. We can't give what we don't have. We need to receive God's mercy and forgiveness first before we can give it to others.

Stewardship Office, Archdiocese of St. Louis

CALENDAR

DECEMBER

Christmas & New Year

As Christmas falls on a Monday this year, some people have asked whether a Sunday evening Mass on Christmas Eve would fulfill both the obligation for a Sunday Mass and the obligation for a Christmas Day Mass. The short answer... no. The faithful should attend two Masses to fulfill their Sunday and Christmas Mass obligations.

4th Sunday of Advent Masses

Sat Dec 23 – 5pm
Sun Dec 24 – 9am, 11am

Christmas Masses

Sun Dec 24 - 5pm (Children's Mass),
7pm (Youth-led Mass)
12am Midnight Mass with carols from 11:45pm
Mon Dec 25 – 9am, 11am & 5pm

New Year's Weekend Masses

(Feast of the Holy Family)
Sat Dec 30 – 5pm
Sun Dec 31st – 9am, 11am & 5pm

New Year's Day Masses

(Feast of Mary Holy Mother of God: Day of Obligation)
Mon Jan 1st – 9am & 11am

JANUARY

Snowshoeing for Youth



Want to get out and do something really fun in the cold, cold month of January? The OLPH Youth Ministry is organizing a snowshoeing trip for youth of our parish. All young people Grade 7 and up are invited to join us. If you're in your early 20s and want to play a leadership role, we look forward to having you join us as well! Parent drivers much appreciated!! Look out for more details in the coming weeks. For more info, contact Theresa.olphyouthmin@gmail.com.

Archbishop Michael Miller's 2017 Christmas Message



One holy night 2,000 years ago, the Son of God became man. Born in a lowly stable, the Mighty God and Prince of Peace came to dwell among us. "I bring you good news of a great joy for all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:10-11).

This Christmas, the Angel's proclamation rings out once again, inviting each of us to welcome our Saviour. Let us not hesitate to allow him into our homes, parishes, schools, workplaces, and communities!

It's understandable that today many ask whether we still need a "Saviour." After all, this is 2017. Is a saviour still required by a civilization that has reached the moon and peers to the ends of the universe? By a humanity that has deciphered the intricate codes of the human genome, navigates the Internet and has made the earth, our common home, a global village? Despite these great achievements, however, there is another side to the coin. In the Lower Mainland, homelessness abounds, and human trafficking robs countless women and girls of their dignity. Others are victims of ethnic and religious intolerance and discrimination. Political interference and coercion with regard to the free exercise of religion and conscience are growing.

And what of people who are trapped in the loneliness of our neighbourhoods and who, seeking solace, often end up addicted to alcohol or drugs? What about those who "choose" death in the belief that they are celebrating life? All of us need to be saved, freed from all that holds us back from living as God wants us to live. All of us need a Saviour.

Humanity today is searching for a way ahead, a reversal of the suffering and evil of our world. It is looking for "something better." Perhaps, unconsciously, it is waiting for the coming of the "Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."

Yes, we need a Saviour. And God in his merciful goodness has sent the world that Saviour, who became flesh in Mary's virginal womb. At Christmas we celebrate that even now Jesus comes "unto his own," and to those who receive him he gives "the power to become children of God" (Jn 1:11-12).

Jesus comes to offer to everyone the joy and peace that alone can fulfil the deep yearnings of the human heart. He gives us the chance to see the Father's glory and to open ourselves to others in love. This is Jesus' Christmas gift to us.

The proclamation of joy – that God is with us in Jesus Christ – is meant for all men and women. Jesus was born as Saviour for everyone. Just as Mary, in Bethlehem, presented him to the shepherds, we too are called to present Jesus to one and all, so that each person and every human situation may come to know the tenderness of God's merciful love.

May the joy of Christmas spur us all to proclaim joy to the world because God is present in our midst and walks with us in our journey through life!
With my prayers and blessing, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,
+ J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver



A TIME TO BRING CHEER

Knights & Youth Bring Christmas Cheer to Kitsilano Community Centre

The Knights of Columbus and OLPH youth worked together to bring a huge helping of Christmas cheer to the folks at Kitsilano Community Centre.

The Kitsilano Community Centre offers a weekly Shower Program on Saturdays from 7:30 am to 9:00 am available to anyone in need. This particular Saturday was aimed at spreading Christmas cheer together with the delicious hot breakfast served by the Knights. OLPH Youth joined them a little later to sing some happy carols. The youth also gave out care bags with personal items bought with cash they raised from a bake sale.

The breakfast program is hugely successful in restoring the dignity of its participants and demonstrating that every demographic in our city deserves respect and nurturing. The volunteers that run this program are wholeheartedly dedicated to the well-being of everyone involved and providing a safe environment for friendships to begin and grow. We are happy to have played a role in it this Christmas!

