

EXPLORING OUR FAITH – PREPARE HIM ROOM

For the past three years, I have experienced the Advent season differently because of a reflection from Sr. Ilia Delio, a Franciscan Religious with doctoral degrees in both theology and science, who suggested that during these four weeks leading up to Christmas we as Christians are not passively waiting for what is not there, but we are preparing room in our hearts for a Jesus who has already come and part of our task is to illuminate his presence through loving actions. The “coming of Christ” also means an active moving onward towards a new way of living, believing and thinking. In essence, God is waiting for us to awaken “as if we’re asleep in the manger, and not Jesus.”

My experience has been that meaningful transformation does not come easily, because at some point I must acknowledge I am not “done” with my faith development, and there will always be room for growth and change. The way in which I understand God and relate to Jesus Christ is different at the age of 48 than it was at the age of 18, not because God has changed, but because I have. I have also noticed that my own transformation has often been accompanied by people and situations I might have otherwise avoided given the opportunity. However these same people and situations have challenged me to reconsider my certainties about God, “to get up from where (I) was and move on” towards Jesus Christ.

So how do we move on in a significant way towards a God who is waiting for us when many of us (myself included) do not even like to change where we sit at mass each Sunday? How can we make room in our hearts for Jesus when we fear those we consider outsiders, or people who are different from us? I know when I am forced to change my routine or way of thinking I often feel a sense of having the rug pulled from beneath my feet.

When I was a child, each year before Christmas a group of adults and catechism children from St. Jude’s in Salisbury would visit the Jordan Memorial Sanatorium in River Glade to sing Christmas carols and distribute candy canes and Christmas cards to the residents. Through the eyes of a child, the sanatorium building was intimidating, sitting like a massive haunted mansion, with its unfamiliar smells, sounds and endless hallways that led to a common room where many residents and staff had gathered. This common room had a stage, which is where we stood to sing our Christmas Carols.

During my first visit I spent a great deal of time staring at residents because I was unfamiliar with this environment. In particular I recall one resident who was confined to her wheelchair with a little table crossing the arm rests, maybe as a safety precaution, I am unsure. All I know is she terrified me because she stretched her arms out across that table towards us children as though she was beckoning us, making noises in her throat my ten year-old mind could not understand. No way was I going anywhere near her.

Many years later I understand better that Jesus was present in every one of us there, residents and carollers both, but the woman in the wheelchair makes me think of how moving towards a God who longs to embrace me can involve frightening steps outside my comfort zone. Maybe I do not treat all children of God with the respect I should be offering every human being, this might be hard for me to admit. The onus was upon me then, and the onus is upon me now to open my heart to a God who waits patiently for me to prepare room in my heart, and awaken to Jesus’ presence in each of us as we journey through this Advent season of love, joy and hope.

~Trevor Driesbeck

Archdiocese of Moncton Office for Evangelization and Catechesis

Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

3rd Sunday of Advent 12 December 2021

Immaculate Conception Church, Rexton

St-Peter's Church, South Branch



Parish Office:

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Web: <https://ourladyofhope.weebly.com/>

Office Hours:

Tuesday 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm,

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



Priest-Moderator: Fr. Bernard Gauthier, C.Ss.R. 523-9788 Cell Phone: 889-0344

Immaculate Conception Mass Times

Sunday – 9:00 am & 4:00 pm (until further notice)

Tuesday – 4:00 pm (Sacristy)

St. Peter's Mass Time

Saturday – 4:00 pm

Scripture Readings for Upcoming Week			
Mon	Numbers 24:2-17	Psalms 25	Matthew 21:23-27
Tue	Zephaniah 3:1-13	Psalms 34	Matthew 21:28-32
Wed	Isaiah 45:6-25	Psalms 85	Luke 7:18-23
Thur	Isaiah 54:1-10	Psalms 30	Luke 7:24-30
Fri	Genesis 49:2-10	Psalms 72	Matthew 1:1-17
Sat	Jeremiah 23:5-8	Psalms 72	Matthew 1:18-25
Sun	Micah 5:1-4 Hebrews 10:5-10	Psalms 80	Luke 1:39-45



PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

Immaculate Conception

Loose: **\$60.00**; Regular Envelopes: **\$385.00**;
Initial Offering: **\$20.00**;
New Year's Env.: **\$20.00**; **TOTAL: \$485.00**

Immaculate Conception Cemetery Fund

Memorial Tree: **\$60.00**

St. Peter's

Loose: **\$35.00**; Envelopes: **\$105.00**;
Donation: **\$100.00**; **Total: \$240.00**

St. Peter's Cemetery

Memorial Tree: **\$1183.00**;
Donations: **\$1166.28**; **Total: \$2349.28**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Please note your envelope donations can also be left in the locked box outside the parish hall.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR UPCOMING WEEK

Sat	11	SP	4:00 pm	Leon Vautour†	Sharon & Gordon Ward
Sun	12	IC	9:00 am	Matthew, Michael & Wildert†	Gail & Peter Barlow
Sun	12	IC	4:00 pm	Raymond Perry†	Dwight & Jeannette Little
Tue	14	IC	4:00 pm	Zoel & Ann Hebert†	Mina Richard
Sat	18	SP	4:00 pm	Leon Vautour†	Phyllis Shortall
Sun	19	IC	9:00 am	Raymond Perry†	Mina Richard
Sun	19	IC	4:00 pm	John & Melina Mourant	Dwight & Jeannette Little

LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR NEXT WEEKEND

				Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers
Sat	18	SP	4:00 pm	1 st Reading & Psalm 2 nd Reading & Intentions	Lois Stella
Sun	19	IC	9:00 am	1 st & 2 nd Reading Intentions	Vina Corinne Gloria
Sun	19	IC	4:00 pm	1 st & 2 nd Reading Intentions	Stephen

WE PRAY FOR STRENGTH FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

Alverie Robichaud, Roger Mazerolle and all residents in special care homes.



CONFESSION/RECONCILIATION

Fr. Bernard will be hearing confessions 30 minutes prior to any mass, or you may also contact him to arrange a another time.

2021 CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Please note that with the current COVID-19 restrictions in place, pre-registration for Christmas Masses will be necessary by contacting the Parish Office where you plan to attend mass. The number for Elsipogtog & Indian Island is 523-7578.



Christmas Mass Schedule

December 24th

Elsipogtog.....6:30 p.m.
Rexton.....9:30 p.m.
Indian Island....12:00 Midnight

December 25th

South Branch...11:00 a.m.

December 26th

Elsipogtog.....11:00 a.m.
Rexton.....4:00 p.m.

December 31st (No Mass)

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
Rexton.....7:30 p.m.

January 1st

South Branch.....4:00 p.m.

January 2nd

Rexton.....4:00 p.m.
Elsipogtog.....11.00 a.m.



DIOCESAN ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER IN SOLIDARITY WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES is celebrated by the Church in Canada on December 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Each year the Canadian Catholic Indigenous Council prepares a reflection for this occasion. This year the message centers on the theme: *"We are called to Healing, Forgiveness, Reconciliation. We, the Body of Christ, are called to live in friendship and harmony with all peoples. We are brothers and sisters of our One Creator God"*. You may read this reflection on the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.cccb.ca. Catholics across the country are invited to join in prayer as a delegation of Indigenous survivors, Elders, knowledge keepers, and young people travel to Rome to meet with Pope Francis as soon as health conditions surrounding international travel will allow it to be done in a safe manner in 2022. The delegation will also help inform the planned pilgrimage of the Holy Father to Canada at a future date. ~Archbishop Valéry Vienneau +

POPE FRANCIS PRAYS FOR CATECHISTS During December 2021, Pope Francis is praying "for the catechists, summoned to announce the Word of God." He says the Church needs "good catechists who are both companions and teachers. ... The lay ministry of catechist is a vocation; it's a mission ... an entire way of being." We, the faithful, are invited by Pope Francis to "thank catechists for the interior enthusiasm with which they live this mission at the service of the Church." Check out his video at the link to see what Pope Francis has to say: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-11/pope-s-december-prayer-intention-for-catechists.html>