

# ST. MARY'S CHURCH

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Fr. Charles Forget, **Pastor**

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## ON THE CUSP OF CHRISTMAS

"... And sadness flee away". This last line of one of the most well-known Advent hymns speaks to a real need, no longer in lands far away among people our lives in comparison would look poor, but now in our own country of Canada. When over 2-million Canadians turned to food banks last month and many Canadians have lost their homes with tent-cities popping up all across the country, including Collingwood, we can see that the pandemic, which started in March of 2020, has left so many people thinking that the life we had, for better or for worse before that time, will never be the same again. Personally speaking, when I look back, I feel that I was living in a kind of bliss before Covid hit. People became divided and many placed all their hope and trust, not in God so much as in medicines and government that would save us and protect us and always make the right decisions.

Why speak of such things, you might ask, on the cusp of Christmas? Why go back in time when we need to look and move forward to a new future? Because the world is not getting better and better with each passing day. Sure, technological advances in many fields increases in leaps and bounds and we are able to communicate in some pretty incredible ways as never before, but have we become a better world? No, I don't think so.



My point, of course, is that just as we needed a Saviour and He was expected for thousands of years in promise, He came. He arrived on the earth He made in a way no one suspected. Unseen, unheard, unloved and unwelcomed, He came right into our midst, born of a spotless Virgin and cared for along with His Mother by a holy and protective man chosen by God, named Joseph. Not in a place befitting of God-in-the-flesh was He born but, as Fulton Sheen said, "under the very floor of the earth". It occurs to me at my writing now that there is a hesitancy in describing the birth of Jesus as 'brought into the world' since after all He made it and was, in fact, already here. I was thinking that since Jesus was already here on the earth His Mother was standing on, yet in her womb, that He came 'into the world' when He was born. But that's nonsense. Was Jesus not in fact already here? YES! Did not He occupy, since conception, a growing space in His Mother's womb and body and did not her feet stand on firm earth? Yes. He was already

here. For nine months, not only because Mary was pregnant with Him as a baby in her womb, He was already here, as vulnerable and dependent as He was and She was. Why on earth would we sophisticated and 'scientific' humans, (and sadly, devastatingly, even so many Catholics and world leaders who are supposed to be Catholics and adherents of all the Catholic Church believes) not consider a human baby in a human mother's womb to be a human baby? It confounds how we can be so smart and yet so intellectually and scientifically dishonest. Is there really a scientist or researcher or doctor who doesn't believe that human life begins at the moment of conception? As if a child passing through the birth canal of the mother and coming outside of her body somehow and magically bestows humanness on the child by the brilliance of man, is confounding in every way possible.



God, who is outside of time, came into the thing called time, through a woman who herself was immaculately conceived in her mother's womb, by God's design and hand. He didn't come as a 'they' or a 'them' but as a man with the singular, personal pronoun reserved for only Him: GOD. Thinking on this is truly astounding in its depth and beauty and truth and yet its simplicity.



Of all the ways in which God could have saved the world, He did it in such a humble, quiet way. Only the eyes of Joseph and Mary saw His birth though they knew Him already. And only after some time, through the glorious apparition of angels to first Shepherds and then the Magi did others come to “see” the Messiah – the very Saviour of the world. And yet, unlike you and me and all people graced to populate this plant earth, He came to it to die. It was the reason for His coming. (Fr.C)

Fulton Sheen wrote in the 60’s so profoundly of this connection in an essay entitled

**THE CRADLE AND THE CROSS**

“She gave birth to her first child, a son. And as there was no place for them inside the inn, she wrapped him up and laid him in a manger.” (Lk. 2:7)

“And when they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him with the criminals.” (Lk. 23:33)

“Is it easier to understand the love of the cross than the love of the cradle; the love that manifests itself in giving up life for another than the love which humbles itself in infancy that men might never boast of their greatness?

He accepted the manger because there was no room in the inn; He accepted the cross because men said, “we will not have this Man reign over us.” Disowned upon entering His own creation, He is rejected upon leaving it. He was laid in a stranger’s stable at the beginning of life and a stranger’s grave at the end. At His crib in Bethlehem, He was flanked by an ox and an ass, and on the cross of Calvary by two thieves. Swaddling clothes bound Him in His birthplace; swaddling clothes wrapped Him in His tomb.

His life was lived not just from Bethlehem to Calvary, rather it began with Calvary. The cross was there at the beginning. It cast its shadow backward to His Birth. We ordinary mortals go from the known to the unknown, submitting ourselves to forces beyond our control. That is why the life of so many of us is a tragedy. But He went from the known to the known, from the reason for His coming, namely to be Jesus, or Saviour, to the fulfillment of His coming, namely, the death on the Cross.

Hence, these was no tragedy in His Life, for tragedy implies the unforeseeable, the uncontrollable, the fatalistic. Modern life is tragic when there is spiritual darkness and unredeemable guilt. For the Christ Child there were no uncontrollable forces; no submission to fatalistic change from which there could be no escape; but there was an ‘inscape’ - the microcosmic manger summarizing the macrocosmic cross on Calvary.

For all the people who know themselves to be stables, inhabited by inner beasts, and who give Him welcome, there is a joy that makes them shout in their hearts - ‘Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas.’”

(Bp. Fulton J. Sheen, *Christmas Inspirations*, Maco Books, 1966)



Monday Dec 25 <sup>th</sup>	CHRISTMAS DAY
9:00am	Mass
11:00am	Mass
Tuesday Dec 26 <sup>th</sup>	No Mass
Wednesday Dec 27 <sup>th</sup>	
8:30am	+Rose Evelyn Wylie Requested by Doety Lewis
Thursday Dec 28 <sup>th</sup>	
8:30am	+John Phillip Whittaker Requested by Maureen Whittaker
Friday Dec 29 <sup>th</sup>	
7:30am	Holy Hour
8:30am	+Anne Van Boxmeer Requested by Patricia Van Boxmeer
	Health Intentions Bart Grudzien Requested by Mom
Saturday Dec 30 <sup>th</sup>	
3:30pm	Confessions
4:30pm	+Nick Cudney Requested by the Cudney Family
Sunday Dec 31 <sup>st</sup>	THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH
9:00am	Unannounced Mass
11:00am	For the People
4:30pm	NEW YEAR’S EVE
Monday Jan 1 <sup>st</sup>	SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD
11:00am	Mass

*Please Pray for the Sick*

Dorothy Dynes, Margot Brandreth, Jean Ferguson, Fred Coulson, Hilary Joseph, Henry Niepalla, Teresa & Feliks Kosierb, Mary Little, Elizabeth Pavilsa.

*Please Pray for the Recently Deceased*

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