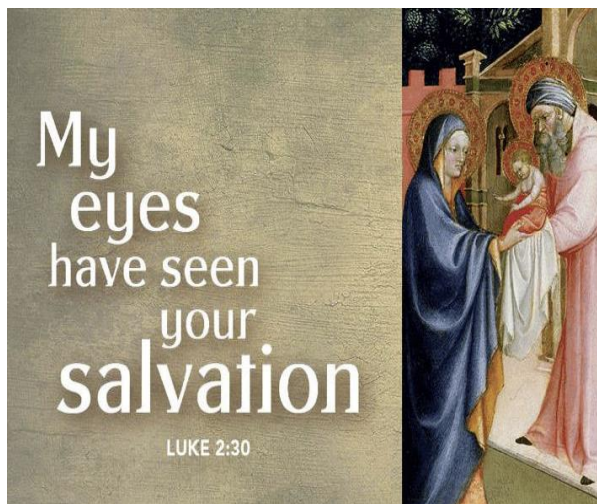




St. Martha's Parish

Feast of the Holy Family - December 31st 2023

Gospel Reflection - Luke 2:22-40



A very young couple and a newborn baby who bring the poor offering of the poor: two turtledoves, and the most precious offering in the world: a child. On the arms of the two elderly people, filled with caresses and smiles, the future of the world passes from one to the other: the old age of the world that welcomes the eternal youth of God in its arms. The little child is welcomed not by the men of the institutions, but by an old man and an old woman without an official role, but two lovers of God who have eyes clouded by old age but still lit by desire. Because Jesus does not belong to the institution, but to humanity. The incarnation is God who overflows everywhere in creatures, in the life that ends and in the life that flourishes. I will not die without having seen the offensive of God, the offensive of good, the offensive of light which is already underway

everywhere, the offensive of the yeast. The Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not see death without first having seen the Messiah. They are words that the Spirit preserved in the Bible so that I, we, could keep them in our hearts: you too, like Simeon, will not die without having seen the Lord. It's hope. It is the word of God. Your life will not end without answers, without encounters, without light. The Lord will also come for you, he will come as a help in what makes you suffer, as a strength in what makes you go. Then Simeon sings: I saw the light prepared by you for all the people. But what light emanates from Jesus, from this little son of the earth who only knows how to cry, drink milk and smile when hugged? Simeon grasped the essential: the light of God is Jesus, incarnate light, love in every love. Salvation is not a particular work, but God who came, allows himself to be embraced by man, is here now, mixes his life with our lives and nothing will ever be able to separate us again. They then returned to their home. They returned to holiness, prophecy and the teaching of the family, which come before those of the temple.

Etiquette at Holy Mass

At Mass it is here the community gathers. It is here that we become the people of God, drawn to each other by the work of the Spirit. And yet we try to sit where we can have as little contact with other people as possible. We bemoan our empty churches and then act as though no one is expected to join us in our empty pew. But here is the deal: the end spots on a pew are for those who arrive after us.

Mass, Confession, Prayer

Mass Times: Mon, Wed-Fri 9am Tue. 7pm
Sat. 5pm Sun. 9am & 11am

Mass time change on MONDAY, 1 JANUARY: 10 am

Reconciliation: Sat. 4pm or by appointment

Adoration: Fri. 10am-8pm following Mass – schedule permitting

Rosary: 30min before Mass - **Divine Mercy Chaplet:** Fridays

3pm **Divine Office:** Morning prayers after weekday morning Masses

Contact Information

403-381-8891 • office@stmarthasparish.ca

Pastor: Fr. William Monis

Office closed on 1 January

To rent the Knights of Columbus Hall contact Marcus Lynch-Staunton (403) 359-4457

Please pray for the sick in our parish:

Juliana Barrajon, Vera Schwartzkoff, Pauline Chabot, Joe Gatner, Anthony Johnston, Riley Svoboda, Devassy Palissery, Helen Smith, Kathleen Roth, August Schulze-Ebbinghoff, Ernest Geisler, Veronica Eagle Bear, Teresa Andron, Roz Walderman, Lou Karpick, Ellsworth Braun, Ellis Watson, Adeline Sherman, Linda Westgeest, Peter Danielson, Raymond Sander, Most. Rev. Gerard Pettipas, Bernie Yaretz, Theresa Blackwater, Viola Mogus, Robert Dubois.

Enlarge the Tent – Art of Accompaniment

“Removing our Sandals before the Sacred Ground of the Other” with Fr. Tim Boyle. Each gathering will begin at 10:15. We will celebrate Eucharist at 11:15. **Monday January 22:** “Zacchaeus... the first of many seekers... and why they don’t want to join”

Plenary indulgence by praying before a Nativity scene

Catholics will be able to receive a plenary indulgence from Dec. 8 to Feb. 2, 2024, by praying before a Nativity scene in a Franciscan church; more info: <https://tinyurl.com/mpzh88k6>

Mothers’ Rosary Group

The Mothers’ Rosary group will be meeting weekly downstairs at St. Martha's for prayer and fellowship, **every Wednesday from 9:30-11:30**. Babysitting is provided. Please join us! We are looking for babysitters. If anyone is interested in this paid position, please contact the office.

Pax Christi

Please join us for the Latin Rosary in the Chapel at **6:30pm on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month – suspended for this month**. Everyone is welcome. For more information please contact Chris Robinson at 403-393-0400 or by email at rosariumlatinum@outlook.com.

Soap for Hope Canada

If you have extra soap/toothpaste/shampoo or any hygiene items you’d like to donate to those in need, you can drop them off in the box by the church’s door.

Grocery Cards Program

Support our Parish! It is a KofC & CWL Fundraiser. Purchase your Grocery Cards in our gathering space after all weekend Masses or **make an e-transfer: knightscards9280@gmail.com indicating the STORE name. Orders received & paid for by Thursday, will be available for quick pickup at our Grocery Card stand at the Masses on the following Saturday / Sunday.**

St Vincent de Paul looking for furniture.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul has received requests for basic **household furniture and other items for kitchen, living room and bedroom**. For more information or for pick-up of items, please leave a message at 403-328-5493. Phone lines are open Mondays @ 9:00 am to Thursdays @ 5:00 pm.

Hobby Prayer group & KofC outreach program

The Hobby Prayer group, which **meets on Mondays from 1:30 to 3:30pm** at STM, is teaming up with our KofC to support the less fortunate; we’ll be knitting/crocheting scarves, toques, blankets, mittens, while KofC will be going out in our community to help those in need. There is a **box in the gathering space** labeled “KofC outreach” for anyone who wishes to help by donating any of those items and/or leftover yarns that can be used in this new undertaking. THANK YOU!

Bereavement Group

Bereavement Group will meet on **Tuesday, Jan. 23, 1pm to 3pm**. Coffee/snacks, speakers, videos are part of the program. For more info, or to register for the upcoming meeting, contact the office, 4033818891 or ruth.mcmillan55@gmail.com

Mass intentions

Mon 1 Jan	10:00 am	All parishioners
Tue 2 Jan	7:00 pm	Clarence Emard +
Wed 3 Jan	9:00 am	Renso Castellarin +
Thu 4 Jan	9:00 am	Keith Lundmark +
Fri 5 Jan	9:00 am	Toney family
Sat 6 Dec	5:00 pm	Adelard Paulhus +
Sun 7 Dec	9:00 am	CWL

Mass Intentions

To those requesting multiple Masses (be it for one person or several different people) please note that **only one Mass per person requesting** can possibly be prayed here in this parish. We will make every effort to schedule one Mass here on the date you are requesting. **We cannot hold Mass requests for more than 2 months, all other requests will be sent away.**

Donation envelopes

Donation envelopes for 2024 can be picked at the parish office. If you wish to sign up for Pre-Authorized Giving Plan please contact Moncy: finance@stmarthasparish.ca **For those who already have PAD, a box of special donations envelopes is available at the parish office.**

Hosts for the NET team

A NET Team of 6 missionaries is staying until May. We need families to host the team (2 team members for 2 weeks). If this is something that you are willing to do, please contact Heather: 403-380-4871 or email lethbridgeNEThousing@gmail.com

Legion of Mary

The Legion of Mary meets every **Saturday, at 10:00 am**, in the library of St. Martha’s Church. All are welcome!

Called to serve!

Our parish needs people of good will to volunteer in any of the Ministry you are called to serve: **Lectors, Singers/Players for the choir, Sacristans, Hospitality team members and Eucharistic Ministers** for our Sunday Masses.

Abiding Together Podcast group

Abiding Together Podcast group for adult women is **Thursdays from 6:30pm - 8:00pm** in the gathering space at St. Martha’s. Bring your bibles and a notebook. More info here: <http://www.abidingtogetherpodcast.com/> or email Shanice_scharchun@gmail.com – next gathering is on **January 11**

Meaningful gifts

Lisza Bruder is selling really good quality beeswax Advent candles. She was a very active member of St Martha's and All Saints before needing to stay home due to chronic illnesses. Her website has many handmade items from candles to rosaries to greeting cards: <https://tinyurl.com/262jeuz6>

Hand made rosaries

Give a call to BERNIE; he also sells other religious items; 403 942 7413



Our fantastic KofC team will serve a pancake breakfast on Sunday, **January 14**: join us!

Events at Mount St. Francis Retreat Centre

To register call 403-932-2012 or write to mtfrancis@shaw.ca

Mixed Retreat, Friday to Sunday, **January 5 - January 7, 2024**

Young Adults (ages 20 to 40)

Maritza Chouza, 778-533-1736, maritzachouza@gmail.com

Men's Retreat, Friday to Sunday, **January 12 - January 14, 2024**

Paul Valentine C.403-862-4206 paul@valentinevolvo.com & Bill

Locke 403-874-1814 billilocke@gmail.com

Events at Martha Retreat Centre

To register call 403-328-3422 or visit martharetreatcentre.ca

An introduction to Self Exploration and Meditation Through Story, Jan 13, 2024, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM | cost \$25

OASIS DAY, 3rd Thursday of the Month, **Jan 18, 2024**, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM | Oasis Days begin with a brief time of facilitation that will serve to guide your time of reflection throughout the day; coming together for a delicious homemade lunch, followed by the afternoon to rest, pray, reflect | cost \$72

HEALING PATH MEDITATIVE YOGA (maximum 14 participants), **Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Jan 23, 30; Feb 6, 13, 20, 27; Mar 5, 12, 19, 26** | cost \$150.00

AWAKENING THE HEART RETREAT: Learning To Love Beyond Boundaries; How do we sustain a "hopeful heart" during these challenging times? **Jan 27, 2024**, 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM | cost \$75

Mental Health Learning Sessions by Holy Spirit Catholic School

Division

Every session will take place in-person at the **Sandman Signature Hotel** in Lethbridge, **Essie's Ballroom** | Online sessions will be available on Google Meet. Doors open at 5:00pm, dinner served at 5:30. Presentation will start at 6pm and go to 7:30pm | RSVP by email: wilistone@holyspiritab.ca

Jan 16: Resiliency and Self-Care -Ft. Lethbridge Family Services

Feb 15: Healthy Relationships -Ft Lethbridge Family Services

Mar 20: ADHD - Understanding the Diagnosis and Treatment Strategies -Ft. Aleigha from True Balance Counselling

Apr 18: Emotional Regulation - How to help our kids when they have big feelings -Ft Allic and Bailey from True Balance Counselling

May 14: Digital Detox - Ft Lethbridge Family Services

L'Arche looking for committee & board members

The L'Arche Lethbridge community consists of 3 homes and 12 "core members". We are part of an international community that believes in people with and without intellectual disabilities sharing life in communities; for more info: www.larchelethbridge.org Current opportunities: Fundraising Committee, Public Relations Committee, Board of Directors. Connect with Tim Wiebe, Community Leader: twiebe@larchelethbridge.org

Christmas note cards

The Diocese has provided Christmas note cards for parishioners to use in conveying care to others this Advent and Christmas. Here are some ideas on how to use them: • Parishioners can convey God's love and care to colleagues at work by leaving these cards at their desks, either signed or anonymously. • Students, parents, guardians, and teachers can share these cards with others in their schools. • These cards can be inserted into Christmas cards and gift boxes. • They could be shared with a stranger who seems down or burdened. Cards are on the table by the bulletins and at the parish office.

SFXC Christmas outreach program: St. Francis Xavier Chaplaincy is collecting non-perishable food to stock up the University pantry. A list of what is needed is by the box at the entrance of the church, where you can drop off your donation. The program runs until **7 January**.

Hymnbooks missing

Several hymnbooks are missing from the chapel and the sanctuary: we kindly ask the person who borrowed them to return them as soon as possible

Sacraments

Baptism Infant baptism is celebrated following the completion of our parish baptism preparation program. New and expectant parents are invited to contact Zachary Hampton, our Sacraments Coordinator, for more information: sacraments@stmarthasparish.ca

First Holy Communion, Confirmation: To register; fill out registration form on our [website](http://www.stmarthasparish.ca). Contact Zachary Hampton, Sacraments Coordinator, for more information: sacraments@stmarthasparish.ca

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults): RCIA started on Tuesday, October 10, following the 7 PM Mass. If you are interested in becoming Catholic or know anyone who is, please register on the parish website as soon as possible. For more information, call the office or email: sacraments@stmarthasparish.ca

Marriages/Marriage Preparation: Couples registered within the parish are required to make arrangements at least **six months prior, no exception**, to the date of marriage by calling the office to schedule interviews with Fr. William and completing the marriage preparation program. Couples complete the marriage preparation course AFTER their first interview with a cleric. Calgary diocese marriage preparation courses: catholicyc.ca/marriage_prep. There are also classes available at All Saints Parish, Lethbridge.

Anointing of the Sick If you have a relative who has been admitted to hospital please call the parish office.

Our parish relies on your Sunday offerings for maintenance and growth. By making your pre-authorized offertory gift, you are providing crucial support to care for your parish.

Contact our parish office to set up a direct debit deposit. Please prayerfully discern where you are called to serve Our Lord at St. Martha's.

THE Holy Family and our holy families

In this time of troubled marriages and beleaguered families, a renewed focus on the Holy Family, and what it teaches us, can act as a bracing support. The mystery of our redemption is particularly lived out in the Holy Family and, therefore, it is a guide for all families called to God's redeeming love. **The Family as a Communion of Persons**, grounded in the family's imaging the Trinity. This is important in our current culture that emphasizes individualism, to the point of losing the sense of commitment to community in the family. Since the term "person" means being in relationship, and the Trinity is the prime analog for persons in relationship, the human person as image of God has come to be seen specifically as image of the Trinity, reflecting the relationships with other human persons, as well as with God. The Persons in the Trinity are Gift in their relationships. In the family as a communion of persons, each person is a gift to the other members. The human subjectivity of each is not lessened but rather strengthened through their participation in the communion of the family. The example of Joseph and Mary who gave themselves totally to the person of Jesus, as well as to each other in the spiritual bond of their marriage, can raise our awareness of this particular calling of the family. **Conjugal Love**: one may raise about how the virginal lives of Joseph and Mary can relate to the ordinary family. The establishment of consent as the essential element in marriage was both validated by the marriage of Joseph and Mary, and validated it. Initially, the Church was most concerned to protect the divinity of Jesus, so that the fatherly role of Joseph was not emphasized. It came to be seen that Joseph's consent was an essential element, not only in the marriage with Mary, but also as a shared cause of the Incarnation, in union with Mary's fiat. In our contemporary culture, Mary is sometimes proposed as an example of pregnancy in an unwed mother, but this is false as she was betrothed to Joseph at the time of the conception of Jesus, so that as the spouse of Mary he had an important part to play in the Incarnation. It was a crucial part of God's plan that His son be born within a marriage, and raised in a family. Joseph's role as husband to Mary, and human father for Jesus, provides an important link between divine fatherhood, and human fatherhood. Next to Mary, his role in the plan of Redemption is critical. He has a prophetic role as a perpetuator of the line of David into the New Covenant, and as the Jewish father responsible for living out with Jesus the whole inheritance of the Old Testament. Chastity is a necessary element in all marriages, and allows the interior value of the person to come into greater focus, which is essential for a communion of persons. All couples can imitate the chastity of Mary and Joseph by putting their faith in God's plan above their own desires. Joseph and Mary did not know what the future had in store for them any more than other couples. Yet, they responded in obedience. **Maternity and Paternity** The gift of motherhood and fatherhood is an awesome power: one's genealogy is shared with another person who has an eternal destiny in God. Parenthood transcends biology for it has the privilege of being an analogy of the Trinity in its fruitfulness, and a communion of persons. **All Are Called to Holiness** The universal call to holiness, as stressed during Vatican II, is particularly relevant to family life. The realization that the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience are also meant for families, according to their circumstances, can be a fruitful challenge. While this is a high standard for ordinary Christian families, it is good to remember that the married love of Christian couples participates in the union between Christ and His Bride, the Church, between humanity and the Word. Through baptism, the couple is incorporated into the mission of Christ and the Church. By living family life in the presence of Christ as a domestic church, they carry out what the Holy Family initiated in their dedication to Christ and His mission: Jesus, Mary and Joseph are the summit from which holiness spreads all over the earth. Mary is the one who has the deepest knowledge of God's mercy. She knows its price. Separations and conflicts within families leave wounds in need of healing. But despite the defects of our environment and our lives, the vocation to love within sacramental grace is possible.

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