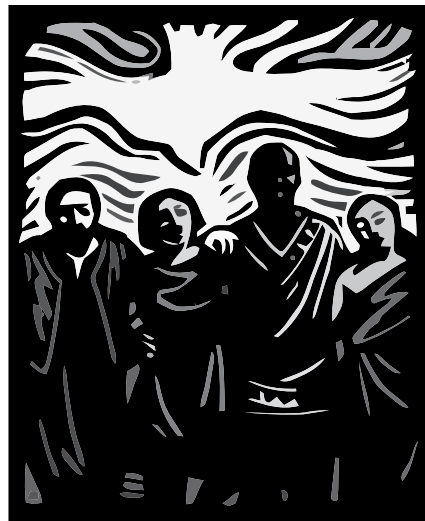


After his baptism by John in the Jordan, Jesus emerged from obscurity and began his public ministry. Recalling the humility of the Baptiser, - who declared himself unworthy to perform even the slave's act of loosening the straps of the messiah's sandals - Luke underlines how amazing is the event that is to take place, as Jesus submits himself to John's baptism of repentance. 'I baptize with water', John declares, 'He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire' - Luke's narrative of the first Pentecost is clearly foreshadowed.

Believers of every generation have been puzzled by this unexpected turn of events. Seeking the reason why, takes us to the heart of God's plan of salvation. This plan, in the words of the Greek Fathers of the early Church, is an expression of the divine 'condescension' - God would open the way to eternal life for a lost world, not by a remote divine edict, but in a way that gives expression to the mystery of God's active love for the human family. The Father 'gave his only Son' (Jn 3:16); the Son 'emptied himself, taking the form of a slave' - he would give expression to God's compassion and generosity for a world that was lost, by taking upon himself the only way that can lead from our world's destructive darkness and selfishness, into the light and life for which we were made. By his sharing in that way he consecrates it; and in the Paschal Mystery its mysteriously foreshadowed he is to become our 'Way' (Jn 14:6).



The kindness and love of God our Saviour has been revealed

Today's first reading is the opening passage of 'The Book of Consolation' of the Isaian writings. These writings had an encouraging message for God's people in their exile - a message that resonates with messianic expectations. Though all may seem to be lost, they must trust in the promises brought by their faith. Their returning to their homeland will be like a new Exodus, as the desert wilderness is transformed into a 'way for the Lord', the valleys are filled and the mountains laid low; 'the glory of the Lord' will lead the way, just as it did in the first Exodus (see Exodus 40:36). (It is not surprising that the New Testament writers associated this passage with the herald ministry of John the Baptiser.)

After foreshadowing how he will make himself the way forward for struggling humanity, Jesus gives himself to prayer, and the tangible presence of the Father and the Spirit point to the full implications of the saving mystery that is to come. There is a symmetry in the gospel story - if the Saviour's public life ends with the climax of the Paschal Mystery, it begins with a foreshadowing of this same mystery, as Jesus goes into the waters of the world's sinfulness and emerges into the glory of the Father's acceptance. Christian baptism has its meaning from both these events. As Paul writes, we 'were baptized into his death' that with him we might 'begin living a new life'. Today's reading from Paul's letter to Titus reminds us of the great benefits that are ours through baptism's 'cleansing water of rebirth', now that finally 'God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race'.

John Thornhill sm
www.theemmauseries.com

As John the Baptist introduced the people of his time to Jesus a voice from heaven said, "You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased." Perhaps God is calling you to do the same in our time.

Is God calling you to be a priest, religious or deacon? Call Fr. Chris Lemieux 416-968-0997 vocations@vocations.ca www.vocationstoronto.ca

PARISH

Readings ~ Isaiah 40.1-5, 9-11 ~ Titus 2.11-14; 3.4-7 ~ Luke 3.15-16, 21-22

Mass Intentions This Week — January 11 to 17

Please join us as we pray for the following announced intentions...

	Intention(s):	Offered by:
Monday, 9am	✠ Deceased friends	
Tuesday, 9am	✠ Helen Conrath	The family
Wednesday, 9am	✠ Marcelle Benjamin	Michael Foran
Thursday, 9am	✠ Nicholas Ferik	Enedina Ferik
Friday, 9am	✠ Mary Lucey	Ursula & John Matthews
Saturday, 9am	✠ Tony Pirri	Joe & Josie Cosentino
5:15pm	✠ Vincent Maloney	The Walker family
Sunday, 8am	✠ For the needs of our parish and faithful parishioners ✠	
9:30am	✠ Franco Pontieri	The family
11am	... of Daniella Servedio	
12:30pm	✠ Walter Peksyk	The family

Building the Samaritan Church, Welcoming the Stranger — Jan. 12, 7:30pm@OLS

► THIS WEEK Renowned author, journalist, and founder of Romero House, Mary Jo Leddy will share her thoughts on the privilege of working with refugees and how we can become a good and joyful church as we expand our concern to include refugees. From her experience of living with and working with refugees for 25 years, Leddy will describe what she has learned about the promise and problems of becoming a Samaritan Church. Leddy is an adjunct professor at Regis College, and a Senior Fellow at Massey College.

This presentation is supported by ECULINKS Etobicoke, an ecumenical organization that promotes faith-based social justice and outreach initiatives, and by the Dominican Institute of Toronto.

Everyone is invited to attend this public event at a time when Canadians are welcoming Syrian refugees to our country. Come and learn how to become engaged in that welcome!

Rosary Group — mornings suspended; Fridays, 2pm, above Running Room

Take this opportunity to pray the Holy Rosary every evening at home with your family!

Offertory Envelopes — Delivered to Canada Post in Mid-December

If you have not yet received yours, please use any envelope clearly marked with your name and envelope number. If you have not received your envelopes by the beginning of February, please contact the parish office. Thank you for your continued support!

Stretch & Flex — Join us! — Running Room, 2nd Floor, Tuesdays, 6:15—7:30pm

Only \$10 per session. Bring a bottle of water, a yoga-type mat and wear comfy clothing!

Rosary Mornings? Children's Liturgy? Your Patience is Appreciated!

The coming weeks will see the restart of a number of ongoing parish programs including those mentioned above. Stay tuned to your parish bulletin for more information. We'll let you know as soon as information becomes available.

Are You Ready To Serve Your Parish? Why Wait?

If you've thought about assuming an active role in the life of your parish, wait no longer! There are myriad opportunities available for parishioners of all ages. Why not contact the parish office to discuss? We'd love to hear from you!



"The Church does not dispense the sacrament of baptism in order to acquire for herself an increase in membership but in order to consecrate a human being to God and to communicate to that person the divine gift of birth from God." — Hans Urs von Balthasar

COMMUNITY

Five-Part Workshop Series on Laudato Si' On Care of Our Common Home

The facilitator for this series will be Paige Souter, Scarborough Missions' Education Program Coordinator. Takes place on Tuesdays, January 12, 19, 26, February 2 and 9 from 7 to 8:15pm at St. Joseph Parish, 162 Leslie Street. For more information or to register please call 416-466-7815 or email stjosephparishtaronto@gmail.com or visit www.stjosephparishtaronto.com

Mass of Comfort and Light January 13, 7pm

The New Beginnings Ministry of St. Padre Pio Church invite you to attend an evening Mass of Comfort and Light. The time immediately after the Christmas and New Year season can be very difficult for those among us who have experienced loss. Our invitation is to gather into the warmth and Light of Christ, finding support and courage in Him, the One who loves us. Takes place at Padre Pio Church, 5500 Major Mackenzie Drive, Kleinburg

The Canticle of Creatures through the Artist's Eyes — Jan. 16, 9:30am—2:30pm

You are invited to attend a winter retreat sponsored by New Beginnings and led by Br. Ignatius Feaver, OFM (cap). Creation flows from the goodness of God, the Author and Great Artist of life. Immerse yourself in the Great Artist himself. St. Clare's Parish Hall, 1118 St. Clair Avenue West. A light lunch will be provided.

Development & Peace "Come and See" Event — Jan. 16, 9:30am—12pm

Did you know that D&P is the Canadian Roman Catholic Church's official international development agency? It is widely known and respected in the Global South for its work in fighting poverty and injustice. Come to St. Clement's Church, 409 Markland Drive, and see what D&P is doing to build international solidarity, both overseas and here in Canada. You're invited! RSVP to Keith Gauntlett, keithgca@yahoo.com or 416-481-1930 by January 11. All are welcome.

Lectio Divina with Cardinal Thomas Collins — February 7 & March 6, 7pm

► February 7 — St. Clement's Parish, 409 Markland Drive

► March 6 — St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 263 Roncesvalles Avenue

Lectio Divina ("divine, or sacred, reading") is the name given to a spiritual tradition among Christians over the last two thousand years. This form of prayer involves three distinct stages: a) reading a short scripture passage b) reflecting on the passage and c) a short period of silence. We begin with Vespers at 7pm, followed by Lectio Divina from 7:30—8:15pm. All are welcome to join in this special evening of prayer. During the extensive renovations at St. Michael's Cathedral, Lectio Divina will be traveling to parishes around the archdiocese. Visit www.archtoronto.org/lectio



Archdiocese of Toronto

Bloordale United — Seminar on "Brain Health" Thursday, March 31, 1-3pm

Kari Quinn-Humphrey, Public Education Manager, Alzheimer Society Toronto, will once again be the guest speaker along with colleague, Joanne Tandoc. This free presentation is intended to better participants' understanding of the risk factors of dementia and to improve and maintain the health of the brain. Topics covered will include: understanding some of the research findings on reducing the risk of developing Alzheimer's Disease; recognizing that lifestyle plays a role; applying strategies to reduce risk. 4258 Bloor Street West. Pre-registration is required. Call Nelsona at 416-620-4098. Visit www.bloordale.ca for more information.

13-Day Pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Rome — June 13—25

Under the Spiritual leadership of Rev. Gustavo Campo from St. Thomas Aquinas Church. "Jesus is the Pilgrimage" will be a wonderful journey. Beginning in Rome and continuing to the Holy Land to visit Jesus' birthplace; the River Jordan; Cana, the site of his first miracle, and much more. For more info please contact Henry at Gideon Travel Agency: 905-949-5533