



**Dec. 23 Saturday - Saint John of Kanty**

5:00 Salvatore Covelli – by Pat & Renata Covelli

**Dec. 24 SUNDAY – FOURTH Sunday of Advent**

10:00 For All Parishioners and Benefactors

11:30 For All Parishioners and Benefactors

**Dec. 24 SUNDAY - CHRISTMAS EVE**

5:00<sub>pm</sub> For All Parishioners and Benefactors

10:00<sub>pm</sub> For All Parishioners and Benefactors

**Dec. 25 CHRISTMAS–NATIVITY OF THE LORD**

10:00 For All Parishioners and Benefactors

11:30 For All Parishioners and Benefactors

**Dec.26 Tuesday - Saint Stephen**

8:00 Rebeca Garcia Pindado – by family

**Dec.27 Wednesday - Saint John the Apostle**

8:00 John Frig – by John Horvath

**Dec.28 Thursday - Feast of the Holy Innocents**

8:00 Elizabeth & James Horvath – by son John

**Dec.29 Friday - Saint Thomas Becket**

9:30 Vito Barone – by wife Maria & family  
Elizabeth & Steven Frig – by John Horvath  
Giovanni Zampino – by Assunta Iammarino  
Maria Saporito – by granddaughter Frances

**Dec. 30 SATURDAY - Saint Egwin**

5:00 For the Needs of All Parishioners  
For All the Deceased of the Parish

**Dec. 31 SUNDAY - Feast of the Holy Family of  
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

10:00 For All Parishioners and Benefactors

11:30 For All Parishioners and Benefactors

**Jan. 1 MONDAY – The Solemnity of Mary  
The Holy Mother of God**

10:00 For All Parishioners and Benefactors

11:30 For All Parishioners and Benefactors

**Jan 2 Tuesday - Saint Basil the Great**

8:00 Theresa Lococo – by friends

**Jan 3 Wednesday - Most Holy Name of Jesus**

8:00 Guelfo Scialdone – by family

**Jan 4 Thursday – Saint Elizabeth of Seton**

8:00 Claudio Andreis – by wife Kristine

**Jan 5 Friday - Saint John Neumann**

9:30 Phil Mazzone – by wife Norma & family  
Lena Mazzotti – by Audrey & Mary & families  
Luisa Falzoi – by Maria Antonietta & Tony

**Jan. 6 Saturday - Saint Andre Bessette**

5:00 For the Needs of All Parishioners  
For All the Deceased of the Parish

**Jan. 7 SUNDAY – THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**

10:00 Iole Orsini-Biamonte - by Gus & Anna Orsini  
Domenico Cameli – by moglie Angelina  
Jerry & Tony Formica - by Marianna & family  
Costanza Martuccio – by husband Joe & family  
Frank Nero & Maria Nero – by Florence & fam

11:30 Dr. Carie LaRosa - by LaRo sa & Salvatore fam.

Pompilio & Angelina DiEmanuele– by son Ezio  
Giovanni & Elisa Tirabasso – by T & N Mazzei  
Rachel Maraldo Patterson-by cousin Mary Lou  
Iole Biamonte – by husband Sam & family

**GOSPEL MESSAGE**

Despite of all the uncertainties and potential hardships in our daily lives, like Mary's Fiat, we are invited to embrace willingly God's salvific plan.

**MESSAGGIO DEL VANGELO**

Nonostante l'incertezza e le difficoltà nella vita, come il Fiat di Maria, anche noi siamo invitati volontariamente ad accogliere il disegno redentrice di Dio.

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**Love: not just a feeling**

When the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, "are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind. And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me."  
(Luke 7:20-23)

On the whole, God's love for us is a much safer subject to think about than our love for Him. Nobody can always have devout feelings, and even if we could, feelings are not what God principally cares about. Christian Love, either towards God or towards man, is an affair of the will. If we are trying to do His will we are obeying the commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." He will give us feelings of love if He pleases. We cannot create them for ourselves, and we must not demand them as a right. But the great thing to remember is that, though our feelings come and go, His love for us does not. It is not wearied by our sins, or our indifference; and, therefore, it is quite relentless in its determination that we shall be cured of those sins, at whatever cost to us, at whatever cost to Him.

*Lord Jesus, remind me that you are close to me and listen to my prayers, whether I am aware of it or not.*

May the blessings of the Baby  
Jesus be yours this Christmas  
and throughout  
the New Year.

You and your loved ones will  
be remembered in the Holy  
Sacrifice of the Mass on  
Christmas Day.

**From Pastor's Desk**

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all - parishioners, benefactors and visitors - and your loved ones, a very blessed Christmas and grace-filled New Year. I am extremely grateful to all of you for your faithfulness to the Lord and support to our parish. As a minister of this church, I feel a source of great joy and inspiration that so many faithful people who offer their services and all the dedicated ministries in addressing the various needs in our community. May God bless you all! **Fr. Kessete & Staff**

***Joy, Joy, For Christ is Born***

Yes, JOY! – the word *deserves* to be uttered twice: JOY! JOY! “For Christ is born!” The angelic announcement brings to fulfillment generations of waiting and hoping and praying and preparing...and even though we know the story, we have been going through those same emotions and activities on the way to celebrating it again.

What Child is this? It is you, Christ the King! Son of David, Immanuel, Redeemer, Lamb of God, Bread of Life, Good Shepherd, Alpha and Omega, Prince of Peace, Rock of Ages, the Light of the World, the Word made flesh, the Prophet promised, and, of course, the names by which the Christmas angel announced you to the shepherds: “a Saviour, who is Christ, the Lord.

**Auguro un Natale pieno di pace  
e serenità e un Anno Nuovo  
apportatore di ogni gioia e  
felicità.**

**Il sacrificio della santa  
Messa nel giorno di Natale  
sara offerto  
per tutti voi  
e i vostri cari.**

**Parola del Parroco**

Carrissimi/me parrocchiani, Gioisco nel Signore per augurare a tutti - parrocchiani, benefattori e visitatori - e ai vostri cari, un Natale benedetto e un' anno pieno di grazia. Sono estremamente grato per tutti voi, per la vostra fedeltà al Signore e il vostro sostegno per la nostra parrocchia. Come parroco, sento a questa chiesa, una sorgente di grande gioia e ispirazione - che la nostra parrocchia ha tanti che offrono il loro aiuto nei ministeri e per i bisogni della comunità. Che il Buon Gesu vi dia buona salute e giosi giorni.

**Padre Kessete & Staff**

*Parole di riflessione:*

**Il segno di Dio è la semplicità. Il segno di Dio è il bambino. Il segno di Dio è che Egli si fa piccolo per noi. È questo il suo modo di . non viene con potenza e grandiosità esterne. Egli viene come bambino – inerme e bisognoso del nostro aiuto. Non vuole sopraffarci con la forza. Ci toglie la paura della sua grandezza. Egli chiede il nostro amore: perciò si fa bambino. Nient'altro vuole da noi se non il nostro amore, mediante il quale impariamo spontaneamente ad entrare nei suoi sentimenti, nel suo pensiero e nella sua volontà – impariamo a vivere con Lui e a praticare con Lui anche l'umiltà della rinuncia che fa parte dell'essenza dell'amore. Dio si è fatto piccolo affinché noi potessimo comprenderLo, accoglierLo, amarLo.**

*Sua Santità Benedetto xvi - Omelia di Natale 2006*

**THE FIRST CHRISTMAS CRIB**

It was St. Francis of Assisi who assembled the first crib in a cave on an Italian hillside. In 1293 the first crèche was erected in the woods of Greccio near Assisi, on Christmas Eve. The crib was ready, hay was brought, the ox and the donkey were led to that particular spot. Greccio became a new Bethlehem. The aim of St. Francis was to make the Christmas story come alive for the people of the locality...to show them how close it was to their own lives. Seemingly, he succeeded. On Christmas Eve the friars and the people assembled with candles and torches around the crib. Francis spoke to the people, who were mostly farmers and shepherds, about God's Son coming among us to teach us that we too are children of God, and that as such we have an eternal destiny. The shepherd and farmers got the message: God had time for simple folks like them. At the end of the vigil they all returned to their homes, full of peace and joy, feeling very close to God and to one another

## IL PRIMO PRESEPE

Fu San Francesco d’Assisi, che assembrò il primo presepe in una grotta su una collina italiana. Nel 1293 il primo presepe fu eretto nel bosco di Greccio vicino Assisi - la vigilia di Natale. Il presepe era pronto, il fieno portato, il bue e l’asinello fu condotto sul posto. Greccio divenne una nuova Betlemme. L’obiettivo di San Francesco era di rendere la storia di Natale viva per tutti i vicini. E sembra che ci è riuscito. La vigilia di Natale i Fratelli e tutte persone assemblati si presenteranno con candele e torce intorno al presepe. Francesco parlò al popolo di agricoltori e pastori, del Figlio di Dio venuto per insegnarci che anche noi siamo figli di Dio e come tale, abbiamo un destino eterno. Tutti sentirono il messaggio: che Dio ha tempo per tutti anche gente semplice come loro. Alla fine della vigilia, tutti tornarono alle loro case, pieni di pace e di gioia, sentendosi molto vicino a Dio e fra di loro.

FROM THE DESK OF ANGELA SALVATORE  
CHILDREN’S LITURGY COORDINATOR

**We wish to thank the following individuals/entities for their donations to the Children’s Liturgy Nativity Play and Reception:**

\$250 Gift Card – Comisso’s + 15% off on items purchased  
\$150 Active Life Rehab +  
\$100 from Four Brothers Cucina  
\$100 from Miro (a parishioner)  
\$ 80 Dr. Joseph Tavano (Chiropractor)

Buns & Cake from Portage Baker – Complimentary  
Table Centre-Piece (discounted) Dobbie’s Florist

**We would also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of the following volunteers who worked so hard in the realization of this event:**

Francesca Azzano – Maria Barone - Tina Biamonte –  
Antoinette Bortolon – Stella Dik – Nina Girolamo – Fitas  
Hernandez – Ylisa Hernandez – Christina LeRose –  
Donata Ling – Joseph Ling- Nancy LoGreco – Barbara  
Salvatore – Dana Szick – Alexandria Attree – Lillian  
Attree – Maria Dussan Barrios

## SEPARATED AND DIVORCED HEALING MINISTRY

The Diocesan Separated and Divorced Healing Ministry Support Group meets every second and fourth Monday of the month (except holidays) from 7:00pm to 9:00pm at Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre – 7020 Stanley Avenue, Niagara Falls, ON

For our pamphlet or information, please call 905-356-4113 or 905-684-0154. Meetings will be held both in person at Mount Carmel and virtually via Zoom platform.

### **PROGRAM SCHEDULE WINTER/SPRING 2024**

January 8 <sup>th</sup> 2024	Embracing the New Year
January 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2024	Loneliness
February 12 <sup>th</sup> 2024	Dealing With Fear
February 26 <sup>th</sup> 2024	What Is Forgiveness

## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP – CHRISTMAS 2023

*My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,*

On Christmas Eve, 1223, St. Francis of Assisi assembled the first living nativity scene in Greccio, Italy. This Christmas marks the eight hundredth anniversary of this significant event.

The context is simple. When St. Francis was returning to Assisi from Rome, he stopped in the town of Greccio. St. Francis had previously visited the Holy Land and noticed that the countryside around the small town reminded him of Bethlehem. Here he was inspired to create a scene of the first Christmas. St. Francis found a cave and had it prepared with an ox, donkey, and a manger full of hay. The people then gathered around the cave and Mass was celebrated. We are told that everyone went home filled with joy because of what they had witnessed. (Thomas of Celano, *First Life* 84: *Franciscan Sources*, 470).

In 2019, Pope Francis visited the Shrine of the Nativity in Greccio. To mark this event, he wrote a beautiful reflection on the meaning and importance of the Nativity Scene. In this Apostolic Letter, entitled *Admirabile Signum* (An Admirable Sign), the Holy Father acknowledges that the nativity scene has the power to touch hearts and strengthen faith. He writes, “Why does the Christmas crèche (manger) arouse such wonder and move us so deeply? First, because it shows God’s tender love: the Creator of the universe lowered himself to take up our littleness. The gift of life, in all its mystery, becomes all the more wondrous as we realize that the Son of Mary is the source and sustenance of all life.” (*Admirabile Signum*, p.3)

Unfortunately, like so many other aspects of Christmas, the manger scene is being eclipsed by secular symbols. The nativity scene is disappearing from the public square, and in private homes, where it once was prominently displayed. This powerful sign of love is being muted by a misguided understanding of inclusivity and diversity and a lack of faith. The truth is that Jesus came to save all people, not just a select few. The manger scene offers a universal message of hope and love.

On this eight hundredth anniversary of the first manger scene in Greccio, take the time to contemplate this beautiful scene of simplicity, mystery, and love. When you are at your parish church for Christmas Mass, kneel before the Holy Family in the manger and ask that they intercede for your family. As you gaze upon the infant Jesus, contemplate the fact that he became so little so that you could love Him and experience His profound love for you.

If you do this with an open heart, then, like those people in Greccio so many years ago, you too will return home filled with joy because of what you have experienced!

May the joy of Christmas be with you always.

*Yours sincerely in Christ*  
*Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.*  
*Bishop of St. Catharines.*

## Christmas & New Year Schedule 2023 / 2024

Saturday – December 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Confessions: 4:00 – 4:30pm  
Mass: 5:00pm

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – December 24<sup>th</sup>  
10:00am Mass (*Italian*)  
11:30am Mass (*English*)

**CHRISTMAS EVE – Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>**  
5:00pm Mass  
10:00pm Midnight Mass

**CHRISTMAS DAY – – December 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD**  
10:00am Mass (*Italian*)  
11:30am Mass (*English*)

Saturday – December 30<sup>th</sup>  
Confessions: 4:00 – 4:30pm  
Mass: 5:00pm

**NEW YEAR'S EVE – Sunday – December 31<sup>st</sup>**  
**FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF**  
**JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH**  
10:00am (*Italian*)  
11:30am (*English*)

**NEW YEAR'S DAY – Monday – January 1<sup>st</sup> 2024**  
**THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY,**  
**THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD**  
10:00am (*Italian*)  
11:30am (*English*)

*The Office will be closed from Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023 to Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. The office will reopen Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2024.*

*L' ufficio rimarrà chiuso dal Venerdì 22 Dicembre 2023 al Lunedì 1 Gennaio 2024. L' ufficio aprirà Martedì 2 Gennaio 2024.*

## NEXT COFFEE SUNDAY January 6 – 7 Gennaio 2024

All parishioners and visitors are invited **Saturday January 6<sup>th</sup> and Sunday January 7<sup>th</sup>** for Coffee and Refreshments in the Parish Hall.

This Coffee Weekend is being sponsored by the **Damiani & Scialdone families** in loving memory of **Clementina & Francesco Scialdone**.

## EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

To all those who helped us to prepare for this Christmas and New Year. A Special thanks to staff, Ushers, Organists, Choirs, Cantors... all those who helped to decorate the Church, all the liturgical ministers, servers and all of you who came to join in the liturgical celebrations.

May GOD BLESS YOU and your families this Christmas and holiday season and throughout the coming year of 2024.

## GRUPPO DI PREGHIERA-ORA DI GUARDIA

Il Gruppo di Preghiera *ORA DI GUARDIA* continua a riunirsi ogni primo Venerdì del mese. Venerdì 5 Gennaio 2024 il Gruppo si riunirà per recitare il Santo Rosario – iniziando l'anno nuovo e continuando la devozione alla Santa Madre.

## MONTHLY PARISH PASTA DINNER FIRST THURSDAY of the MONTH

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February**  
**St. Ann Parish Hall**  
doors open 4:30 pm

**Pasta & Meatballs - Salad & Dessert & Coffee**  
Take-out available – *we supply containers*  
**Tickets at the door: Adults \$13 .00**  
**Children (till 10 yrs.) \$6.00**  
*Welcome one and all! Bring your family & friends.*

## PROJECT SHARE

Please keep donating items such as canned goods, peanut butter, crackers, juice boxes, etc., and place them in our food bin at the entrance of the church. The need for donations is even greater now as the cold weather approaches. Monetary donations can also be made directly to Project Share.