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**BRINGING THE GIFT OF OURSELVES**

Befana, the Housewife, scrubbing her pane, saw three old sages ride down the lane, saw three grey travelers pass her door - Gaspar, Balthazar, Melchior. "Where journey you sirs?" she asked of them. Balthazar answered, "To Bethlehem, for we have news of a marvelous thing. Born in a manger is Christ the King." "Give Him my welcome!" Then Gaspar smiled, "Come with us, mistress, to greet the Child." "Oh, happily, happily would I fare, were my dusting through and I'd polished the stair." Old Melchior leaned on his saddle horn, "Then send but a gift to the small Newborn." "Oh, gladly, gladly I'd send Him one, were the hearthstone swept and my weaving done. As soon as ever I've baked my bread, I'll fetch Him a pillow for His head, and a coverlet too," Befana said. "When the rooms are aired and the linen dry, I'll look at the Babe." But the Three rode by. She worked for a day and a night and a day, then, gifts in her hands, took up her way. But she never found where the Christ Child lay. And still she wanders at Christmastide, houseless, whose house was all her pride. Whose heart was tardy, whose gifts were late; wanders, and knocks at every gate. Crying, "Good people, the bells begin! Put off your toiling and let Love in.

This week marks the beginning of Advent Season, followed by the Christmas Season. We, like Befana are faced with equally daunting responsibilities and routines. Whether housewife or executive, laborer or retiree the demands made upon us by the many good things in life never diminish from distracting us from pursuing the best in life. Will we allow the demands to also cause us to put off recognizing his coming and postpone bringing him the gift of ourselves?

Before we know it the gifts will be opened and relatives will be returning home, and the only lasting impression on our heart will be one of exhaustion and disappointment. Once again we may be faced with the emptiness of heart that comes from realizing that another Advent/Christmas season has passed and we missed the opportunity to worship, and celebrate the Christ child.

Saint Bernard explains that there are three comings of Christ. The first is what we celebrate as Christmas, where he came in our flesh and in our weakness. In his final coming he will come in glory and majesty. "The intermediate coming is a hidden one; in it only the elect see the Lord within their own selves, and they are saved. In his first coming our Lord came in our flesh and in our weakness; in this middle coming he comes in spirit and in power; in the final coming he will be seen in glory and majesty."\*\* Saint Bernard reminds us of Jesus' words, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him." What will we do with his coming to us?

These coming Advent and Christmas Seasons can be different, filled with awe and reflection, and with joy, peace, and adoration bubbling up within us. Instead of being like Befana, when the Befanas of our world knock on our door looking for where the Christ Child lays, we can invite them in to discover Jesus in our heart and in our home.

This week let's determine that the birth of Christ the King will be celebrated this season and all year long in our heart and lives.

Emmaus Journey Reflections

Bishop of the Diocese  
Most Reverend Gerard P. Bergie, D.D.

Parish Priest  
Father Christopher Gerard Gillen. P.P.

Sunday Masses  
Saturday 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

Weekday Masses  
Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri @ 9:00 a.m.  
Wed @ 6:30 pm

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament  
TO BE RE-SCHEDULED

Reconciliation/Confessions  
Sat 4:00 - 4:30 p.m. or on request

Baptism  
Catechesis and appointment necessary

Marriage  
Contact the parish office

Sacrament of the Sick  
Please call the office.

Secretary  
Sandy Johnson  
Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday  
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.


St Martin School  
Phone 905-957-3032

Cemetery  
Ron Roscovich at 905-386-0648

Diocesan Website: www.saintcd.com

Diocese of St. Catharines

**St. Martin of Tours Roman Catholic Church**



166 West Street, P.O. Box 74  
Smithville, Ontario L0R 2A0  
Telephone: 289-956-0221  
Email: st.martins@cogeco.ca  
www.stmartinsparish.com

**Ministry Schedule - Dec 9/10**

**Hospitality Ministers**  
5:00 pm - Needed  
9:00 am - Needed  
11:00 am - Needed

**Altar Servers**  
5:00 pm - Needed  
9:00 am - Needed  
11:00 am - Needed

**Children's Liturgy**  
Needed

**Next Hospitality Sunday**  
January 7

**Sunday,  
Dec 3, 2017**

**Advent  
Week One**

**Lectors**  
5:00 pm #1 - Mitch Pogoda  
#2 - Yolanda Baldasaro  
9:00 am #1 - Susan Armstrong  
#2 - Maeve Devlin  
11:00 am #1 - Andrew Steger  
#2 - Alex Joyner

**Ministers of Communion**  
5:00 pm - Martha & Doug  
9:00 am - Vern & Dick  
11:00 am - Sherri & Barb

**Counting**  
Marg Van Geest & Kathleen Diletti

# December 3, 2017

## 1st Sunday of Advent - Year B



*Lord, may the request of your people  
rise before you like a fragrant offering*

Monday	Dec 4	9:00 am	+In memory of Joseph Olascki, Charles Parker, Olga Mous & Winnie Stadelbauer (Benefactors)	by St. Martin's Parish
Tuesday	Dec 5	8:40 am	For the special intentions of the ACTS team	by Doug and Maeve Devlin
Wednesday	Dec 6	6:30 pm	+For the repose of the soul of Mary Tilden	by Martha Devlin
Thursday	Dec 7	<b>St. Ambrose</b> 9:00 am	+For the repose of the soul of Paul Massad	by Joyce and Rodney Ross
Friday	Dec 8	<b>The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</b> 9:00 am	For the health and healing and God's blessings Grace Tye	by Joan and Bob Hignett
Saturday	Dec 9	<b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b> 5:00 pm	For the special intentions of St. Martin's Parish family	
Sunday	Dec 10	9:00 am	+For the repose of the soul of Ivo Tusak	by the Tusak family
		11:00 am	+For the repose of the soul of Michael Chorley	by Maria Chorley

### ADVENT DAY OF RECONCILIATION FOR PRIESTS

Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at Mount Carmel  
Spiritual Centre Niagara Falls.

**Parish morning Mass will be celebrated at 8:40am.**

### JOURNEY'S PROGRAM FOR GRADES 8

On Tuesday, December 5, and 12 at Our Lady of Grace, Spiritual Centre, Ridgeway, Father Christopher will celebrate the evening Mass at 5:00pm followed by dinner with students, parents, principal and teachers.

### PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Father Christopher will attend the Annual Faith Formation and Luncheon for Priests, Trustees, Principals, Vice-Principals, Administrators and Chaplains. Wednesday, December 13, 2017, Club Roma, St. Catharines. This year's theme will continue our focused efforts to enrich the partnership between our parishes and schools as we continue to build a strong Catholic identity and community throughout Niagara.

### FIRST RECONCILIATION

Congratulations to those students (27) in Grade 2 who celebrated First Reconciliation, Wednesday, November 29, 2017. Thanks to teachers Mrs. Jeffrey and Mrs. Szabo for their cooperation, guidance and leadership.

### CHRISTMAS CAKES

The Knights of Columbus will be selling Right To Life Christmas Cakes after all Mass the weekend of December 10th.

Small \$15.00  
Large \$25.00



### CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND CHURCH DECOR

There will be a special collection for Christmas Flowers on December 9/10. Envelopes for this collection will be in the December 2/3 bulletin. Thank you.

### CHURCH OFFERTORY ENVELOPES 2018

Are now available at entrance foyer.  
Thank you for using our offertory envelope system.  
Thank you for your weekly tithe/stewardship.  
Bills don't take vacations. We do!  
Please remember and support us weekly.

### LOAF OF BREAD OUTREACH

Thank you all for your generous support of the Loaf of Bread Outreach Program last year. For the fifth year, St. Martin of Tours Parish in conjunction with the local churches in the Smithville area has been hosting the Loaf of Bread Program for those disadvantaged financially, or in need of social support. This program starts in January and runs until the end of June. St. Martin of Tours will host the dinners in January and March. Home cooked meals are supplied every Thursday evenings during those time periods between 5 and 7pm for those invited guests. All participating churches are requested to financially support this endeavor. Therefore, St. Martin's parish will have a special collection on December 17th to contribute to this service. Thank you again and may the Good Lord keep you ever blessed as you store up enormous treasures in heaven this way.

### DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE FALL EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Development and Peace launches a new campaign called **Women at the Heart of Peace**. This campaign invites all Canadians to learn more about the vital role women play in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Join us in paying tribute to the women who build peace in communities around the world.

Sign the Development and Peace - Caritas Canada Action Card today! **(Given with last week's parish bulletin. Please fill it out and send. We are presently recording the number of cards given).**

Together, let's call on the Canadian government to give women the resources they need to be at the heart of peace. You can also sign our Action Card online: [Devp.org/act](http://Devp.org/act).

On behalf of all women who build peace in their communities, Development and Peace - Caritas Canada thanks you for your continued commitment. Together, we have the power to change things! Join a dynamic pan-Canadian movement that takes action for peace and justice- become a member of Development and Peace. Without your action, there's no change, no justice! For more information, please go to [devp.org/membership](http://devp.org/membership).

### SUNDAY MISSALS

Sunday Missals are available and in the church foyer. To cover the cost, a donation of \$5 would be appreciated. Thank you.

### PARISH STEWARDSHIP

Last Sunday's Collection December 3, 2017  
1, 719.00 - Envelopes (73)  
\$112.35 - Loose

*Thank you for your tithe/stewardship.*

### SCHOOL ADVENT CONFESSIONS

**Each Wednesday in Advent beginning at 9:30am.**

### EXTRA PARISH ADVENT CONFESSIONS

Regular Confessions are: Saturday: 4:00pm-4:30pm  
or by appointment at anytime.

Each Wednesday in Advent 5:45pm to 6:25pm  
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at this time.

Parish Evening Mass is at 6:30pm

Come for Adoration, time for Prayer and Reconciliation  
and stay for Eucharist.

### BAPTISMS

Congratulations and Welcome to:

Jayda Juliana Archibald  
Emmett James Ewing.

Baptized Sunday, December 3, 2017.

### CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE OF MASSES

**December 24: Regular Sunday Masses 9 & 11 am**

**Christmas Eve: Sunday, December 24**  
**Family Mass 5:00pm.**

**Christmas Midnight Mass: ?**  
**(Some have suggested an early start time 11:30pm?)**  
**What do you think? Let Father Christopher know.**  
**Christmas Day: Monday, December 25, 10:00am.**

### NEW YEAR'S DAY

**December 31: Regular Sunday Masses 9 & 11 am**

**New Year's Vigil Mass: Sunday December 31, 5pm**  
**January 1, Monday New Year's Day Mass 10:00am**  
**Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.**

### BEST WISHES THIS WEEK TO

#### Birthdays:

Samantha Pouliot - Dec 3  
Maria Martins/Thomas Valeri - Dec 5  
Shirley Thompson - Dec 6  
Cassidy Barnes - Dec 8  
Maryanne Paradis/Dick Van Geest - Dec 9  
Christian Altobelli - Dec 10

#### Anniversaries:

Dick & Marg Van Geest - Dec 5