

THE GROTTTO OF BETHLEHEM WHERE JESUS WAS BORN

In 135, Christian places of worship in the Holy Land were obliterated under the anti-Christian Emperor Hadrian, and shrines dedicated to Roman gods were erected in their place. A shrine was thus constructed atop the grotto where Christ was born. This seeming tragedy later proved a blessing in that these pagan temples helped Christians to locate and identify the exact locations of the revered sites after the anti-Christian persecutions subsided.

When the delegation of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine, arrived in the Holy Land, it was this pagan shrine which helped to locate the site indelibly as the place of the birth of Christ. Constantine ordered Hadrian's temple removed and the cave was found intact below.

Directed by his mother, St. Helena, Constantine ordered a magnificent basilica constructed over the site in 325. Known as the Church of the Nativity, it was richly decorated with marble mosaics and frescoes. No expense was spared in its construction. It was so elaborate and permanent that the original octagonal altar and the foundations can be seen to this day.

Over the centuries, however, the Church of the Nativity would be looted and sacked on numerous occasions. In 529, it was badly damaged by the Samaritans who were revolting against the Byzantine Empire. Thankfully, it was immediately rebuilt by Emperor Justinian in 530. The Justinian church is the one still standing today.

In 614 when the Persians destroyed all churches in the area, it was church to evade destruction thanks top a mosaic representing the Wise Men in ancient Persian costumes. This church with massive stone walls and appears as a fortress from the outside is now the oldest church in the Holy Land. To enter it one must bow in order to pass through the door of humility. Only children enter with ease.

BY J.P. Sonnen

2023 Envelopes

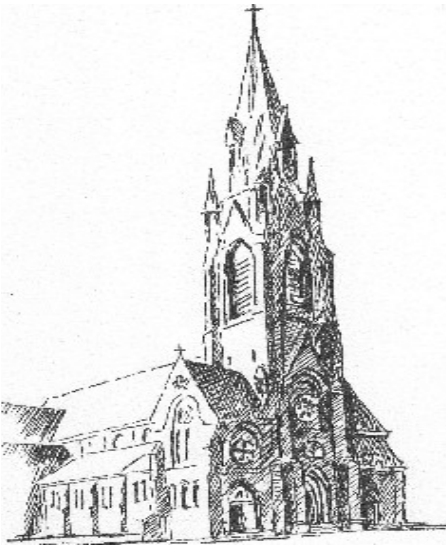
Your numbered box of envelopes is now available. You can pick it up at the back of the church.

New Year's Schedule

On New Year's Eve, we will have Adoration at 5:00 p.m. followed by Mass at 6:00 p.m. in English and Portuguese. New Year's day Masses will be at 10:00 a.m. in Portuguese, 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. in English.

St. Mary's Church

Rev. Msgr. Fernando Couto (Pastor)
Rev. Fr. João Ferreira (Associate Pastor)



588 Adelaide St. W.
Toronto, On. M6J 3P8
Tel: 416-703-2326 Fax: 416-703-4196
Email: stmaryschurch2@rogers.com
Website: stmarysbathurst.archtoronto.org

OFFICE HOURS
Mon.– Fri. 8:30—12:00 and 1:00—4:00

Sunday Masses
8:30 am Portuguese
10:00 am Portuguese
11:30 am English
1:00 pm English

Weekday Masses
Monday—Friday 9:00 am Portuguese
6:00 pm English
Saturday 5:00 pm English

- Parish Council
- Parish Finance Council
- Legion of Mary
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
First Friday of Every Month at 5:00 p.m.
- English Choir
- Portuguese Choir
Ana da Silva 905-891-5444
- Santo Cristo
Joey Teves 647-887-2804
- Santo Cristo Band (Hall)
Marco Lima (President) 416-703-2231
416-818-5462
- Santo Cristo Association
Please contact the parish 416-703-2326
- Espirito Santo
Afonso & Filomena Vieira 905-848-8571
- Saint Vincent De Paul 416-247-8868
- Volunteer Co-ordinator
Delia Medeiros (contact the parish)
- Baptism—Sundays
Baptisms will be booked by appointment only
- Marriages
Please contact the priest 12 months in advance
- Confessions
Every day before Mass, except on Sunday
- Schools
St. Mary Elementary 416-393-5205
Bishop Macdonell 416-393-5462



Nativity of the Lord

December 25, 2022

Psalm—All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

Luke’s account of the birth of Jesus forms the Gospel for the first two Masses of Christmas. The story reflects the faith of the post-resurrection Church. The same titles that Peter attributes to the risen Jesus, ‘Lord and Messsiah’ (Acts 2:36), are now applied to the newborn child by the angels. Luke’s chief concern is theological. Every detail in the story serves this purpose. This is not to say that there is no historical basis for what he recounts. Luke gives the birth of Jesus a solemn setting. He is also hinting at the cosmic significance of the event. Unwittingly Augustus becomes an instrument of the Lord by ensuring that Jesus (the Messiah) was born in the town of David. His rejection at the inn anticipates his rejection by the Jewish people as a whole. Mary is shown to be a caring mother, wrapping the child in swaddling clothes and laying him in a manger-cradle. Her loving care reflects God’s care. Since Jesus was born in poverty, it is fitting that the news of his birth was first announced to simple shepherds. This also reflects Jesus’ concern (and Luke’s) for the poor and the lowly.

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o’er the plain,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strain.

**Gloria, in excelsis Deo,
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.**

Shepherds why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say, what may the tidings be,
Which inspire your heav’nly song.

Come to Bethlehem, and see,
Him, whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee,
Christ, our Lord, the newborn King.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King.
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinner reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies.
With th’angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born, in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King.

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord.
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of the Virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see,
Hail, th’incarnate Deity.
Pleased as one with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King.

Mary Did You Know

Mary did you know
that your baby boy will one day walk on water?
Mary did you know
that your baby boy will save our sons and daughters?
Did you know
that your baby boy has come to make you new?
This child that you've delivered, will soon deliver you

Mary did you know
that your baby boy will give sight to a blind man?
Mary did you know
that your baby boy will calm a storm with his hand?
Did you know
that your baby boy has walked where angels trod?
And when you kiss your little baby,
you have kissed the face of God

Mary did you know
The blind will see, the deaf will hear
and the dead will live again
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak,
the praises of the lamb

Mary did you know
that your baby boy is Lord of all creation?
Mary did you know
that your baby boy will one day rule the nations?
Did you know
that your baby boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?
This sleeping child you're holding is the great I AM.

Joy To The World

Joy to the world the Lord has come:
Let earth receive her King.
Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room,
And heav’n and nature sing,
And heav’n and nature sing,
And heav’n and heav’n and nature sing.

Joy to the world the Saviour reigns:
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Mass Intentions for this Week

Saturday, December 24th

9:00 pm. Portuguese

11:00 pm. English

Sunday, December 25th

10:00 am. Portuguese

11:30 am. English

1:00 pm. English

Monday, December 26th

9:00 am. Souls in purgatory

6:00 pm. No Mass

Tuesday, December 27th

9:00 am. Rosária Ferreira

6:00 pm. Maria da Conceição Isidro Matela de Jesus Cavacas

Wednesday, December 28th

9:00 am. Souls in purgatory

6:00 pm. José Medeiros

Thursday, December 29th

9:00 pm. Intention of Mario João Gomes

6:00 pm. Maria Rosa & José Couto, Pat Nesci & Carmello Guido

Friday, December 30th

9:00 am. António & Ana Igreja

6:00 pm. For all health care workers, souls in purgatory

Saturday, December 31st

5:00 pm. Adoration

6:00 pm. Mass English/Portuguese

