

EXPLORING OUR FAITH - *Let us offer each other a sign of peace*

Offering each other the “sign of peace” is something you have done countless times, if you are a regular participant at Mass (unfortunately, this gesture is non-existent in the French-speaking churches in our diocese). Just prior to reaching our hand out for the hands of our neighbours at Mass, we hear the priest say this: **Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles: “Peace I leave you, my peace I give you”; look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.** The part in parenthesis, “Peace I leave you, my peace I give you” is found only in the Gospel of John. It is part of what we traditionally call the “farewell discourse.”

Spanning chapters 14-17 inclusive, it’s the longest good-bye speech I can think of. It’s a sort of I-have-to-go-but-I-want-to-stay dialogue that comes right from the heart. When you think of it, it’s really quite amazing given the context. Jesus is within 24 hours of facing a kangaroo court of lies, deceit, abandonment, torture, and a violent crucifixion, but what is uppermost in his mind are the people (you and me by extension) around the Table. He wants to leave us his peace. More than that, he wants to *give* us his peace. In the New Jerusalem translation of the Bible, Jesus says, “Peace I bequeath you.” Wording like that makes it sound like we are waiting to hear what Jesus will give us or bequeath us in the will...ahead of his own death! To make it even more remarkable, for me, is that Jesus is at peace so close to his own, unjust death. That very peace within him, that is filling him at that moment, he wants to give it to you and me. In Matthew (26:30) and Mark’s (14:26) version of the Last Supper, it says that immediately after the meal was done, Jesus lead his Apostles in singing psalms before leaving for the Garden of Gethsemane. It leaves me asking: What was bursting forth in Jesus that is almost totally absent in me? Knowing my life was about to end cruelly tomorrow, I don’t think I would be full of peace and offering it to others as my final wish. I would be calling a lawyer. Singing psalms would definitely not be at the top of my list of “things to do” either. Jesus’ ability to bring harmony to others even when dealing with such inner conflict within his own heart never ceases to amaze me. Offering peace to my neighbours at Mass can never be just an inconsequential or frivolous gesture; it wasn’t for Jesus.

Part of the same sentence where Jesus says, “Peace I leave you, my peace I give you” continues this way, **“my own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you.”** Wow! What’s wrong with the peace the world gives? Firstly, it’s often conditional. You have to cut deals and sometimes even “sell your soul” for it. Or you have to come on bended knee and plead your case about why you deserve it. There’s nothing like that in Jesus. Secondly, the peace the world offers usually isn’t lasting as much as we would like it to be. History is full of broken promises, deceptive treaties, and feeble truces fraught with hidden agendas. Jesus’ peace is backed not with words but with integrity. When he offers his peace, I don’t think it’s just for this particular moment. I think Jesus’ words are the forerunner of an ultimate peace that we’ll only know fully at the end of time. In the meantime, we are to be ambassadors of Christ’s peace wherever we go. Perhaps our rallying cry during Advent isn’t only “Come, Lord Jesus” but “Come, Lord Jesus, and bring us your peace.”

When we say “Peace be with you” or “The peace of Christ” we are not offering our own peace but Christ’s peace, a peace the world cannot give. With the sign of Christ’s peace, we are saying with our bodies that we hold dear the One who is our peace. We are believing with our bodies that the barriers between us have been broken down, the divisions are undone, the ruptures repaired. We are pledging to leave this place and spread this peace of Christ to the sidewalks, the supermarket aisles, the hospitals, the classroom, the homeless shelters, the boardroom, the garage, the daycare, and the nursing homes. Jesus didn’t give us his gift of peace in order for us to dig a hole and preserve it there; he gave it to be shared. If there was ever a time the world needed genuine, lasting peace...the kind that only Christ can give...it’s now. Turn to the person next to you, in front of you, behind you. Clasp hands or hug that person as you would embrace Christ himself, for indeed that is what you are doing.

~Fr. Phil

Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 3 December 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

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

Mon	Isaiah 2:1-5	Ps 122	Matthew 8:5-11
Tue	Isaiah 11:1-10	Ps 72	Luke 10:21-24
Wed	Isaiah 25:6-10	Ps 23	Matthew 15:29-37
Thu	Isaiah 26:1-6	Ps 118	Matthew 7:21-27
Fri	Genesis 3:9-15 Ephesians 1:3-12	Ps 98	Luke 1:26-38
Sat	Isaiah 30:19-21	Ps 147	Matthew 9:35—10:1-8
Sun	Isaiah 40:1-11	Ps 85	2 Peter 3:8-14 Mark 1:1-8



— FIRST SUNDAY OF —
ADVENT

PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

Immaculate Conception

Loose: **\$145.25**; Envelopes: **\$685.00**;
Baptism Donation: **\$200.00**; Memorial Tree: **\$700.00**
TOTAL: \$1730.25

St. Peter's

Loose: **\$30.00**; Envelopes: **\$110.00**;
Donation: **\$20.00**; Hall Donation: **\$100.00**;
Mass: **\$130.00** **TOTAL: \$390.00**

Thank you for your generosity!

MASS INTENTIONS FOR UPCOMING WEEK

Sat	2	SP	4:00 pm	Lucy & Dorrence Campbell †	Debbie & Dale Harnett
Sun	3	IC	11:00 am	Raymond Perry †	Nancy
Tue	5	IC	4:00 pm	Thomas Poirier †	Teakles Family
Sat	9	SP	4:00 pm	Leon & Lilian Vautour †	Evelyn & John
Sun	10	IC	11:00 am	Antonio & Magdalena Mendoza †	Adona

LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR NEXT WEEKEND

				Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers
Sat	9	SP	4:00 pm	1 st Reading & Psalm: 2 nd Reading / Intentions:	Lois Stella
Sun	10	IC	11:00 am	1 st Reading & Psalm: 2 nd Reading & Intentions:	Judi / Donna Rose Ann Louise

ROSARY SCHEDULE FOR IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

				Leader	Intentions
Sun	10	IC	10:30 am	Gail	1 st Decade: For our Clergy; 2 nd Decade: For our parishioners; 3 rd Decade: For our youth; 4 th Decade: For peace in our world; 5 th Decade: For the intentions of parishioners.
Sun	17	IC	10:30 am	Vina	



WE PRAY FOR STRENGTH FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

ALVERIE ROBICHAUD, CHRISTIAN ROBICHAUD

ROGER MAZEROLLE

ALL RESIDENTS LIVING IN SPECIAL CARE HOMES

CATECHISM BEGINS Catechism will begin on Friday, December 15th at 7:00 pm in the Parish Hall.

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 this weekend after mass in both South Branch in Rexton.**

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 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.

DONATIONS FOR 2023 Please note that donations for 2023 must be received by the Parish Office by December 31st in order for it to appear on this year's tax receipt.

FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE



THE FILIPINO COMMUNITY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MONCTON invites everyone to join in our first ever **SIMBANG GABI IN MONCTON**. *Simbang Gabi*, a tagalog phrase that literally means "Evening Mass," is the Filipino traditional novena Masses offered for nine consecutive evenings before Christmas Eve. It is a spiritual journey for Filipinos, a time of reflection, devotion, and anticipation as we prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Centred on the Eucharist, the nine Masses honour the Blessed Mother Mary, who carried Our Lord Jesus in her womb for nine months. How is it different from a daily Advent Mass? On Simbang Gabi Masses, the priest wears white festive vestments, and the Gloria is sung. In Moncton, Fr. Carlos Jacinto will preside at **SIMBANG GABI**

MASSES AT ST. BERNARD'S CHURCH (43 BOTSFORD STREET) FROM DECEMBER 15TH TO THE 23RD AT 7:00 PM.

All Masses are in English. We will be honoured if you join us in these celebrations.

MAY 17– 27, 2024: PILGRIMAGE TO MEDJUGORJE where Our Lady has been appearing daily for 42 years. Cost of \$3570 includes all airport taxes, security, fuel surcharges, airfare from the Moncton/Halifax, (twin or triple) accommodation, daily breakfast & dinner, and experienced local guide. (Optional single room supplement, \$250/p.) INFO: Hector Caissie at hectorcaissie@gmail.com or 506-857-2295.

THEOLOGY ON TAP Our next Theology on Tap will take place on **Monday, December 18th at 6:30 pm** at Five Bridges Pub in Riverview. Our guest speaker will be Maurise Levesque who will share with us talk entitled "Dealing with Loss in Death and Life: Common Misconceptions about Grief." Please register with Karen at 387-4198, karen.diocese@gmail.com or online at www.diocesemoncton.ca → Pastoral Offices → Adult Faith → Formation Opportunities.

