

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

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Fr. Charles Forget, **Pastor**

Jayne Williams, **Office Administrator**

prepare the way...



ADVENT

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

A BRIEF REPRIEVE?

Bill C-9 has not passed, even though the government had hoped it would before the Parliamentary Christmas break. The vote will come up again in January. There has been significant pushback from MPs and Canadians at large, who have suddenly become aware of what this bill could mean, especially for religious freedom. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) wrote a firm letter expressing serious concern about what this bill proposes and its impact on religious liberties long held in this country. All Canadians, particularly religious leaders from all faiths, need to educate themselves about the controversy surrounding the proposed bill, especially since it seeks to remove a clause that has long protected religious liberty in Canadian law. The CCCB website summarizes the issue as follows:

"The Liberal government has reached an agreement with the Bloc Québécois concerning an amendment to eliminate the religious exemption clause from Canada's hate speech legislation in Section 319 (3) (b) of the *Criminal Code*. This initiative is intended to garner support for Bill C-9, titled 'An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime, and access to religious or cultural places).' The current provision in the *Criminal Code* slated for removal states: **"(3) No person shall be convicted of an offence under subsection (2) [...] (b) if, in good faith, the person expressed or attempted to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text."**

For Catholics and all other Christians, a 'religious text' specifically refers to the Bible, which is the Word of God, comprising all 73 books in the Catholic version. For Catholics in particular, everything the Church teaches and has taught—based on God's revelation, including the Catechism of the Catholic Church, papal encyclicals, and numerous Church Councils over two millennia—constitutes our 'belief in religious texts'. Therefore, the proposed Bill C-9 would eliminate this protection, meaning that preaching the Church's truths would no longer be safeguarded. The deliberate removal of this longstanding religious protection demands explanation as to its necessity, though the government's defense has appeared as vague to say the least, not to mention the repeated phrase of the need to fight against 'hate speech'.

It's not like preachers within Christian churches have been spreading hatred or inciting violence towards groups or individual Canadians. The every-Sunday proclamation of the Word of God, for example, in Catholic churches throughout Canada, has not been cited by anyone as calling for hatred towards our neighbour. The word 'hatred' pertains to sin and not to the sinner himself. Archbishop Fulton Sheen so famously stated years ago that "There are not one hundred people in the United States who hate The Catholic Church, but there are millions who hate what they wrongly perceive the Catholic Church to be." The same can be said of the Gospels, and the Gospel the Church has been mandated to preach since Christ founded her. In the Gospel of St. Luke (10:16), when Christ addresses the cities that had heard the Gospel

message and rejected it and therefore remained unrepentant, He made it clear that the Gospel proclamation itself by His disciples, even when met by rejection or hostility, was the same as hearing from Jesus Himself, when He said, "those who hear you, hear me".

We live at a time when so many are tired of this often upside-down world and are coming to the beautiful freshness and grace of the words and truth of God's love in Christ Jesus, the Saviour. They are recognizing Jesus' Gospel as the only words that echo the truth that is beyond time and calls us to hate, yes hate, all those 'things' that would deprive us of unspeakable joy and peace in this life and for life eternal. Satan is trying to rob us of what Jesus has purchased for us already, for he is a thief and a murderer. The Devil has gone so far as to now, in our time, call that which is really the most significant sign of God's love, salvation, and hatred. The Church's desire to see people ensnared by sin set free from it is now called hate. For as St. John tells us, "Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also." (1 Jn. 4:20-21) It is love, therefore, that compels priests and preachers to call us out of our sins, whatever they may be, wherever they may be, and no matter how much they have become culturally accepted. Yet the Devil is not only a thief, but a liar, who is so evidently busy in telling us that up is really down, black is actually white, sin is virtue, evil is good and love is hate.

For Christians, especially Catholics, it is essentially an effort to silence the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Church. No Catholic who stays true to the Gospel's truth and the timeless, unchanging teachings of Holy Mother Church should see this proposed bill as a positive and necessary safeguard against hatred. But let's be honest. The current climate, not only in Canada but worldwide, is such that some consider the writings of St. Paul to be so-called 'hate speech' because they oppose the sin Jesus came to call us away from. Our very commitment to follow Christ isn't merely a call to be nice but to hate the sin within ourselves, prompting us toward repentance and a change in our way of living. We hear this clearly in the readings each Sunday, particularly in Advent, when the scriptures call us to prepare a straight path within ourselves for God, who came to earth in the Incarnation and will come again at a time we do not know. And in Lent, which again calls us to seriously turn away from sin and remain faithful to the Gospel, we are constantly reminded of our mortality and the brevity of this life, which is new in the morning but withers and fades by night.

The world without God would call us to a fake world of 'nice' that falsely leads us to believe that we don't need a Saviour because we didn't need one in the first place. Therefore, sin is subjective, based on how one personally feels about human behaviour. Ultimately, if our government or any other tries to interfere with God and His living, revealed Word, who do you think will prevail? (Fr. Charles)

MASS



**SCHEDULE
& INTENTIONS**

Tue Dec 23rd
7:00pm +Joe Wylie
Requested by Doety Lewis

Wed Dec 24th
4:30pm CHRISTMAS EVE
6:30pm CHRISTMAS EVE

Thurs Dec 25th
9:00am CHRISTMAS DAY
11:00am CHRISTMAS DAY

Fri Dec 26th
7:30am HOLY HOUR
8:30am Unannounced Mass

Sat Dec 27th
8:30am Unannounced Mass
4:30pm +Margaret Ogles
Requested by Barb & Mary

Sun Dec 28th
9:00am Special Intentions of Luke & Andrew Jagielski
Requested by Mom

11:00am For the People

Please Pray for the Sick

Mary Little, Alex Poirier, Hudson Ford,
Mary Elliot.



Please Pray for the Recently Deceased



The Sanctuary Lamp Burns for the
all the Souls in Purgatory.
Nov 30th to Dec 27th, 25



Regular Collection Dec 14th 2025

Inc. PAG	\$4030.05
ShareLife	\$35,475.90



OFFERTORY ENVELOPES

There are still some Offertory Envelopes that need to be picked up. They will be in the parish hall this weekend, and then they will be brought back into the office until the New Year. If you would like to start using envelopes please give me a call at the parish office and I will get a box ready for you.

**Please note the office will be closed
Between Christmas and New Year**

**4th Sunday of Advent
December 21, 2025**

Amplify your love through ShareLife!

NEW: Your gift will double in value! From November 3 until year end, your contribution to our parish's ShareLife campaign will be matched by an anonymous donor up to a total of \$500,000.

Right now, there's a mother wondering how she'll feed her child, a senior hoping someone will remember them, a family praying for a way forward. Your support for ShareLife and the Food Security Grants is not only a source of hope but a tangible lifeline, ensuring that food finds its way to the tables of those who need it most.

Your Christmas gift will go twice as far, providing twice the hope, twice the comfort, and twice the love to those who are counting on your support. If you donate online by December 31, you will receive a **2025 tax receipt**.

Please support the work of ShareLife agencies through sharelife.org/donate or by giving at our parish using a ShareLife envelope. Thank you for living the Gospel!

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

The Masses for Christmas and New Year's will be as follows:

Wednesday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)

4:30pm and 6:30pm

Thursday, December 25 (Christmas Day)

9:00am and 11:00am

Feast of the Holy Family/New Year's Eve

Wednesday, December 31

4:30pm

Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God/New Year's Day

Thursday, January 1

10:00am

To The Parishioners of St. Mary's

This Christmas may these words of scripture fill your heart with Joy....

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father."

In that lovely manger bed, the Christ Child found rest for his little head. May Gods love fill your heart this Christmas.

Merry Christmas and Blessings for the New Year 2026

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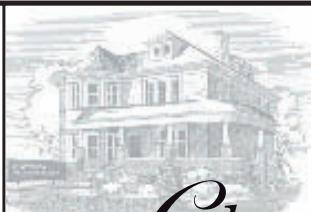
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