

How Did the Early Christians Prepare for Initiation?

From apostolic times to our own day, Christian initiation involved a journey in several stages. Though historically the process varied in the time it took to complete, the following elements were always present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel, conversion, profession of the faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, and reception of the Eucharist.

Christianity was illegal in the first three centuries. Becoming a Christian was very serious business. It involved beginning a new life in Jesus Christ. It meant that a person had to renounce his or her former life. There was a possibility a convert would be *martyred*, or killed, for his or her faith either before or after being baptized.

Most converts to Christianity in the first century were adults. Thus it made sense to have a rather lengthy period of preparation—typically three years—before a person was fully initiated into the Church. To turn from a life of sin and embrace the life of love commanded by Jesus took sober thought, reflection, and formation. (When infant Baptism became the norm in later centuries, a post-baptismal **catechesis** was established.)

The period of preparation was called the *catechumenate*. During this time, the **catechumens** in partnership with sponsors learned about the Christian faith and became disciplined to the Christian way of life through prayer, fasting, and self-denial. The key emphasis was on conversion to Christ.

The Sacraments of Initiation themselves were celebrated at the Easter vigil after a forty-day period of prayer and formal instruction in the faith during Lent. In this proximate period of preparation, the candidate learned the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, the privileged prayer of Christians.

Those attending R.C.I.A. (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) are baptized during the Easter Vigil. At St. Mary's, registrations are done during the months of October and November. Anyone interested can call the church office and arrange to speak with a priest.

ShareLife

Last weekend we had our first ShareLife collection for this year. We received the amount of \$6,235.00. God bless everyone.

First Reconciliation

All children receiving their First Communion, will have their Reconciliation (First Confession) on Thursday, April 3rd, at 7:00 p.m. All children must attend.

Day of Confessions

Wednesday, April 9th, from 10:30 to 12:00 noon and 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Laus-Perene / Blessed Sacrament Adoration

On April 13, 14, and 15th, we will have the Blessed Sacrament Adoration (Laus-Perene), from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. We need your help for the Easter flowers. All contributions are very much appreciated.

St. Mary's Church

Rev. Msgr. Fernando Couto (Pastor)
Rev. Fr. Benny Joseph (Associate Pastor)

Parish Council

Parish Finance Council

English Choir

Susan Taylor 416-531-0503

Portuguese Choir

Ana da Silva 905-891-5444

Santo Cristo

Artur Rocha 647-624-7113

Santo Cristo Band (Hall)

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

Santo Cristo Association

Contact the Parish 416-703-2326

Espirito Santo

João & Lilia Tavares 647-308-7556

St. Vincent de Paul

416-247-8868

Volunteer Co-Ordinator

Delia Medeiros (Please contact parish)

Baptism—Sundays

Baptisms will be booked by appointment only

Marriages

Please contact the priest **12 months** in advance

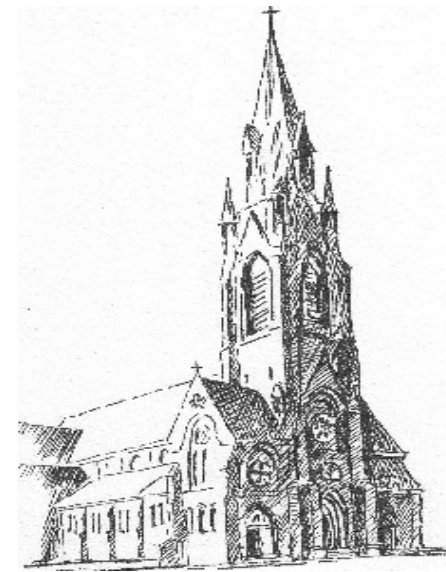
Confessions

Every day **before** Mass, except on Sunday

Schools

St. Mary Elementary 416-393-5205

Bishop Macdonell 416-393-5462



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



**IV Sunday of Lent
March 30, 2025**

A clear theme runs through all three readings: God's mercy to sinners. In the First Reading we have the beautiful words God spoke to his people: 'I have taken the shame of Egypt away from you'. The shame of sin and the darkness of slavery are behind them. The years of wandering in the desert are over; they have come home to the promised land. A new era was about to begin. They mark their homecoming by celebrating anew the feast of Passover.

Psalm: *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

This reminds us of the home-coming of the prodigal son. His shame also is behind him. His years of wandering are over and he returns home to a warm welcome and a great feast. A new and bright future lies ahead of him. Jesus told the parable in response to the criticism of the Pharisees that he was too lenient towards sinners. They were meant to see themselves in the older son. For Luke the 'Pharisees' are righteous Christians, for whom God's mercy to sinners is unfair and scandalous.



Lead Me, Guide Me

**Lead me, guide me along the way;
For if You lead me, I cannot stray;
Lord, let me walk each day with Thee.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me.**

I am weak, and I need Thy strength and power
To help me over my weakest hour;
Let me through the darkness Thy face to see,
Lead me, O Lord, lead me.

Help me tread in the paths of righteousness;
Be my aid when Satan and sin oppress.
I am putting all my trust in Thee,
Lead me, O Lord, lead me.



I Will Sweep Away Your Transgressions

**I will sweep away your transgressions like a cloud
and your sins will be to me like a mist dissolved.
so return to me, I will heal you for I love you.**

If you say to me, "Father, I am blind."
If you say to me, "I can't see."
I will be your light; I'll restore your sight
place all your darkness in me.

if you say to me "I'm in prison, Lord,
imprisoned by my fears."
then I'll come to you, I will comfort you
Let me wipe away your tears.

Father I Have Sinned

Father I have sinned help me find my way
Remember not my sin just let me hear you say:

**I forgive you, I love you
You are mine, take my hand
Go in peace, sin no more beloved one.**

Father I have turned my back and walked away
Depended on my strong
and lived life my own way.

Father I have closed my heart to those in need
Though only for myself avictim of my greed.

Father I have loved if love's the word to use
I've play so many games
They left me so confused.

Father I've returned I'm home with you to stay
Standing by your door knowing that you'll say:

Blest Be The Lord

**Blest be the Lord; blest be the Lord,
The God of mercy, the God who saves.
I shall not fear the dark of night,
Nor the arrow that flies by day.**

He will release me from the nets of all my foes.
He will protect me from their wicked hands.
Beneath the shadow of his wings I will rejoice
To find a dwelling place secure.

I need not shrink before the terrors of the night,
Nor stand alone before the light of day.
No harm shall come to me,
no arrow strike me down,
No evil settle in my soul.

Mass Intentions For This Week



Saturday, March 29

5:00pm: For the sick of our parish, for Pope Francis

Sunday, March 30

8:30am:

10:00am: Community—Santo Cristo Association—
António José Braga—Manuel do Couto Vieira—Abel
Ferreira, parents, in-laws, siblings & family—Luis Cabral
& Luis Teves

11:30am: Ana Carvalho—Thanksgiving Mass for the
Mota family—José Soares & parents—Cajetan
D'Souza—António Belas

1:00 pm:

Monday, March 31

**9:00 am:
6:00 pm:**

Tuesday, April 1

9:00 am: António Rodrigues Marcos
6:00 pm: José, Henriqueta & John Rebelo

Wednesday, April 2

9:00 am: José Calmeira, spouse & children
6:00 pm: Manuel Gaspar Oliveira

Thursday, April 3

9:00 am: Cousins of Rosa Mota

11:00 am. Funeral—Rev. Msgr. Mariano Polito

6:00 pm: António Neto & family

Friday, April 4

9:00 am: Maria Rosa & José Couto, parents, in-laws,
family & souls in purgatory
6:00 pm: Ildeberto Camara

Saturday, April 5

5:00 pm: