

## EXPLORING OUR FAITH ~ EMBRACING BLINDNESS

Jesus' disciples asked, "who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" I hear some variation on this question almost every week in the hospital. "What did I do to deserve this?" "Why are we being punished?" "What should I have done differently?" When bad things happen, most of us look for something that will make life seem fair and, perhaps even more important, predictable. We want to be able to see what is coming so that we can live in certainty rather than having to rely on faith.

Both the Old Testament reading and the Gospel reading today remind us that God is not predictable. God does not do things the way human beings would do them. Suffering and struggle are not punishment, they are part of the human condition. Suffering and struggle are not what separates us from God; rather they are the place where God meets us and is made visible in our world. The man in the Gospel story was not blind because he deserved blindness, and he was not blind because his parents deserved to have a child who was blind. We are told that he is blind so that "the works of God might be made visible through him." In every place where we acknowledge our human vulnerability and limitation, we are presented with the opportunity to see God more clearly.

Jesus says that he came into the world so that the blind might see and so that those who see might be made blind. Jesus came to draw all of us closer to God by giving us what we most need. To those who are separated from God by their suffering, he gives healing: sight for those who are blind; hearing for those who are deaf; and the ability to walk for those who are lame. To those who are separated from God by their certainty, their smugness, and their belief that they already know what God will do, he gives an awareness of uncertainty, of how much they do not know. That new found "blindness" is offered not as a punishment but as an opportunity. It is only when we realize that there is something right in front of us that we have not been able to see, that we begin to look more closely.

I do not claim to know why good people suffer. I do not know why people get diseases or die untimely deaths. What I do know is that those who accept the fact that they do not know and cannot know, those who recognize the limits of their human vision and turn to God with trust find a peace and an awareness of love that humbles and inspires me.

Working in the hospital, I see suffering every day. It terrifies me to know that my life and the lives of those that I love are not significantly different from the lives of many patients before they were admitted to the hospital. I wish that I could be certain that God would spare me and "mine" because of our faith or our "goodness" or our service, or anything else. But I cannot. The only thing that I can be sure of, is that whatever comes there will be an opportunity to see the work of God in our lives if we look.

~Pam Driedger, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish Grouping

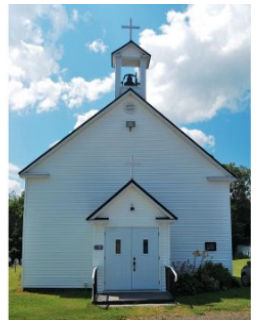


# Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent 19 March 2023

Immaculate Conception Church, Rexton

St-Peter's Church, South Branch



### Parish Office:

12 School Street Rexton, NB E4W 2E5

Phone: 506-523-6817

Email: [icprexton@rogers.com](mailto:icprexton@rogers.com)

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 – 11:00 am

Tuesday – 4:00 pm (Sacristy)

### St. Peter's Mass Time

Saturday – 4:00 pm

### Scripture Readings for Upcoming Week

<b>Mon</b>	2 Samuel 7:4-16 Romans 4:13-122	Psalms 89	Luke 2:41-51
<b>Tue</b>	Ezekiel 47:1-12	Psalms 46	John 5:1-16
<b>Wed</b>	Isaiah 49:8-15	Psalms 145	John 5:17-30
<b>Thu</b>	Exodus 32:7-14	Psalms 106	John 5:31-47
<b>Fri</b>	Wisdom 2:12-22	Psalms 34	John 7:1-30
<b>Sat</b>	Isaiah 7:10-14; 8-10 Hebrews 10:4-10	Psalms 40	Luke 1:26-38
<b>Sun</b>	Ezekiel 37:12-14 Romans 8:8-11	Psalms 130	John 11:1-45



## PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

### Immaculate Conception

Loose: \$174.00; Envelopes: \$815.00; **TOTAL: \$989.00**

### Regional Mass Account

Masses: **\$100.00**

### St. Peter's

Loose: \$25.00; Envelopes: \$300.00;

**TOTAL: \$325.00**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED GENEROSITY!**

## MASS INTENTIONS FOR UPCOMING WEEK

Sat	18	SP	4:00 pm	Lillian Vautour†	Jeanne Warren
Sun	19	IC	11:00 am	Ernest LeBlanc†	Jeannine, Dianne & Family
Tue	21	IC	4:00 pm	Eric Johnson, Sr.†	Elva & Family
Sat	25	SP	4:00 pm	Wallace Best†	Lois & Richard
Sun	26	IC	11:00 am	Len & Helen Carter†	Dick & Family

## LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR UPCOMING WEEK

				Lectors		Eucharistic Ministers
Sat	25	SP	4:00 pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading & Psalm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading / Intentions	Lois	Stella
Sun	26	IC	11:00 am	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading & Psalm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading & Intentions	Pat / Bob James	Adona

## ROSARY SCHEDULE FOR IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

				Leader	Intentions
Sun	19	IC	10:30 am	Vina	<b>1st Decade:</b> For our clergy
Sun	26	IC	10:30 am	Gail	<b>2nd Decade:</b> For our parishioners
Sun	2	IC	10:30 am	Vina	<b>3rd Decade:</b> For our youth
Sun	6	IC	10:30 am	Gail	<b>4th Decade:</b> For peace in our world
					<b>5th Decade:</b> For the intentions of parishioner

## WE PRAY FOR STRENGTH FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

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



**PARISH HALL** As you may have heard, due to ongoing water problems the Parish Hall will be closed for public use (including parish potlucks, etc.) until further notice. A plumber is looking into the problem, which we hope to have resolved within a couple of weeks. A notice will be placed in the bulletin when the hall has re-opened.

**MARK THE DATE:** The St Andrew's United Church Outreach Committee invites you to join them for a **Community Crockpot Lunch on Wednesday, March 22nd, 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM** at the Rexton Lions Hall.

There will be Lunch- soup, biscuits, tea and coffee, cookies and conversation. **NO Charge for Lunch.** You may wish to make a donation towards earthquake relief in Turkey and Syria, as you are able. For Whom? Anyone who wants to join us. ALL are Welcome! We will serve until 1:00 PM or whenever the soup runs out...whichever comes first. No take out.

## FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MONCTON

**MASS OFFERING Effective April 10, 2023, a new rate of \$15.00 for Mass intentions will be in effect for the Diocese of Moncton.** For over 40 years, the \$10.00 fee has remained the same. Please be assured that priests from here and elsewhere will celebrate **all Masses reserved before April 10, 2023, at the \$10.00 rate.**

~Archbishop Valéry Vienneau

**THE CALL OF THE CATECHIST WEBINAR SERIES** The CCCB's National Office for Evangelization and Catechesis is offering a series of three free webinars for those involved in the ministry of catechesis. On Tuesday, March 28th Sherry Weddell of the Catherine of Sienna Institute will offer a session entitled "Discerning Charisms"; Sr. Janet Shaeffler, OP will offer a session on Tuesday, April 11th entitled "The Spirituality of the Catechist,"; and on April 18th, Anne Walsh (Redemptorist Lay Missionary) will offer a session entitled "Theological Reflection and the Catechist." All sessions will take place from 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm (Atlantic Time). For more information and to register, please contact Karen at 387-4198 or karen.diocese@gmail.com.

**'THE HOUR HAS COME' 3-DAY LENTEN RETREAT** The natural world, the world created by God and infused by Divine Spirit, is crying out. The cry of the earth, as Pope Francis tells us in Laudato Si, is also the cry of the poor. Our neglect—and worse, our abuse—of the earth and its natural resources is evident in many measurable ways. Polar ice caps are melting; plant and animal species are going extinct; soil, water, and air are being contaminated, and resources are seen more and more as private property of the multinational companies. The late Fr. Thomas Berry dedicated his life to educating, first himself and then others, about the Great Work that needs to be done in us in response to this. Come join us on retreat as we explore the Great Work we, as Christians, are called to here and now. Hope to see you at St. Bernard's church each night beginning at 7 p.m. (Tues. March 28—Thurs. March 30).

**THE MONCTON DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE** invites you to meet Raquel Soto, a Colombian partner of Development and Peace. During this meeting, which will take place at the Place Cathédrale community hall (224 Saint-George Street) on Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Raquel will tell us how her journey with the Asociación Campesina de Antioquia (Peasant Association of Antioquia - ACA, Colombia) has allowed her to live again after having experienced violence and displacement. **PLEASE NOTE THAT RAQUEL SPEAKS SPANISH AND HER PRESENTATION WILL ONLY BE TRANSLATED INTO FRENCH.** To help us set up the room for the event, we would appreciate it if you could let us know by Friday, March 24<sup>th</sup> by phone at 506 801-0440 or by email at dpatlantique@devp.org. We look forward to seeing you at this event! A light lunch will be provided. In addition, Raquel will be speaking at mass at Christ-Roi on Tuesday March 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 and at the Cathedral on Wednesday March 29<sup>th</sup> at 9:00.