

DECEMBER 12/13, 2020

St. Thomas More Parish with St. Bernadette Mission



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stthomasmillbrook.ca



PASTOR: FR. ANTONIO BAROL

PLEASE PRAY FOR...

Those who are sick, especially:

Erica Perk/Bernie Durand/Shirley Kloefer/Dolores
Flood/Josef and Hermie Jandristis,

WEEKLY MASS SCHEDULE

Wednesday: 5:30pm- Mass at Rectory

Thursday & Friday: 9:00am—Mass at Rectory

Saturday: 4:00pm – Mass at St. Thomas More

2:45 – 3:45 pm - Confession and Rosary

Sunday: 9:00am – Mass at St. Thomas More

8:15-8:45am – Confessions and Rosary

11:00am – Mass at St. Bernadette, Nestleton

2021 SUNDAY MISSAL (\$5.00)

Missals are now available at the entrance to the Church.

If you prefer to pick one up at the rectory, please call me
at 705-400-7888 to make arrangements for pickup.

FR. ANTONIO BAROL - MESSAGE FOR THE 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Dear sisters/brothers, parishioners of St. Thomas More and St. Bernadette,
Allow me to greet you by using the Entrance Antiphon of the mass; "Rejoice in the Lord always again I say rejoice.
Indeed, the Lord is near."

The third Sunday of Advent is called "Gaudete Sunday" simply because the message in the liturgy is to rejoice. Just as when our preparations are almost done, we tend to have a little break and see the good things that we have accomplished in relation to our waiting of who or what is coming. Just think God who everyday will be looking at what He created and rejoicing of what He created He said, and it was good. Let us hope and pray that what we have done are good preparations. That is the rejoicing part of our Advent, the joy of completing part of our advent journey, especially last weekend we were reminded of how to prepare the way of the Lord. Let us then continue the joy of waiting and if there are some adjustments to be done, we still have one more weekend to do it. Our church Christmas decorations are up and let us hope that these decorations will add to the joy in our spirit and make us hopeful that the Messiah will complete the joy that is in our hearts. While adding some lights to our outside nativity set a passerby looked and said, "Thank you for putting this every year, it adds something to the spirit of Christmas." This would have been the weekend that we can shout with one of the famous song of Advent, "Rejoice, rejoice oh Israel, to thee shall come Emmanuel."

Prophet Isaiah, in the first reading, prophesied about the Messiah who will bring good news, to the people who are experiencing all kinds of oppression and difficulties in life. As we have learned that Prophet Isaiah was trying to comfort the exiled people of Israel who were losing hope of God's promise of a Saviour. At this time of the pandemic we can relate to the people of Israel, crying out for help, asking God for mercy and healing. We thank God that at least we are now getting closer to the end of the pandemic with the news a vaccine is now at hand, though the number of cases is still rising and there is still need to obey the guidelines.

Cont'd....

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We have prayed for our medical researchers to find a solution not only to prevent it but also to cure those who had been affected and are now still struggling in our hospitals. Let us look ahead with hope that we will be back to our normal way of living, as many of our usual ways are prohibited and prevented to happen especially in this Christmas season. As I always said, "God has a better plan than what we have and we just have to wait patiently, not a passive waiting but a creative one, to make special times, hours, minutes and occasions that we gather together in prayer. We have to go another mile and make occasions when we can tell God about our situations and put everything in His loving arms.

Again the message of St. Paul to the Thessalonians enforces the idea of joy, he said, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." We might not be comfortable in expressing joy in our heart especially in this season of Christmas, due to the many restrictions brought by the pandemic, but as Pope Francis wrote about St. Joseph in his Encyclical, 'Patris Corde', (With a Father's Heart) referring to him as our model of faith said, "Even though Joseph's fears, God's will, his history and his plan were at work. Joseph then teaches us that faith in God includes believing that he can work even though our fears, our frailties and our weaknesses. He also teaches us that amid the tempest of life, we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course. At times we want to be in complete control yet God always sees the bigger picture." While waiting we must possess a creative courage, one that turns a problem into a possibility by trusting always in divine providence.

Once more the gospel focuses on John the Baptist, who came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. In their excitement about the coming of the Messiah the people thought that he was the one and he might have some qualities that could pass the criteria of the religious leaders, like his family background, he was the son of Zechariah a priest at least they knew him as coming from a priestly family. Although there were some attitudes that the religious leaders were doubting like, living in the desert instead of in the house with his parents, and taking turn to offer sacrifice as a priest why in the wilderness? Eating wild food, wearing a poor man's attire instead of being dressed with a priestly gown, therefore some religious leaders were not so keen about him so they sent messengers to investigate him especially he was baptizing. John was humble enough to admit that he was not the Messiah but played the role of Elijah a voice crying out in the wilderness telling people to prepare the way of the Lord.

In this third Sunday of Advent we have to ask ourselves, how far are we in our preparation to celebrate to remember the first Christmas which usually consists of material preparations such as gifts, decorations and food, while in preparation for the second aspect of Advent which is the spiritual preparation for his second coming; how good is our preparation for this final event? As John the Baptist suggested, we have to make our valleys level and smooth, our hill and mountain level, and crooked ways, straight. Let me borrow the words of St. Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians, "May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." This coming Christmas may we all focus on the birth of Jesus and not on the fear of the virus.

Let us follow health protocols so that our churches can remain open and let us be concerned about the health of others too.

Quote of the week: "Do not be troubled or weighed down with grief. Do not fear any illness or vexation, anxiety or pain... Are you not under my shadow and protection? (Our Lady of Guadalupe to Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin.)

News: Pope Francis declared as the year of St. Joseph, December 8, 2020 to December 8, 2021. It is the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph as the Universal Patron of the Church which was promulgated by Blessed Pius IX in 1870. Due to the pandemic, we limit the number of those who will be attending our Christmas eve masses which are at; 4:00 PM and 10:00 PM at St. Thomas More in Millbrook, 7:00 PM at St. Bernadette in Nestleton. We also have a 10:00 AM mass on Christmas day at St. Thomas More. Please register on-line (instructions to follow) or phone the office to reserve a seat.

If ever you cannot come for these masses due to the pandemic, the Church through the Bishop continues to dispense the obligation and also the diocese is offering a televised Christmas eve mass through Cogeco and through YouTube from the diocesan website.

Thank you very much and may you have a blessed, merry and healthy Christmas. Fr. Tony Barol

Dr. Charlene Rostkowski D.V.M.
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