

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

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Fr. Charles Forget, **Pastor**

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Feast of the Holy Family

THE GREATEST STORY

There is no greater story that has resounded on the earth than the story that has two great book ends - the story of the birth and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Yet it is not a story just like any other because a regular story can teach us or entertain us, but the story of Jesus is real and true and life changing for all who believe in Him. His coming as a baby and his growth in "age and grace and wisdom" was the fulfillment of all of the prophets, yet He was one of us - a human in all things but sin. He laughed, blew little baby bubbles, soiled his diaper and learned to walk and eventually run. He was divinity dwelling in a human nature born of Mary.

Jesus,
 I believe you laughed
 as Mary bathed you
 and Joseph tickled your toes.
 I believe you giggled
 as you and the other children
 played your childhood games.
 And when you went
 to the Temple
 and astounded the teachers,
 I believe you chuckled
 as all children chuckle
 when they stump adults.
 And surely there were
 moments of merriment
 as you and your disciples
 deepened your relationship.
 And as you and Mary
 and Martha and Lazarus
 fellowshiped, mirth
 must have been mirrored
 on your faces.
 Jesus, I know you wept
 and anguished.
 But I believe you laughed, too.
 Create in me
 the life of laughter.

Lois H. Morgan

The Story of Artaban: The Fourth Magi



The Wise Man Artaban, in his pursuit of the King of the Jews, misses his three friends, who set out before him: Balthazar, Gaspar, and Melchior. He misses the Christ Child, too, because his adventures lead him into strange encounters with dying beggars and frightened mothers, to whom he gives two of his three jewels saved for the Christ Child. He returns to Jerusalem after a fruitless search in Egypt. There, after thirty-three years he still diligently searches for the child.

This year it is Passover time. Artaban, now an old man, notes an unusual commotion, and he inquires about its cause. People answer him, "*We are going to the place called Golgotha, just outside the walls of the city, to see two robbers and a man named Jesus of Nazareth hanged on a cross. The man Jesus call himself the Son of God, and Pilate has sent him to be crucified because he says that he is the King of the Jews.*"

Artaban knows instinctively that this is the King he has been searching for. So, he rushes toward the scene. But on his way he meets a young girl being sold into slavery. She sees his royal robes and falls at his feet pleading for him to rescue her. His heart is moved, and he gives away his last jewel for her ransom. Just then, darkness falls over the land, and the earth shakes, and great stones fall into the streets. One of them falls on Artaban, crushing his head.

As he lies dying in the arms of the girl he has just ransomed, he cries out weakly, "*Three and thirty years I looked for thee, Lord, but I have never seen thy face nor ministered to thee!*" But then a voice comes from heaven, strong and kind, and says, "*Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.*" Artaban's face grows calm and peaceful. His long journey is ended. He has found his King!



There is much said about Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Poems and hymns are written about her, but St. Joseph often gets only a walk-on part at Christmas. I came across this poem about St. Joseph many years ago and have committed it to heart for life.

POEM FOR SAINT JOSEPH

Whenever the bright blue nails
 would drop

Down on the floor of his carpenter shop,
 St. Joseph, Prince of carpenter men,
 Would stoop to gather them up again.

For he feared for two little sandals sweet,
 And very easy to pierce they were,
 As they padded over the lumber there
 And rode on two little sacred feet.

But alas on a hill between earth and heaven,
 One day three nails into a cross were driven
 And fastened it firm to the sacred feet
 Where once rode two little sandals sweet.

And Christ and his mother
 looked off in death
 Afar to the valley of Nazareth,
 To the carpenter shop, all spread with dust
 While the little blue nails all packed in rust,
 Slept in a box on the window sill
 And Joseph lay sleeping under the hill.

The Mysteries, The Message And St. Mary's Parish

In the 170 years since this parish of St. Mary's was established in Collingwood, Catholics have worked, prayed, built, shared and worshipped God in Jesus Christ. The many activities in the diversity of its people over 17 decades have and must always be centered and recentered on the one thing of our worship of God. The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines this for us:

CCC 2096 *Adoration is the first act of the virtue of religion. To adore God is to acknowledge him as God, as the Creator and Saviour, the Lord and Master of everything that exists, as infinite and merciful Love. "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve," says Jesus, citing Deuteronomy.*

As pastor, following a long line of faithful priests who have shepherded the people of St. Mary's, I, in the name of all parishioners, all those who serve in parish ministry and those who serve in outreach groups within, pledge to Christ Our Lord that we will renew our commitment to worship, follow and serve Him alone, lest we should ever become a 'multi-use' building and not a people who together build the Kingdom of God. May we strive to be holy as our Heavenly Father is holy. Blessings. (Fr. C)

Indigenous Reconciliation Fund Update

On December 12, 2023, the Archdiocese of Toronto announced the first phase of funding as part of our \$6 million commitment to the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund (IRF). Through the tremendous generosity of parishioners throughout the archdiocese, including our own parish, more than \$2.7 million has been directed through the IRF to organizations and projects committed to promoting healing and reconciliation for communities and families.

Recipients include: **Aboriginal Legal Services** located in Toronto, Ontario, that will receive \$538,000 to help fund their Indigenous family dispute resolution program called Giiwedini Anang. **Embrace Life Council** located in Iqaluit, Nunavut, that will receive \$250,000 over five years. The funds will be used for grief care packages to assist those mourning the loss of a loved one by suicide. **Indigenous Spirit Fund**, a branch of Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, Ontario that will receive \$400,000 over four years to enrich their On the Land culture camp program curriculum. **Keeseekoose First Nation** located in Saskatchewan that will receive \$30,000 in support of their "Truth Telling Gathering" held earlier this year, supported also by the Archdiocese of Regina. The event was dedicated to honouring Indigenous cultures, fostering understanding and empowering communities. **Native Peoples' Mission** located in Toronto, Ontario that will receive \$150,000, over five years to expand programs and outreach of the mission. **Ontario Native Women's Association**, Thunder Bay, Ontario will receive \$475,000 over five years to enhance existing programming including activities related to healing and reconciliation for Indigenous women, culture and language revitalization, education and community building and spiritual and cultural

teachings with elders and knowledge keepers.

Teach For Canada – Gakinaamaage located in Toronto, Ontario that will receive \$450,000 over three years. The funds will be used for their initiative to invest in local educators in First Nations schools in remote locations, benefitting more than 4,300 students annually.

Wigwamen Terrace located in Toronto, Ontario that will receive \$475,000 over five years allowing the organization to hire additional support staff in order to provide their elderly residents with assistance with navigating technology, accessing mental health services and maintaining connections to Indigenous cultural and spiritual communities and resources.

Thank you for your continued prayers and ongoing support as we journey together on the path of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples of This Land. To learn more, visit www.archtoronto.org/healingandreconciliation



Monday Jan 1 st 11:00am	Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God Mass
Tuesday Jan 2 nd 7:00pm	+Barbara Chomyn Requested by the Gerynowicz Family
Wednesday Jan 3 rd 8:30am	+Catherine Morrissey Pagan Requested by Helen McGuire
Thursday Jan 4 th 8:30am	+Margaret Ogles Requested by Barb & Mary
Friday Jan 5 th 7:30am 8:30am	Holy Hour Intentions of Rebecca Wedge Requested by the Family Health Intentions of Bart Grudzien Requested by Mom
Saturday Jan 6 th 3:30pm 4:30pm	Confessions +Monsignor John Weber Requested by Mary & John Scanlon
Sunday Jan 7 th 9:00am 11:00am	For the People For the Families of Sandy & AL Mattacott Requested by Sandy Mattacott

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

Agatha Tawaststjerna

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