

EXPLORING OUR FAITH – *The Man and the Birds*

The man I'm going to tell you about was not a scrooge, he was a kind decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family and upright in his dealings with other men. But he just didn't believe in all of that incarnation stuff that the churches proclaim at Christmas time. It just didn't make sense and he was too honest to pretend otherwise. He just couldn't swallow the Jesus story, about God coming to Earth as a man.

He told his wife "I'm truly sorry to distress you, but I'm not going with you to church this Christmas Eve." He said he would feel like a hypocrite and that he would much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them. So he stayed and they went to the midnight service.

Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then he went back to his fireside chair and began to read his newspaper.

Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. Then another ... and then another. At first he

thought someone must be throwing snowballs against the living room window. But when he went to the front door to investigate he found a flock of birds huddled outside miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and in a desperate search for shelter they had tried to fly through his large landscape window. That is what had been making the sound.

Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures just lie there and freeze, so he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter. All he would have to do is to direct the birds into the shelter. Quickly, he put on a coat and galoshes and he tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light so the birds would know the way in. But the birds did not come in.

So, he figured that food would entice them. He hurried back to the house and fetched some bread crumbs. He sprinkled them on the snow,

making a trail of bread crumbs to the yellow-lighted wide open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs.

The birds continued to flap around helplessly in the snow. He tried catching them but could not. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around and waving his arms. Instead, they scattered in every direction ... every direction except into the warm lighted barn.

And that's when he realized they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me. That I am not trying to hurt them, but to help them. But how? Any move he made tended to frighten them and confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shooed because they feared him.

He thought to himself, if only I could be a bird and mingle with them and speak their language. Then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to the safe warm ... to the safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see ... and hear ... and understand.

At that moment the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind.

He stood there listening to the bells, *Adeste Fidelis*, listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas.

And he sank to his knees in the snow.

~Paul Harvey



Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 24 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 52:7-10	Ps 98	Hebrews 1:1-6 / John 1:1-18
Tue	Acts 6:8-59	Ps 31	Matthew 10:17-22
Wed	1 John 1:1-4	Ps 97	John 20:1A-8
Thu	1 John 1:5—2:2	Ps 124	Matthew 2:13-18
Fri	1 John 2:3-11	Ps 96	Luke 2:22-35
Sat	1 John 2:12-17	Ps 96	Luke 2:36-40
Sun	Sirach 3:2-14	Ps 128	Colossians 3:12-21 / Luke 2:22-40



PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

Immaculate Conception

Loose: **\$188.00**; Envelopes: **\$950.00**;
Hall Rental: **\$110.00**; Mass Stipends: **\$90.00**
TOTAL: \$1338.00

Immaculate Conception Cemetery

Cemetery Fund: **\$50.00**

St. Bartholomew Cemetery Fund

Memorial Tree: **\$1,180**; Donations: **\$550.00**;
TOTAL: \$1,730.00

St. Peter's

Loose: **\$31.00**; Envelopes: **\$230.00**;
TOTAL: \$261.00

St. Peter's Cemetery

Memorial Tree: **\$160.00**; Cemetery Fund: **\$456.60**
TOTAL: \$616.60

Thank you for your generosity!

MASS INTENTIONS FOR UPCOMING WEEK

Sat	23	SP	4:00 pm	David Harnett †	Debbie & Dale Harnett
Sun	24	IC	9:30 pm	For the People of the Parish	
Mon	25	SP	10:30 am	For the People of the Parish	
Tue	26	IC	4:00 pm	Stella McIntyre †	Teakles Family
Sat	30	SP	4:00 pm	Stephanie Peters †	Margaret & Pat Augustine
Sun	31	IC	11:00 am	Jimmy Curwin †	Shirley Curwin
Mon	1	IC	10:30 am	For the People of the Parish	
Tue	2	IC	4:00 pm	Raymond Perry †	Nancy Perry
Sat	6	SP	4:00 pm	Stephanie Peters †	Barb Jadis
Sun	7	IC	4:00 pm	Katherine A. Hatt †	Bill Legoff

LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR NEXT WEEKEND

				Lectors		Eucharistic Ministers
Sat	30	SP	4:00 pm	1 st Reading & Psalm: 2 nd Reading / Intentions:	Lois	Stella
Sun	31	IC	11:00 am	1 st Reading & Psalm: 2 nd Reading & Intentions:	Stephen / Corrine Marian	Louise
Sat	6	SP	4:00 pm	1 st Reading & Psalm: 2 nd Reading / Intentions:	Lois	Stella
Sun	7	IC	11:00 am	1 st Reading & Psalm: 2 nd Reading & Intentions:	Judi / Donna Vina	Adona

ROSARY SCHEDULE FOR IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

				Leader	Intentions
Sun	31	IC	10:30 am	Vina	1 st Decade: For our Clergy; 2 nd Decade: For our parishioners;
Sun	7	IC	10:30 am	Gail	3 rd Decade: For our youth; 4 th Decade: For peace in our world; 5 th 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**

CHRISTMAS OFFICE HOURS – Please note the Parish Office will be closed between Christmas and New Year's, reopening on January 2nd, 2024.

NEXT CATECHISM SESSION will be held on Friday, January 19th at 7:00 pm in the Parish Hall.

BASS RIVER MEMORIAL TREE – A big “thank-you” goes out to everyone who made donations to the St. Bartholomew Memorial Tree this year. So far, a total of **\$1,730.00** has been raised for the St. Bartholomew Cemetery Fund including the Memorial Tree and other donations. **The cost to maintain both cemeteries each year is \$4,500.**

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.

