

EXPLORING OUR FAITH:

The Book of Job is one of the most interesting books in the Old Testament. Most scholars agree that the person of Job didn't exist but that he represents every person who has ever suffered undeserved hardship. Job had everything: wealth, health and a large family to ensure his future legacy. He assumed his life was good because God had rewarded him for being loyal and for having lived a good and righteous life. (Satan argues that Job is only loyal to God because his life is good. If his life had been rotten, he wouldn't be so loyal!) Through a series of disasters, Job loses everything: his possessions, his family and his health. Although he remains loyal to God, our first reading is taken from a time when he bemoans the unfairness of his predicament, arguing he had done nothing wrong to deserve the hardships he is now experiencing.

The Book of Job deals with that difficult question many of us have asked, "Why do bad things happen to good people." (Also the title of a wonderful book by Harold S. Kushner.) We know that innocent children sometimes suffer cancer and abuse. We see how natural disasters destroy the homes and livelihoods of people who were only in the wrong place at the wrong time. We are experiencing a random pandemic that is causing the death and economic destruction of innocent and vulnerable people. We, too, might be lamenting, "It's not fair!"

Although today's reading from Job ends on a sentiment of despair, it is important to note that Job's story doesn't end there. His own pain and suffering lead him to a newfound understanding that suffering is an inherent part of being human and he becomes more compassionate toward others who suffer innocently. He also knows that God hasn't abandoned him, nor does God reward or punish him for his level of goodness or sinfulness. Job teaches us that suffering often cannot be predicted or controlled, but we can control how we respond to it.

The readings of today challenge us to think less about why suffering happens, and to focus more on our response to hardships and suffering either within our own lives or that of others. Are we pessimists who spend our energies on complaining about the unfairness of it all and seeking out someone to blame? Are we optimists who feel life is a gift, despite all its pain and messiness and so spend our energy on easing the hardships as best we can?

Today's gospel shows us how Jesus responds to the pains and suffering of humanity. At the time, it was believed that illness was caused by demons and given as a punishment for having sinned. Although Jesus is inundated with people seeking to be healed, he offers his healing to everyone who asks, without judgment. The first to be healed in today's gospel is Peter's mother-in-law. She models for us a response by serving those around her. To be a follower of Jesus is to serve and to help ease the sufferings of those around us without judgement of their "worthiness."

Sometimes in our pain, we exert a great deal of energy looking for explanations or pointing fingers of blame, and we get distracted from actually doing something to alleviate that pain. Like Job, we are called to trust that God is present amidst our sufferings and giving us the grace we need to work within it. Grace allows us to see loss also as a source of gain. Grace opens our eyes to new perspectives we may not have been able to see before. Our present pandemic has been both a source of suffering and grace. I hope that when we get through this all, we will remember how the light of God's grace was working among us, making us more aware of our connectedness to one another and empowering us to become a better, more compassionate community.

~Mary Joshi, Queen of All Saints Parish Grouping

Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 7, 2021

Immaculate Conception Church, Rexton

St-Peter's Church, South Branch



Parish Office:

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Office Hours:

Tuesday 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm,

Wednesday & Thursday – 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

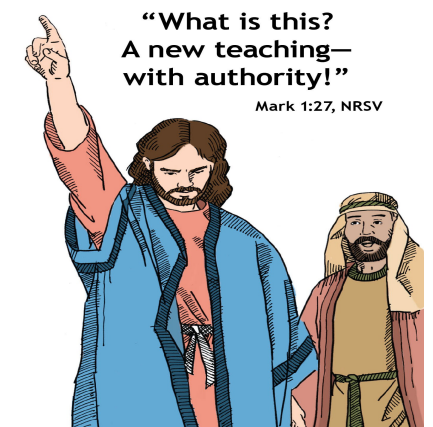


Priest-Moderator: Fr. Bill Bernard, C.S.s.R. 523-9788 (house) 233-6587 (cell)

Assistant: Fr. Bernard Gauthier, C.S.s.R. 523-9788 (house)

**AT THE TIME THIS BULLETIN WAS PRINTED, HEALTH ZONE 1 (MONCTON)
WAS STILL SITUATED IN THE COVID-19 RED ALERT LEVEL
ALL ADVERTISED MASSES CANCELLED**

<i>Scripture Readings for Upcoming Week</i>			
Mon	Genesis 1:1-19	Psalm 104	Mark 6:53-56
Tue	Genesis 1:20-2:4	Psalm 8	Mark 7:1-13
Wed	Genesis 2:4-17	Psalm 104	Mark 7:14-23
Thur	Genesis 2:18-25	Psalm 128	Mark 7:24-30
Fri	Genesis 3:1-8	Psalm 32	Mark 7:31-37
Sat	Genesis 3:9-24	Psalm 90	Mark 8:1-10
Sun	Leviticus 13:1-46 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1	Psalm 32	Mark 1:40-45



PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

Immaculate Conception

Envelopes: **\$310.00**; Initial Offering: **\$20.00**;
Ash Wednesday Offering: **\$20.00**; Missals:
\$10.00; CEWS Subsidy: **\$280.81**
TOTAL: \$640.81

St. Peter's:

Envelopes: **\$105.00**; **TOTAL: \$105.00**

St. Peter's Cemetery:

Memorial Tree: **\$124.22**

Immaculate Conception Cemetery

Donation IMO Emile Cormier: **\$20.00**

St. James' Cemetery:

Donation IMO Aunt Alice: **\$75.00**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Please note your envelope donations can also be left in the locked box outside the parish hall, mailed to the parish at 12 School Street, Rexton, NB E4W 2E5, or dropped off at the parish office during office hours.

WE PRAY FOR STRENGTH FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

Alverie Robichaud, Roger Mazerolle, Brenda Beers, and all residents of nursing homes.

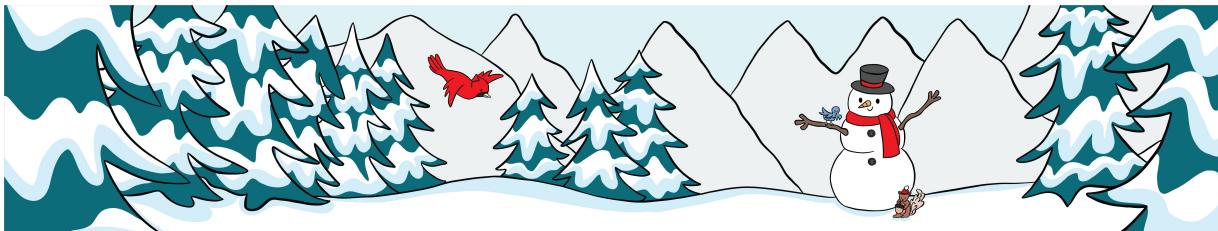
INCOME TAX RECEIPTS for 2020 are now available and can be obtained by:

- Providing the parish office with your email address so a digital copy can be sent electronically;
- Contacting the parish office to request a paper copy be sent to you via Canada Post.

COVID-19 UPDATE

The Parish Office will be closed to visitors until further notice. We are still here to serve you and will be answering calls and responding to emails during regular office hours.

Future updates will be posted on our website and Facebook page as we receive them, so please check regularly and share the information with those who do not use the internet if you can. If you would like to be added to the parish e-mail list, contact the parish office at icprexton@rogers.com and you will receive updates via email.



NB Public Health has announced that Zone 1 (Moncton area), Zone 2 (Saint John area) and Zone 3 (Fredericton area) will move to the red alert level of COVID-19 as of midnight January 20th.

This will result in the closure of all our churches, as religious services or indoor gatherings are not permitted. All announced masses are cancelled starting January 20th inclusively.

We need to understand the apprehensions of Public Health and work with them in following the guidelines to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

As a Church, we are concerned for the health and well-being of our faithful.

May the Lord bless us and continue to watch over us.

+ Valéry Vienneau, Archbishop of Moncton

FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE

Faith Experiments Express (via Zoom)

Learn about faith using science experiments! Designed for young people in grades 1-6, participants will be guided step by step through various fun and simple science experiments that will help them to learn more about faith and scripture. This invitation is extended to children from all parishes throughout the diocese. The next two sessions will take place at 6:30 pm on February 22, and March 22. Contact Karen at 387-4198 or ihmccatechism@rogers.com to register.

The End is Nigh of an Era: Exploring the Book of Revelations, Part 2

Dr. Fiona Black and Dr. Andrew Wilson will answer your questions from the last session on The Book of Revelations and dig a little deeper into the end of the world images we see in these passages during a

second virtual session on Tuesday, January 19th from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. If you're interested in hearing more or would like to join us for the first time, register with Ellen by Monday, January 18th and you will be sent the Zoom link to 'link' into the evening. **Contact:** ellen.diocesemoncton@gmail.com or 857-9952.

"We're All in this Together": Exploring Pope Francis's encyclicals, Laudato Si and Fratelli Tutti

In all his writing, Pope Francis calls us to see the world through a different lens, emphasizing the unconditional and unending love of God for all God has created and the importance of our connectedness with this creation. In *Laudato Si'*, calling us to care for our common home, he states: "The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change." (LS#13) In *Fratelli Tutti*, on fraternity and social friendship, he says: "To care for the world in which we live means to care for ourselves.

POPE FRANCIS TWEET:

THE LORD DOES NOT CALL US TO BE SOLOISTS, BUT TO BE PART OF A CHOIR THAT CAN SOMETIMES MISS A NOTE OR TWO, BUT MUST ALWAYS TRY TO SING IN UNISON.

