

**EXPLORING OUR FAITH - Fear or Love – What is our Starting Point?**

As I sit to write this reflection I am just back in the office after one week’s holidays. While it is always nice to have some time to relax and re-energize, the one thing a week’s holiday makes crystal clear to me is that I am nowhere near ready for retirement. While my birth certificate is telling me that I am coming to a time in my life where that will be a major consideration, I feel that time has not yet arrived. I think much prayerful discernment goes into any major decision in life, especially one that is going to result in living out the remainder of your days without a job. My hunch is that God will be dropping many little hints that will help guide me to the appropriate time to move on to the next chapter in life.

The readings this week are also dropping some hints about what to do to be prepared to move on to the next chapter after we leave this earth. I have heard many homilies and sermons throughout my years where the presenter was giving his/her version of the road map I must follow if I want heaven to be my final destination. I also had wonderful parents who tirelessly worked to guide me on the right path. While my mom had an unshakeable faith, much of it was rooted in fear. For her, God (and the church) had laid out a strict set of rules that needed to be followed if there was any chance for redemption. And while these worked wonders for keeping me and my siblings on the straight and narrow, for the most part, they didn’t do much to develop in me a love for God. Mostly, I believed God was watching over me, but not in a good way. It created the same fear of God in me that was in my mother.



As I grew, I realized that my faith was not my own, but rather my mother’s and parish priests and catechism teachers I had encountered over the years. At some point I needed to make this faith my own if I was ever going to have a meaningful relationship with God. One of the first things I thought of as I began this journey was a quote from my grade 11 history teacher, who said, **“anyone you fear, you will eventually grow to hate.”** If I only view God through the lens of a student being summoned to the principal’s office, how can I ever trust that God loves me more than I could ever imagine and only has my best interest at heart. I would read the gospel we hear this week and see it as a cold list of anticipated actions that if I don’t complete will inevitably lead to my personal downfall. The problem with that, is that what Jesus is calling me to in this week’s gospel is to love. To love unconditionally and generously. To love the stranger and the friend alike. To recognize the needs of others and not rest until they are met. I cannot love that way while living in fear.

It is impossible to do the work of building God’s kingdom without having love as our foundation. When we can move out of a space of judgment and fear and into a place of loving acceptance, then we will be able to convert people. This is only doable if we know within our heart of hearts that we are infinitely loved and so is the person standing in front of us, no matter their lot in life. That kind of love will clothe the naked, feed the hungry and welcome any stranger. Fear never could and never will be able to do that.

Mark Mahoney  
Pastoral Associate

# Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

## CHRIST THE KING 26 November 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>	Daniel 1:1-20	Dn 3	Luke 21:1-4
<b>Tue</b>	Daniel 2:31-45	Dn 3	Luke 21:5-11
<b>Wed</b>	Daniel 5:1-28	Dn 3	Luke 21:12-19
<b>Thu</b>	Romans 10:9-18	Ps 19	Matthew 4:18-22
<b>Fri</b>	Daniel 7:2-14	Dn 3	Luke 21:29-33
<b>Sat</b>	Daniel 7:15-27	Dn 3	Luke 21:34-36
<b>Sun</b>	Isaiah 63:16B-19B; 64:2-7	Ps 80	Corinthians 1:3-9 Mark 13:33-37



## PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

### Immaculate Conception

Loose: **\$113.00**; Envelopes: **\$585.00**; Sale of Missals: **\$97.00**; Votive Candles: **\$210.00** **TOTAL: \$1005.00**

### St. Peter's

Loose: **\$50.00**; Envelopes: **\$140.00**; **TOTAL: \$190.00**

*Thank you for your generosity!*

## MASS INTENTIONS FOR UPCOMING WEEK

Sat	25	SP	4:00 pm	Fr. Alyre Cormier †	Claire
Sun	26	IC	11:00 am	Dr. Francis Kenney & Mrs. Juanita Kenney †	Elena & Family
Tue	28	IC	4:00 pm	Henry Leger †	Blaine & Donna
Sat	2	SP	4:00 pm	Lucy & Dorrence Campbell †	Debbie & Dale Harnett
Sun	3	IC	11:00 am	Raymond Perry †	Nancy

## LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR NEXT WEEKEND

				Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers
Sat	2	SP	4:00 pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading & Psalm: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading / Intentions:	Lois Stella
Sun	3	IC	11:00 am	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading & Psalm: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading & Intentions:	Stephen/Corrine/Marian Gloria

## ROSARY SCHEDULE FOR IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

				Leader	Intentions
Sun	3	IC	10:30 am	Vina	1 <sup>st</sup> Decade: For our Clergy; 2 <sup>nd</sup> Decade: For our parishioners;
Sun	10	IC	10:30 am	Gail	3 <sup>rd</sup> Decade: For our youth; 4 <sup>th</sup> Decade: For peace in our world; 5 <sup>th</sup> Decade: For the intentions of parishioners.



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

**ALVERIE ROBICHAUD. CHRISTIAN ROBICHAUD**

**ROGER MAZEROLLE**

**ALL RESIDENTS LIVING IN SPECIAL CARE HOMES**

**MEMORIAL TREE 2023 (Rexton & South Branch)** To purchase a bulb, those in South Branch should contact **Phyllis Shortall** (506-523-6178), **Carol Beers** (523-6389 / 427-0027), or **Stella Marinelli** (506-523-3612). In Rexton you can purchase a bulb through the Parish Office, or by dropping a bulb request in the collection basket. Requests can be found at the back of the church. **The Memorial Trees will be lit and blessed next weekend after mass in both South Branch in Rexton.**

**\*\*\* NEW \*\*\*SAINT BARTHOLOMEW CEMETERY** in Molus River (Bass River) will illuminate a Christmas tree at the graveyard in remembrance of loved ones or as a sign of gratitude or to extend prayers for someone. With a donation of \$10.00 per Bulb you can have a Solar bulb added to the tree. We accept cash, cheque, e-transfer to [mghannay1@gmail.com](mailto:mghannay1@gmail.com) password -bulb. Donations along with the person's name can be given to Carmel Whalen, Rita Whalen, Daneen Warman, Christa Ward-Gillis & Marilyn Hannay by December 15, 2023.

**CEMETERY FLOWERS** We ask that those who have placed plastic flowers on stones in the cemetery please remove them before the end of November. If left over the winter the flowers will blow into neighbouring yards

**BREAKING OPEN THE WORD DURING ADVENT** Come join us on the road to break open the Sunday readings of Advent. **First week of Advent will be at Immaculate Conception in Rexton 10:00 am on Saturday December 2nd.** Second week of Advent will be at St. Lawrence O'Toole in Irishtown at 10:00 am (after 9:30 am mass) Monday December 4th. Third week of Advent will be at Immaculate Heart of Mary (after 9:30 am mass) Wednesday December 13th. Fourth week of Advent will be at St. Bernard's (after 9:30 am mass) Thursday December 21st. *Take this opportunity to reflect and grow in what God is telling you this Advent.*

**CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY SOCIAL & TREE LIGHTING** will take place at the Rexton Lions Club on November 26<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm. Join us for a heartwarming Christmas gathering filled with joy and community spirit. Donations are encouraged (sweets/sandwiches to share with attendees, non-perishable food items for the local food bank, ornaments to hand on the tree in memory of a loved one.) Let's come together and make this holiday season a time of giving, remembrance, and festive cheer. Contact Judy Carpenter with the Rexton Community Improvement Centre at 523-8186.

## FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE

**TRANSFORMED THROUGH EUCHARIST** What happens during the Eucharist? How important is Eucharist to you? Why do we prepare our children for First Communion? Transformed Through Eucharist will deepen your understanding of what the Church believes and teaches about the sacrament of Eucharist. The presentation will begin at 6:30 pm on Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at Holy Family Parish (52 Falkland Street). Facilitators Karen LeBlanc and Ellen Bennett will offer an overview of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and talk about how, through the Eucharist, the bread and wine and the assembly are transformed again into the Body of Christ. *Please register with Karen at 387-4198 / [karen.diocese@gmail.com](mailto:karen.diocese@gmail.com).*

**COP28 Matters - What can we do?** Pray for Pope Francis, who is the first Pope ever to participate in a UN Climate Summit. Send letters to politicians to keep global warming below 1.5°C. Encourage municipalities, corporations, and others to sign the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. Make sure you sign yourself! <https://fossilfuel treaty.org/>

Let us pray, 'Dear God, as we give thanks for the beauty and wonder of creation, we pray for wisdom, courage and compassion in the those participating at COP28. May they agree on shared solutions that honour the needs of the poorest, while reflecting meaningful action from the richest. We pray the developed countries will lead, as they have long promised. We offer this prayer with all our hearts. Amen'