

EXPLORING OUR FAITH - Sunday Celebration of the Word

From the first century onward, the Church (the people of God) has always insisted on the importance of gathering on Sunday. Early Church documents attest to Christians gathering on the Day of the Lord to break bread and give thanks in remembrance of Christ. Each Sunday was, and still is, considered “Little Easter” since the Resurrection of Christ is the central event in our faith. Moreover, we believe it is the Risen Lord himself who gathers us and is sacramentally present to us each time we gather for Eucharist. When Christians cannot be nourished at the table of Christ’s Body, however, they can still be nourished at the table of His Word.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) restored the importance of the Liturgy of the Word to its rightful prominence that it had during the first centuries of the Church. (Remember, it wasn’t that long ago when some Catholics felt that as long as they made it to Mass in time for the consecration “it counted!” They had fulfilled their “obligation”). Vatican II, thankfully, reminded us that the readings from the Old Testament, the Psalm, the New Testament writings, and the Gospels was like a feast God spread before us and invited us to take in the mysteries of how God saved our ancestor and how God is saving us here and now. Do we ever see the first part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word, as a feast that is meant to nourish us? The Prophet Jeremiah certainly saw it that way when he said, **“When your words showed up, I ate them—swallowed them whole. What a feast!”** (Jer. 15:16). In the Liturgy of the Word, the first half of Mass, hopefully we can say as Eli taught the boy, Samuel, to say, **“Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening”** (1 Sam. 3:10). Sunday Eucharist is not always possible, but gathering to huddle around God’s Word is always possible; it is by no means something new. Catholics have been nourished for hundreds of years on God’s Word (in the absence of a priest) long before it was legitimated by the Church leaders at the Second Vatican Council. The opening lines of the Bible, the creation story, attests to the importance and power of God’s Word long before Jesus was born and long before the Church was established. We are told in the Book of Genesis that all God had to do was speak His Word and creation emerge. When the prophets appeared to tell us of the importance of God’s word they spoke with conviction: **“Just as the rain and snow fall from the sky and don’t return until they have watered the earth, so it is with my Word. It, too, will not return to the heavens empty-handed. My Word will bring good to the earth as it was always meant to do”** (Is. 55:11).

Vatican II (1964) along with the Code of Canon Law (1983) gave us the provision to provide Sunday Celebrations of the Word. The ritual was put into book form in Canada in 1995, although it was prayed by Catholics in this country for at least 10 years prior to that. While Catholics are no less responsive to the call of the Risen Lord for the Sunday Celebration of the Word, we must never see this ritual as a substitute for Eucharist itself. The Sunday Celebration of the Word is not a mini-Eucharist. It is celebrated in anticipation of the day when the faithful can gather with their priest and celebrate Eucharist. Provisions are deliberately built into the Sunday Celebration of the Word so that it won’t be perceived as a watered-down version of Mass. Sunday Celebration of the Word is not a mini-Mass, but it is a legitimate prayer form that makes the saving action of Christ present in its own way. God’s creative Word is not thwarted because there is no priest to celebrate Eucharist on a particular Sunday. The faithful are still nourished by the Word proclaimed, the “homily,” the intercessions, the hymns, and the thanksgiving that arise from their mouths.

With the clear shortage of priest, and their increasing age, Sunday Celebration of the Word is becoming increasingly important in the life of the Church. I hope you will always support this ritual, take your place around the Risen Lord, and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with your brothers and sisters in faith.

Fr. Phil

Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time 21 January 2024

Immaculate Conception Church, Rexton

St-Peter's Church, South Branch



Parish Office:

12 School Street Rexton, NB E4W 2E5

Phone: 506-523-6817

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

Office Hours:

Monday - 9:00 am - 3:00 pm, Tuesday 1:00 pm - 7:00 pm,
Wednesday to Friday – 9:00 am - 3:00 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	2 Samuel 5:1-10	Ps 89	Mark 3:22-30
Tue	2 Samuel 6:12B-19	Ps 24	Mark 3:31-35
Wed	2 Samuel 7:4-17	Ps 89	Mark 4:1-20
Thu	Acts 22:3-16; 9:1-22	Ps 117	Mark 16:15-18
Fri	1 Timothy 1:1-8 or 1 Timothy 1:1-5	Ps 96	Mark 4:26-34
Sat	2 Samuel 12:1-17	Ps 51	Mark 4:35-41
Sun	Deuteronomy 18:15-20	Ps 95	1 Corinthians 7:32-35 / Mark 1:21-28



PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

Immaculate Conception

Loose: **\$156.95**; Envelopes: **\$740.00**; Initial Offering: **\$20.00**; Heating for the Church: **\$110.00**; New Year's Day Offering: **\$30.00**; Donation: **\$200.00**; Votive Candles: **\$125.00**
TOTAL: \$1381.95

St. Peter's

Loose: **\$15.00**; Envelopes: **\$135.00**; Heating for the Church: **\$20.00**;
TOTAL: \$170.00

Thank you for your generosity!

MASS INTENTIONS FOR UPCOMING WEEK

Sat	20	SP	4:00 pm	Carmel Sock †	Robert & Donna Francis
Sun	21	IC	11:00 am	Raymond Perry †	Nancy
Tue	23	IC	4:00 pm	Mina Richard †	Doreen Daigle
Sat	27	SP	4:00 pm	Carmel Sock †	Carol & Leon Sock
Sun	28	IC	11:00 am	Jimmy Curwin †	Shirley Curwin

LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR NEXT WEEKEND

				Lectors		Eucharistic Ministers
Sat	27	SP	4:00 pm	1 st Reading & Psalm 2 nd Reading / Intentions	Lois	Stella
Sun	28	IC	11:00 am	1 st Reading & Psalm 2 nd Reading & Intentions	Judi / Donna	Louise

ROSARY SCHEDULE FOR IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

				Leader	Intentions
Sun	28	IC	10:30 am	Vina	1 st Decade: For our Clergy; 2 nd Decade: For our parishioners;
Sun	4	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



You are cordially invited for the upcoming 80th Birthday celebration of **STELLA ARSENAULT** on **February 3, 2024**, to be held in Rexton Lions Hall from 2:00~5:00pm.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE -The gifts we have are made valuable only by sharing them with others. Your gifts are gratefully accepted by the Catholic Women's League where members willingly share the good things God has given them. We can't wait to meet you! Our first meeting of the year will be held on Monday, January 22nd at 1:30 PM in the parish hall. A social will follow a brief business meeting. Looking forward to seeing you.

FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE

COSMIC WALK – The Laudato Si' Committee invites you to join in the telling of a special story—a story of Mother Earth, of humans, of gazelles, of mountains; it's the story of you and me! Birth, death, and resurrection. Our Christian story is our cosmic story! We will tell this amazing story are two different times on Thursday, February 8th at the Dan Bohan Centre, at 2:00 pm and again at 6:00 pm. Register with Karen at 506-387-4198, karen.diocese@gmail.com or online at www.diocesemoncton.ca - Pastoral Offices Adult Faith Formation Opportunities.

SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK will be celebrated at St. Bernard's Church (43 Botsford Street, Moncton) on Sunday, February 11th at 2:00 pm. (Mass and Sacrament of the Sick) Who should celebrate this sacrament? Those who are elderly and whose frailty is becoming more pronounced; those adults and children who are suffering from a major illness; illness comes in many different forms - physical, mental, psychological, emotional, and spiritual; those who are facing or recovering from surgery or serious medical tests; those suffering from a serious accident; those who suffer from chronic illness such as arthritis or diabetes; those who care for the sick, especially those who are closely bound in love to them. The English churches of the Archdiocese of Moncton work together to offer this communal celebration. Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate in this celebration. It is important that those who are sick and those around them understand the significance of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick as a sacrament of healing.

THE COSMIC WALK

The Laudato Si' Committee invites you to join us in the telling of a special story – a story of Mother Earth, of humans, of gazelles, of mountains; it's the story of you and me! Birth, death, and resurrection. Our Christian story is our cosmic story.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH AT
2:00 P.M. AND 6:00 P.M.
(DAN BOHAN CENTER)**

Register with Karen at 506-387-4198, karen.diocese@gmail.com or online at www.diocesemoncton.ca → Pastoral Offices → Adult Faith → Formation Opportunities.