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**Father Christopher's Weekly Musings...**

Dear friends:

Advent is a time of waiting and preparation for both the celebration of Jesus' birth in history, as well as the great anticipation of His final return. In 2020, it seems that we are in a very different world this year than the last. From pandemic, to and an overall weary and uncertain world... this final week of our Advent season provides us an opportunity to sit and reflect on the year that we have experienced, and to rest in the truth of God's promises. We take comfort in God's word that promises us restoration of peace through the Messiah. **Micah 5.5: He shall be our peace!** **Eph 2:14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations.**

During this final Advent week, may the birth of the Messiah encourage us all to be agents of peace, comfort and restoration to those suffering and afflicted. He is with us as he invites our prayers. Prayer is not a last resort, but a loving promise from our Lord that He will hear us. Please join us in praying for those suffering from the coronavirus, those caring for the ill, those seeking the new vaccine, and all others who serve in these times. Pray for those experiencing anxiety, depression, and suicide. And please know that we are praying for each of you. For our Eucharist and our personal and collective prayer are vital in these days of concern and struggle. My personal mantra, I again share with each of you. "Keep Calm, and Carry On."

Shalom, Christopher+

IRISH CHRISTMAS BLESSING

GO RAIBH SOLAS CHRÍOST  
I DO CHROI AGUS I GCROÍ  
GACH DUINE ÁTA AG  
CUIMHNEAMH ORT AN  
NOLLAIG SEO

TRANSLATION:

May the light of Christ  
Be in your heart and in the heart  
Of every person  
Who thinks of you  
This Christmas

**Pastor**

Rev. Father Christopher Gerard Gillen P.P.  
Diocesan Social Justice Office Rep.  
Member of Ontario Bishops' Social Affairs Commission.  
Spiritual Chaplain to Diocesan D&P  
Spiritual Director to Acts Retreat Ministry Men & Women.  
Acts Core Executive Member  
Weekly Celebrant/Preacher at Gethsemane Centre Wellandport  
Intern to Mental Health/ Addiction Counselling Hamilton

**Sunday Masses**

Saturday 5:00 pm Sunday 10:00 am

**Weekday Masses**

See Schedule on the inside of the bulletin

**In Office Hours**

Tuesday & Thursday 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

**Administrative Assistant**

Sandy Johnson

**Financial Recorder**

Tracy Piggott

**Reconciliation/Confessions**

By Appointment Only

**Requesting Sacraments**

Call office for details

**St Martin School**

Phone 905-957-3032

**Cemetery**

Ron Roscovich at 905-386-0648

**Parish Organizations**

Catholic Women's League  
President - Carolyn Vaughan

**Knights of Columbus**

Grand Knight - Pierre Paradis  
koc.16421@gmail.com

**Facility Maintenance**

Tom Diletti - tom.diletti@gmail.com

**Parish Groups**

Children's Liturgy. Youth Ministry  
West Lincoln Loaf of Bread  
Parish Events Group  
Parish Financial Council  
Responsible Faith Ministry  
ACTS Retreat Teams

Diocese of St. Catharines  
Bishop of the Diocese  
Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.  
Diocesan Website: www.saintcd.com

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



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**December 20, 2020**  
**Year B**  
**The 4th Sunday of Advent**

# December 20, 2020

## The 4th Sunday of Advent - Year B

### MASS TIMES, INTENTIONS, PARISH CALENDAR

Mon	Dec 21	9:00 am	+ Barbara O'Keefe by Family + Chinnamma Dominic (Suresh's mother- Gethsemane Ministries)	by Fr Christopher
		6:30 pm	- 7:30 pm Confessions in preparation for Christmas and Eucharistic Adoration/Benediction	
Tues	Dec 22	9:00 am	+ Past Benefactors of St. Martin's.	by St. Martin's
		10:00 am	- 1:00 pm Father Christopher's Pastoral Phone Ministry	
		1:00 pm	- 2:00 pm Zoom Meeting Hamilton Drug and Rehabilitation Meeting	Fr Christopher
		6:30 pm	- 7:30 pm Confessions in preparation for Christmas and Eucharistic Adoration/ Benediction	
Wed	Dec 23	9:00 am	+ Ken Lewis	by Pauline Lewis
		10:30 am	No Mass at Gethsemane Centre today. Thanks Suresh. I need the break. LOL!	
		6:30 pm	- 7:30 pm Confessions in preparation for Christmas and Eucharistic Adoration/Benediction	
Thur	Dec 24	<b>Christmas Eve</b>		
		5:00 pm	+Harry Belmont	by Heather Belmont & Family
		8:00 pm	Gethsemane Christmas Mass LIVE STREAM celebrant/preacher	Fr Christopher
		10:30 pm	Anticipated Christmas Midnight Mass.	
			For the special intentions of Martha Devlin	by Pauline Lewis
Fri	Dec 25	<b>Christmas Day</b>		
		10:00 am	Fr. Christopher celebrates this Mass for all parishioners, family, and friends all.	
		11:30 am	- 2:30 pm - Pastoral Home Visits to those who signed up. Holy Communion Services	by Fr Christopher
Sat	Dec 26	<b>The Solemnity of the Holy Family Jesus, Mary and Joseph</b>		
		4:00 pm	- 4:30 pm Sacramental Confession. Call the office prior to coming, if you can.	
		5:00 pm	+Manuel DaSilva & Blessings upon the DaSilva family	by Maria DaSilva
Sun	Dec 27	10:00 am	Pro Populo Dei - For the special intentions of St. Martin's Parish Family	

#### ONLINE EUCHARIST

##### Cathedral of St. Catharine of Alexandria

Sunday Mass live stream at 11:30 am.

Visit the diocesan website for viewing:

[www.saintcd.com](http://www.saintcd.com) or on YouTube

##### **St. Joseph's Parish Grimsby.**

Follow on Face Book or their website:

[Stjosephgrimsby.ca](http://Stjosephgrimsby.ca)

##### **Vision TV: Sun - 8:00 am**

**Mon - Fri - 8:00 am & 12:00 pm**

**Sat - 8:00 am & 9:30 am**

##### **Salt + Light: Sun - 11:00 am & 10:30 pm**

**Mon - Sat - 6:30 am, 11:00 am,**

**3:00 pm, 10:30 pm**

##### **yesTV: Sun - 10:30 am**

**Mon - Sat - 1:00 pm**

Internet : [www.dailytvmass.com](http://www.dailytvmass.com)

[www.youtube.com/dailytvmass](http://www.youtube.com/dailytvmass)

#### E-TRANSFERS

These transfers are often referred to as **Interac e-Transfers** and done through your online banking, website or app. To transfer funds to St. Martin Parish e-Transfer to:

[st.martinsdonation@gmail.com](mailto:st.martinsdonation@gmail.com)

**Please do not enter a security question and answer. You will be informed that your transfer to "The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation" has been completed.**

This is a first for us, so bear with us as we begin this new way of accepting tithe/stewardship/donations. We thank you for your patience and generosity during this pandemic.

#### "VIRTUAL" CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Our Children's Liturgy, under the direction of Mrs. Noseworthy is posting videos every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

Thank you; and very much appreciated.

#### ADVENT/ CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR'S

##### PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday, Dec 22 - Normal Hours

Thursday, Dec 24 Christmas Eve - Closed

Tuesday, Dec 29 - Closed.

Thursday, Dec 31 New Year's Eve - Closed

Tuesday, Jan 5 - Normal Hours.

#### PASTORAL HOME VISITS

Many remain uncomfortable with going to Vigil Mass Saturday and Sunday Mass. Again, we invite you to attend weekday Masses as the numbers attending are very low. If you cannot come and still desire a pastoral visit I'm more than available to bring you Holy Communion, Anointing and Sacramental Confession.

Throughout this pandemic I've also shared the Good News with many of you on the phone. Please call the parish office to setup a home visit or call my cell. Remember, you are not alone. Connection and prayer is only a phone call away.

#### REGISTRATION FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES

**As we begin to fill up our spaces for Christmas Masses it is important that you also call the office if you've changed your mind. Sickness and other challenges might present themselves. Not showing up means we might be turning someone away. Thank you.**

#### GENTLE REMINDERS

Masks MUST be worn in Church at ALL times. The only time you take your mask off briefly is at Holy Communion. Some also need to replace their mask after consuming the Eucharist, as you cannot leave the church building holding your mask. Please arrive early. We discontinued locking the doors as others protested. Yet, we have not turned others away. Please do not place your offering before Mass, please give after Mass. With our limit of 30% every space is precious and needs to be accounted for. That will mean some inconvenience on your part. Sitting where you are placed - and move into the pew as to allow others to sit without having close contact with you. Pandemic fatigue has set in for all of us. Please help all of us by being co-operative, charitable and kind. Thank you kindly.

#### COVID-19 AND PARISH STEWARDSHIP

While the situation of COVID-19 continues to develop in our lives and communities, it is increasingly evident that the pandemic has had, and will continue to have for some time to come, a far reaching impact on all of us. We appeal to your generosity as we need the weekly stewardship of one and all, to maintain our financial commitments. A special thank you to those who send in their weekly/monthly stewardship. Also, to those who have begun with E-Transfers. We encourage others to be regular with their presence and stewardship.

#### STEWARDSHIP ENVELOPES 2021

Stewardship/Offerory envelopes are available in numerical order on the table in the crying room. Please enter by the church entrance near the confessional room and exit by the main foyer, exercise social distance and wait until other people have moved on. Please check that your name and address are correct.

If you did not use envelopes last year and wish to begin this year or if you have changed your address, please come to the office during the week. We ask you not to use old Church envelopes from previous years. If you have not used envelopes for a few years your number may have been assigned to someone else. If you would still like your box of envelopes and are not attending please contact the office to arrange a pick up time. We acknowledge also those who have increased in weekly contributions. We do need to do this annually in order to keep up with inflation. Our E-Transfers are also increasing weekly. Thank you!

#### NEW NOTE:

Once again, and its worth repeating: We thank our COVID-19 homebound faithful parishioners who continue to financially support us while being absent. And recently those who've made an effort to make up on past stewardship in 2020.

Unfortunately, not all are committed to seeing things this way. Don't let others carry you, respond if you can. God's providence to us abounds; and we have survived 2020 financially, and spiritually. We are in good shape, as they say. But a reset will be required as we face 2021. We are not returning to normal.

## REGISTRATION FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Advent calls us to be alert, ready. We begin early plans and preparation as we invite you to register for the Christmas Masses. Christmas is a time where a lot of our families and friends join us to celebrate the birth of Christ. That is a joyful and happiest occasion for each of us to get together to worship the gift of Love that God shares with us. Given the situation of COVID-19, we need to limit the numbers and we need to plan for the masses. We want to try to give as many chances for the people and your registration will greatly help in our planning.

Even though it is a pandemic, let us not forget that we need God in our lives and only God can lead us and guide us and give us the strength to face any situations. The church will be disinfected after every Mass. Strict protocols are in place to assure your safety.

The pandemic has caused financial difficulty for a lot of families, young people at colleges or universities, some struggling with terminal illness, seniors and municipal and provincial businesses. The church is not an exception. I invite all those who can do a little more to support our parish. Currently, less than half of our members have supported us throughout the pandemic. Let's act together for a just recovery that includes all. Thank you for your generosity and solidarity.

There will not be an official collection to avoid the interaction between people but we invite you to leave your offering in the basket at the foyer. I hope you will show your generosity as we celebrate the love of God being shared with you and your family.

If there is a need, more Masses will be added. Therefore, we must receive early registration from you by December 13, 2020. This Sunday is the deadline. Please register!

Here is our proposed schedule.

- Christmas Eve Dec 24
  - Vigil Mass 5:00pm.
  - Anticipated Midnight Mass 10:30 pm
- Christmas Day December 25
  - 10:00 am.

Parish Office: Phone: (289) 956-0221  
Email: [st.martins@cogeco.ca](mailto:st.martins@cogeco.ca)  
Website: <http://www.stmartinsparish.com>

## CHRISTMAS PASTORAL GREETINGS

*“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined...for a child has been born for us.” (Isaiah 9:2, 6a)*

My dear friends:)

I find it appropriate on this Gaudete (Rejoice the Lord is near) Sunday, to present my Christmas message to all of you with the use of these opening words from the prophet Isaiah, words which open us up to the knowing that darkness will never prevail when we live in the light. And during these unprecedented times in the history of the world where a virus has threatened all of us so deeply to the roots of our being, words of assurance and instances of light are truly welcomed. And it is with this in mind where I sit in my chapel before the Blessed Sacrament - I share with you my message of hope and my blessings to you and your families as this season unfolds.

None of us will ever forget 2020! Covid-19 has dramatically altered everyone's daily life and powerfully exposed the vulnerability that all humans share. This period has forced us to reassess a lot of things. The temptation to return to the past is something that comes naturally to us, but we must always be open to Christ's voice in the present. For Christians, postponing our mission is never a legitimate option; faith cannot be quarantined. It has to be lived in the circumstances of the time.

I was particularly touched by what Pope Francis has written in his new book: Let Us Dream.

*“Let us begin anew from the numerous examples of generous, freely-given love, which in these months have shown us how much closeness, care, and sacrifice are needed to nourish fraternity and civil coexistence. In this way, we will emerge from this crisis stronger.”*

Christmas for many of us could possibly be very different this year. Family gatherings may not be happening as in days gone by.

The annual pilgrimage to the church on Christmas Eve may or may not take place, depending on what decisions different communities of faith take on in-person worship. Your children or grandchildren may not have the opportunity of sitting on Santa's knee as you travel to the local mall and see the empty chair where the jolly fellow used to sit.

Travel will be different. Christmas pageants may be non-existent. Annual choir concerts will be silent. Things will change and there will be a strangeness to it all, a strangeness which will strike to the very heart of our spirits. But there's something which we always need to keep in mind – the child in Bethlehem will burst into our lives once again. And in these times of darkness, as Leonard Cohen stated, *“There's a crack in everything and that's how the light gets in.” And yes, Jesus is our light and will break through once again.*

Advent is about breaking through and letting in the light, and thanks be to God! If ever there was a season that captured the “mood” of the world in its context, it's Advent 2020. We long for what we believe is yet to come, reflecting upon the hope, peace, joy, and love we know in Jesus Christ, perhaps *especially* because those gifts have seemed to be in shorter-than-usual supply this year. Whether we await divine intervention, or simply the rollout of an effective vaccine, we wait with expectant hope. This is a time to reflect on our needs and the coming of the light that Jesus brings to our world at Christmas.

My hope for all of you is that Christmas will come into your world with a renewed feeling of peace and love and joy and may the Christ-child be born into your hearts once again. My deepest blessings to all of you and may the light of the stable of Bethlehem be found in your life.

Be safe - be in touch ~ be assured that I am holding you in prayer and in our daily celebration of the Eucharist.

Yours with love and deep gratitude.  
Christopher +  
Parish Priest  
December 13, 2020.

## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP - CHRISTMAS 2020

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

*“Do not be afraid: for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Christ, the Lord” (Luke 2:10)*

The Angel of the Lord said these words to the shepherds at the first Christmas. They are just as meaningful today as they were over two thousand years ago. At this moment we are in the midst of a pandemic. We need some ‘good news’.

There is no question that Covid-19 has had a dramatic impact on our world and on our lives. Our Christmas celebrations will be very different this year. Since extended families and friends will not be able to gather, many traditions will need to be altered. This can all be very troubling.

The good news is the Covid-19 cannot stop Christmas! We need not allow our fears and anxiety to rob us of the joy and peace that we celebrate on this feast.

If our temporal activities are significantly restricted this year, perhaps God is giving us an opportunity to contemplate the spiritual meaning of the birth of our Saviour.

In the Gospel of St. John, we are told that *“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16)*. This radical love of God is the central theme of Christmas.

We need not worry or be afraid because God will never stop loving and caring for us. Like Our Blessed Mother Mary, all we need to do is trust in that love and be filled with joy.

This year, as we contemplate the Holy Family at Christmas, consider the tranquility that filled the manger scene despite the chaos of the world around them. They were in the presence of Divine Love and this brought them hope and peace.

So be not afraid and trust in God's love for you. This is indeed the ‘good news’ that we need at this time!

May you have a blessed Christmas and a grace-filled New Year.

Yours sincerely in Christ  
Bishop Gerard P Bergie