

The First Week of Ordinary Time – Epiphany of the Lord

For most of the world, January 6, is the celebration of the **Epiphany of the Lord**, although the US celebrates it this Sunday. That is why this year the closing feast of the Christmas Season, the **Baptism of the Lord**, is celebrated on Sunday, in most of the world, but in the U.S. it is moved to Monday.

Whether we celebrate the **Baptism of the Lord** on Sunday or Monday, we hear the Lord say in the first reading from **Isaiah**, “Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit.” That is echoed in **Luke's Gospel**, after Jesus' baptism: “And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” This feast marks the end of the **Christmas season**. Monday or Tuesday begins **Ordinary Time** on the Church calendar which will continue until **Ash Wednesday**.

During the weekdays, we begin a three-week cycle of captivating readings from the **First Book of Samuel**. We read of Samuel's mother, Hannah, who promises the Lord, “if you give your handmaid a male child, I will give him to the LORD for as long as he lives.” Samuel hears a call from the Lord and responds, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” An epic battle against the Philistines ends in devastating losses for Israel and the capture of the Ark of the Covenant. In his old age, Samuel rules Israel and the elders ask Samuel to appoint a King to rule them. Samuel meets Saul. “When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the LORD assured him, “This is the man of whom I told you; he is to govern my people.”

From now until the beginning of Lent, the weekday gospels are from **Mark's Gospel**. Mark offers us a look at the beginning of Jesus public ministry. Jesus calls his first disciples, fisherman at work: Simon and Andrew, then James and John. “Then they left their nets and followed him.” He drives out evil spirits and heals the sick. He hears the cry of the leper: “If you wish, you can make me clean,” and Jesus, “moved with pity” heals him. Friends lower a paralytic from a roof down into the crowd in front of Jesus, who heals him and says, “Child, your sins are forgiven.” Jesus extends an invitation to the despised tax collector, Levi: “Follow me.”

Daily Prayer

In this first week of Ordinary Time, we might find ourselves feeling a little let-down after the Christmas season, especially in parts of the world where it seems cold and dark most days. This is where we can ask for the grace to let the stories of the gospels come alive in our hearts.

The vivid narratives of this week's gospel are packed with stories of Jesus' entering into the lives of real people and touching them in extraordinary ways. These are not far away stories, but ones that have a real meaning for us. This is a week of invitation from Jesus to us, with two invitations for us to ponder in our hearts this week.

Jesus encounters Levi, a Jewish tax collector. Because of his profession, he was probably wealthy but he had humiliated his family and made himself a pariah to most of those around him. Jesus' response to this “outcast” was to invite him to be one of his closest disciples - and to dine at his house.

In our own lives we may find a loneliness or separation from people in our family or others in our lives. We have parts of our lives that are dark and embarrassing and seem unchangeable. It is into this very darkness and discomfort that Jesus extends the same invitation to us - “Follow me.” This clear and personal call to us is from Jesus who already knows us and our failings and yet asks us to be with him. We can hear this invitation more clearly if we can be touched with awareness of our own failings and understand more deeply how much we need a savior in our lives. It is then that our hearts open to accept this invitation.

This week Jesus invites us to follow him, as friends and disciples. This is a good week for us to contemplate with Jesus, what we are looking for and how much we want to turn and follow him. We can pray to Jesus for the strength to leave the patterns and habits of our lives that so often turn us away from him and ask for the grace to make a new beginning in our lives. If we can sit with our hands open in humility, we can accept that we can't do this on our own, but know in our hearts that with the help of God, nothing is impossible.

[Creighton U Online Ministries](#)

CHRISTMAS THANK YOU 2023!!!!

Dear Parishioners of Holy Spirit Parish,

This weekend we celebrate the Epiphany, which draws to close the Christmas Season. I would like to thank each and every parishioner for your ongoing participation and generosity during our Christmas season and including the past year; not only in monetary support, but also in your gift of faith and service, sharing your God-given talents to help bring alive our parish community. As well, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to all of you who remembered me with your prayers, cards with supporting sentiments, beautiful gifts, and food, during this holy season. We continue to be a parish of many gifts given to us by God. It is in gratitude to God for having a parish that “Welcome’s... where we Worship and give Witness!” Therefore, I want to acknowledge and ‘thank’ the following:

- to those who initiated, participated in and supported the **Parish Photo Contest** and for those who purchased the beautiful calendars that arose from these photos!
- to our musicians and cantors, Mary Rose Daigle and Trish Gallagher. Beautiful selections of the season helped enhance our liturgies, with St. Matthew’s Worship Site dawning new choir robes. As well as students from Saint John High School who joined Trish with voice and instruments to enhance our Christmas Eve Masses.
- to those on our Liturgy Committee, including the Art and Environment committee who helped parishioners decorate our worship spaces.
- to our newest members, originally from India who shared with us some of their traditions, especially the beautiful Nativity Scene. Hopefully you were able to see the large village that was constructed at the front of St. Rose Worship Site. Many wonderful comments we received!
- to those who keep our sign at St. Matthew’s Worship Site up-to-date... even in the worse weather. These encouraging messages are warmly received by many who pass our sign!!
- to those who made monetary donations to our ‘Christmas Exchange Fund.’ This need was greater than it ever was before.
- to those who offered ‘generous response’ to **Horizon Recovery Center**. Truly what you donated was phenomenal!!
- to those who continue to make and donate soup for **Avenue B** and offered food and monetary donations for those in need.
- to our Secretary, Bernice Martin, for her ongoing commitment to our parish, her ‘pastoral response’ to it’s many (not just administrative) demands!
- the success of our **First Annual New Year’s Potluck Dinner** with our neighbouring Christians from other traditions! Over 150 people attended and brought many tasty dishes for us to share. A lot of fun was had by all and a great way to start the ‘2024’ together. Many shared their desire to make this an annual event. As this was a last minute project, I am grateful for those who jumped in last minute to help bring it to fruition.
- to anyone or ministry I may have inadvertently failed to mention and those of you who have contributed “silently” in any way toward making this a truly blessed and joyful Christmas celebration, I thank you. These “gifts from the heart” are great signs of the love you have for your faith community.

In his poem, “When Christmas Begins”, Michael Doughy tells us that once the ‘visible’ Christmas is put away... the ‘real Christmas begins...

“When the Carols have been stilled; when the star-topped tree is taken down;
When family and friends are gone home; when we are back to our schedules;

The Work of Christmas begins:

To welcome the refugees, to heal the broken planet,

To feed the hungry, to build the bridges of trust, not wall of fear or anger.

To share our gifts, to seek justice and peacefully for all people,

To bring the “Light of Christ into the World.”

Finally, I would like to wish you God’s choicest blessings for you and your loved ones for 2024!

~Fr. David

MASS SCHEDULE 2024

Jan 09, 2024	Tue	St. Matthews Worship Site	7pm	Special Intentions
Jan 11, 2024	Thur	St. Rose Worship Site	12:10pm	Patti Kleinke
Jan 13, 2024	Sat	St. Rose Worship Site	4pm	Alfred & Noella Bastrache Alfreda & Michel Bastrache
Jan 14, 2024	Sun	St. Rose Worship Site	9am	Parishioners
Jan 14, 2024	Sun	St. Matthews Worship Site	11am	Roger Gionet Don Drew

Please remember to put your name, address and phone number on your 2024 donation envelopes, especially if you are using the envelopes for the first time. This allows me to provide you with your income tax receipt.

Thank you!!!!

*Thank you so much for your Christmas Blessings, kind words and your thoughtful gifts. It is a pleasure to be your Parish Secretary.
I wish you all the best for 2024.*

Bernice Martin – Parish Secretary

Eternal Rest Grant unto them O Lord...” Our prayers and condolences go out to the families of John Hickey and Jonathan Fenney

The Prayer Shawl Group resumes on Jan 17, 2024!!

Join us on Wednesday mornings from 10-12 at the Rectory Hall, 279 Nerepis Road, Grand Bay-Westfield. Call Jill (639-0007) or Angie (639-6582) if you’re interested. New people always welcomed!! Yarn, needles, & patterns will be supplied; you can create from the comfort of your own home.

COLLECTIONS

Dec 24, 2023 – Regular - \$2,405.00 Christmas - \$6,499.50

Christmas Exchange Recovery - \$290.00

PAD Weekly Average - \$1,713.00 PAD BLDG - \$148.00

Dec 31, 2023 – Regular - \$3,156.00 Loose - \$233.00 Christmas - \$440.00

Christmas Exchange Recovery - \$300.00 New Years - \$525.50

Initial Offering - \$165.00 Bldg Fund - \$861.00

PAD Weekly Average - \$1,713.00 PAD BLDG - \$148.00

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

OFFICE HOURS 9 am to 4 pm

SMWS – Tues & Thur – 506-738-2320 SRWS - Wed -506- 653-6850

Mon & Fri: BOTH OFFICES CLOSED

Mailing Address: 279 Nerepis Rd, Grand Bay-Westfield, NB E5K 2Z9

St. Matthew Worship Site (SMWS) (506)738-2320

Civic Address: 45 Dollard Drive

St. Rose of Lima Worship Site (SRWS) (506)653-6850

Civic Address: 541 Milford Road

WEBSITE: www.holyspiritparish.ca Email: holyspiritparish@nb.aibn.com

Pastor – Rev. David J. Martin

HOLY SPIRIT PARISH

ST. MATTHEWS & ST. ROSE WORSHIP SITES

“Where we WELCOME everyone, WORSHIP together and WITNESS to Jesus Christ”

The Epiphany of the Lord

Jan 07, 2024

**Sunday Exposition/Adoration: Jan 07, 14, 21 & 28, 2024
at St. Rose Worship Site from 1-2pm**

**THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION AT ST. ROSE WORSHIP SITE BEGINNING AT 3:15PM
PRIOR TO THE 4PM SAT MASS**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Holy Spirit Parish –Please contact Linda Spinney at 506-636-0677 or email her at holyspiriteducationsj@gmail.com

Gentle Path – Counselling Services – Pathways to Hope

Gentle Path Counselling Services provides counselling at the 199 Chesley Drive, Saint John Office and is now scheduling appointments at Horizon’s Market Place Wellness Centre in the Lower West Side

We offer counselling for:

Anxiety	Addictions	Grief & Loss	Domestic Violence
Couples Counselling	Sexual Assault Trauma	Self Esteem & Body Image	Sexual Identity & Orientation
PTSD	Parenting	Depression	First Nations
Kids & Teens	Blended Families	Anger Management	Work Related Issues

(Subsidies are available)

Gentle Path Counselling Services, Ltd.

Phone (506)652-7284 Toll Free 1-888-394-4022

www.gentlepathsj.com

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Charitable # - 85377 7175 R0001