

CHRISTMAS

What’s the real date of Christmas?

To answer this question, we have to start with the fact that we do not know exactly when Jesus was born. St. Luke reminds us that the first Christmas, the day of Jesus’ birth, wasn’t a holiday, but a working day. The truth is, no one knows the real birthday of Jesus. Most likely Jesus was born in the Spring and not in the Winter.

The early Christians certainly had different opinions about when it should be celebrated. The Romans celebrated the “Dies Natalis Solis Invicti” meaning the birthday of the unconquered sun on December 25. It was a festival in which they worshipped the sun for winning over the darkness of winter (and that’s where Sunday comes from).

By the 4th century, the Christians in Rome were so many, and many were slaves it made sense to choose a day that was already a holiday and people did not have to work. By taking over this pagan festival (Saturnalia) the Christians gave it a new meaning: Jesus is the Son of God and He is the Light of the World.

What is the other date for Christmas?

The first recorded date of Christmas being celebrated on December 25th was in 336, during the time of Emperor Constantine. After that, Pope Julius I, decided that everybody should celebrate Christmas on December 25th. But not everybody agreed. St. John Chrysostom, urged the Christians in the east to celebrate Christmas on December 25th. They chose not to go along and to this day, like the Armenian Apostolic Church, they celebrate Christmas on January 6th which is for the Christians in the west, the feast of the Epiphany. And because many Orthodox and Coptic Churches still use the Julian calendar they celebrate Christmas on January 7th.

Who started the First Nativity Representation?

In the catacomb of St. Sebastian in Rome, there is a fresco from the 4th century which depicts Mary, Joseph and Jesus, an ox and a donkey. (The first Christmas card). Later in 1223, St. Francis of Assisi, re-enacted the whole story with live animals, people, and a Mass that lasted just about the whole night. (The first Nativity representation).



Christmas Eve Schedule

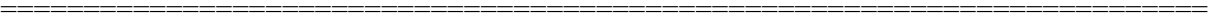
On Christmas Eve Masses will be 9:00 p.m. in Portuguese and 11:30 p.m. in English.

On Christmas Day Masses will be at 10:00 a.m. Portuguese, 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 pm. in English.



Thank You

We would like to thank everyone for all donations made towards the poor and flowers. We also thank everyone who sent us Christmas cards.

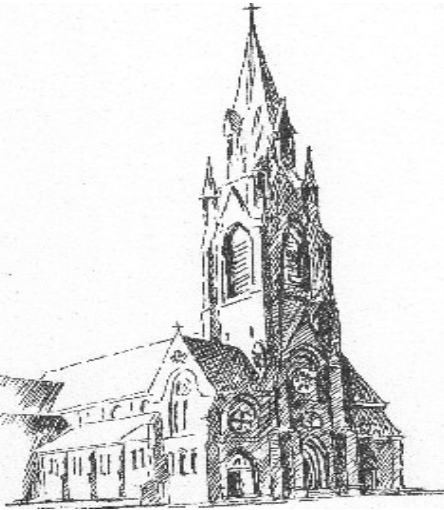


Church Offerings

We ask that all your donations for this year, be made by **December 31st**. Donations made after this date will not reflect on your income tax receipt for 2025. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

St. Mary's Church

Rev. Fernando Couto (Pastor)
Rev. Benny Joseph (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 416-531-0503

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
Please contact the parish 416-703-2326

Espirito Santo
Kevin & Christina Cordeiro 647-218-1601

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

School
St. Mary Elementary 416-393-5205
Bishop Macdonell 416-393-5462



December 21, 2025

First Reading (Is 7:10-14) This reading foretells the birth of a very special child—a child who will be called Emmanuel, that is God-with-us.

Psalm: *May the Lord come in; he is kind of glory.*

Second Reading (Rom 1:1-7) These opening lines from Paul’s letter to the Romans draw attention to the human and divine ‘roots’ of Jesus.

Gospel (Mt 1:18-25) Matthew shows that Isai-ah’s prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus, and in a far greater way that the prophet could ever have im- agined. The New Testament reveals the true iden- tity of this special Child. The Second Reading and the Gospel make it clear that Jesus was the Son of David. This was so because Joseph, his legal father, was descended from the line of David. But he is more than that. He is also the Son of God.

*To all our parishioners
and their families
a very Merry Christmas
With many blessings!*

Every Valley Shall Be Exalted

**Ev’ry valley shall be exalted
and ev’ry hill made low.
And all God’s people
shall see together
the glory of the Lord.**

A voice cries out in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the Lord.
Make straight in the desert a highway,
A highway for our God.”

Stand upon the mountain top;
Lift up your voice to the world.
Sing joyfully Jerusalem;
Behold, behold your God.



O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O come, O come Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel.
That mourns in lowly exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

**Rejoice, rejoice, O Israel,
To thee shall come Emmanuel.**

O come Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine Advent here.
Dispel the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

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.

Blessed are you among women,
blest in turn all women, too.
Blessed they with peaceful spirits.
Blessed they with gentle hearts.

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 Saviour, 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.**

Shalt come in peace and meekness,
And lowly will they cradle be;
All clothed in human weakness
Shall we thy Godhead see.

Mass Intentions for this Week

Saturday, December 20th

5:00 pm. Mariano Machado, in-laws, Lurdes Teixeira & Edna Grace Avery — Luis Raposo & family — João Engenheiro, José & Claudia Cruz—Jaime Rodrigues Rego

Sunday, December 21st

8:30 am. Parents & in-laws of José & Margarida Silva, souls in purgatory

10:00 am. Community — Maria de Fátima Tavares Melo— Albertina de Sousa—Maria da Conceição Cavacas—Manuel & Olinda Resendes—Intention of Graça Cardoso—Tommy de Carvalho—Judy da Silva

11:30 am. Mellilo & Aurilia families—Arlindo, Ilda & Richard Vicente — José & Angelo Medeiros—Pasquale Rizzotto—Tomas Yntia—Abel da Rocha, Vasco & Maria Afonso—Marceline Kotchap

1:00 pm. Yue Ming

Monday, December 22nd

9:00 am. Rosária Ferreira

6:00 pm. Attilia & Vittorio Bettio

Tuesday, December 23rd

9:00 am. Intention of Maria, Andy, Elayna & Fátima Medeiros

6:00 pm. Michael Correia

Wednesday, December 24th

9:00 pm. Portuguese

11:30 pm. English

Thursday, December 25th

10:00 am. Portuguese

11:30 am. English

1:00 pm. English

Friday, December 26th

9:00 am. Intention of Filomena & Jamie Melo

6:00 pm. No Mass

Saturday, December 27th

5:00 pm. Odilia & Michael Correia—Manuel & António Faria—Gary Realejo