

DATE OF CHRISTMAS

What's the real the date of Christmas?

We simply do not know, since for the early church the Resurrection was everything.

The early church had little or no interest in the actual date or circumstances of Jesus' birth and the gospels do not record it. St. Luke simply reminds us that the day of Jesus' birth, wasn't a holiday, but a working day.

We have two traditional dates for Christmas: December 25 in the Western Church and January 6 in the Eastern Church.

It was Pope Julius I (337-352) who decided that we should celebrate Christmas on December 25. Indeed at the time of Pope Julius, St. John Chrysostom, urged the Christians in the east to celebrate Christmas on December 25. They chose not to and, to this day, still celebrate Christmas on January 6, which is for us the feast of the Epiphany.

Regarding any pagan influences, like the "birthday of the unconquered sun", which Emperor Aurelian in 274 declared to be the principal divine patron to the Roman Empire, Christians simply embraced it referring to Christ as the true unconquered light of the world (John 8:12). So, as the festival of December 25 became so popular in the Roman Empire, Christians had no problem making it the birthday of Jesus.

By the 5th century Christians made December 25 the beginning of the Church year and during the Middle Ages, Christmas exploded in popularity.

In the 16th century, the Protestant Reformation challenged the excessive celebration of Christmas, since much of it was not at all connected directly with the mystery of Jesus' birth.

Indeed, Jesus is the reason for the season and Christians should always wish each other Merry Christmas.

2024 Envelopes



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

Christmas Concert

A special thank you to the Senhor Santo Cristo Band and church choirs for the beautiful Christmas Concert.

New Year's Schedule

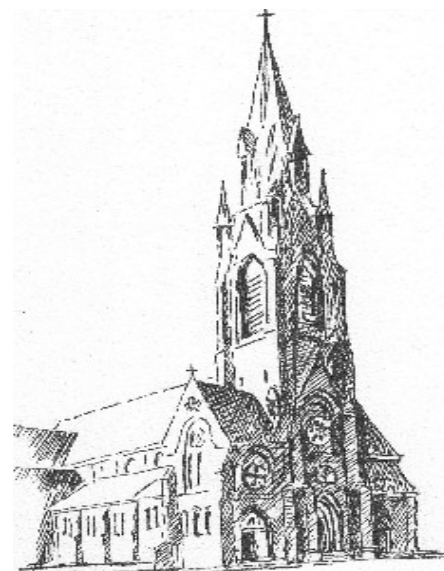
On Sunday, December 31st (New Year's Eve), besides our regular Sunday Masses, we will have Adoration at 5:00 p.m. followed by Te Deum and Mass at 6:00 p.m. in English and Portuguese.

New Year's day Masses will be at 10:00 a.m. in Portuguese, 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 pm. in English.

St. Mary's Church

Rev. Msgr. Fernando Couto (Pastor)

Rev. Fr. Andre de Lima (Associate Pastor)



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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

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

First Friday of Every Month at 5:00 p.m.

English Choir

Susan Taylor 416-277-6291

Portuguese Choir

Ana da Silva 905-891-5444

Santo Cristo

Joey Teves 647-887-2804

Santo Cristo Band (Hall)

Paul Valerio (President) 416-703-2231
647-998-5916

Santo Cristo Association

Please contact the parish 416-703-2326

Espirito Santo

Jose & Margarida Silva 905-873-1908

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

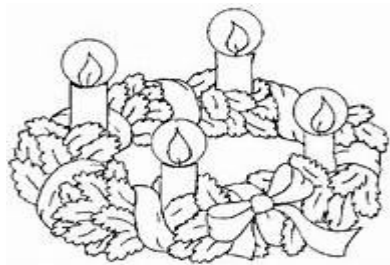
Confessions

Every day before Mass, except on Sunday

Schools

St. Mary Elementary 416-393-5205

Bishop Macdonell 416-393-5462



**December 24, 2023
Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Responsorial Psalm: Forever I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord.

Now that David was king of a united country, with Jerusalem as the capital, he set about building a house (temple) for the Lord. But the Lord pre-empted David's plan. Instead it is the Lord who will build a dynasty for David, a dynasty that will last forever. When Jerusalem was destroyed in 587 BC it seemed that the promise would not come from the house of David.

The expectation was fulfilled when Gabriel announced to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Redeemer, who, through Joseph, would be of the line of David. Gabriel's words echo the words of God's promise to David.

As the birth of a child draws near, attention focuses on the mother. Since we are nearing the celebration of the birth of Christ, it is no surprise to find that Mary is at the centre of today's Gospel. Mary's only concern was to do the will of God. She will help us to do it also.



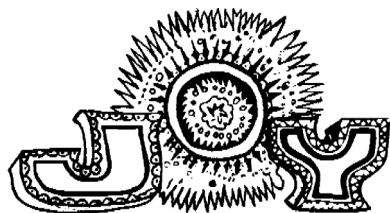
O Come Divine Messiah

O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph,
And sadness flee away.

**Sweet Savior haste;
Come, come to earth,
Dispel the night, and show Thy face,
And bid us hail the dawn of grace.**

**O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph,
And sadness flee away.**

O Thou, whom nations sigh for,
Whom priest and prophet long foretold,
Come break the captive fetters;
Redeem the long-lost fold.



Wait for the Lord

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near
Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart!

Hail Mary, Gentle Woman

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women
and blest is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of death.
Amen.

**Gentle woman, quiet light,
morning star, so strong and bright,
gentle Mother, peaceful dove,
teach us wisdom; teach us love.**

You were chosen by the Father;
you were chosen for the Son.
You were chosen from all women
and for woman, shining one.

People Look East

People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the star, is on the way.

Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, December 23

5:00 pm. Mariano Machado, in-laws, sister in law, Lurdes Teixeira & Edna Grace Avery — Mary Celmira & Alida Rita Delgado—Manuel e António Faria—Melillo & Aurilia families—Leonel Moniz Cabral, parents, in-laws & family — Maria da Conceição Isidro Matela de Jesus Cavacas—Carlos Arruda

Sunday, December 24

8:30 am.
10:00 am.
11:30 am. Luis Alfonso Burgos
1:00 pm.
9:00 pm. Portuguese
11:30 pm. English

Monday, December 25

10:00 pm. Portuguese
11:30 am. English
1:00 pm. English

Tuesday, December 26

9:00 am.
6:00 pm. No Mass

Wednesday, December 27

9:00 am. Rosária Ferreira
6:00 pm. Intention of Marion Claire Iliohan

Thursday, December 28

9:00 am. For the homeless, all who suffer, souls in purgatory
6:00 pm. José Medeiros

Friday, December 29

9:00 am. Intention of Mario João Gomes, family, for the poor
6:00 pm. St. John of God, St. Jude, St. Lawrence, St. Peregrin, Santo Cristo

Saturday, December 30

5:00 pm.