



Dec.21 Saturday - Saint Peter Canisius

4:00 Sam Covelli – by Pat & Renata Covelli
 Angelina & Pompilio DiEmanuele – by
 M & S Santesso & family

Dec.22 Sunday – FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

9:00 Angela Fiocca-Kirk – by family
 Donato Pizzulo – by daughters
 Domenico Cameli – by moglie Angelina
 Biagio & Esterina Stante – by family
 Maria Girolamo – by son Rocco & family

11:00 Vince & Maria Morocco – by R.H.
 Rosalie Morocco-Clark – by R.H.
 Alfredo/Pilar Aquino-Ralph,Alita,Eric,Sarah Elefante
 Italia Pelusi – by E. Leo

Dec.23 Monday - N O M A S S

Dec. 24 TUESDAY - CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00_{pm} For All Parishioners and Benefactors
 10:00_{pm} For All Parishioners and Benefactors

Dec. 25 CHRISTMAS – THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

9:00 For All Parishioners and Benefactors
 11:00 For All Parishioners and Benefactors

Dec.26 Thursday - Saint Stephen

8:00 Theresa Lococo – by friends & family

Dec.27 Friday - Saint John the Evangelist

9:00 Luigi & Anthony Marano – by Angelina DiRienzo
 Antonio Roberto – by Roberto family
 Anna Van – by Duy Nguyen
 Maria Saporito – by family & friends

Dec. 28 SATURDAY - Feast of the Holy Innocents

4:00 For the Needs of All Parishioners
 For All the Deceased of the Parish

Dec. 29 SUNDAY - THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY and JOSEPH

9:00 Ida Campana – by Lucia DelBuono
 Lili Martuccio-Custode – by dad Joe & family
 Gildo Luvison – by Carmela LaRosa
 11:00 Greco & LeRose families – by Anne & family
 Maria Bonadio – by parents Joe & Isabella
 Carmine,Amelia,Mario Maida – by Maida fam

Dec. 30 MONDAY - N O M A S S

Dec. 31 TUESDAY - NEW YEAR's EVE

4:00 For All Parishioners and Benefactors

Jan 1 NEW YEAR's DAY – The Solemnity of THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

9:00 For All Parishioners and Benefactors
 For All Parishioners and Benefactors

11:00 For All Parishioners and Benefactors
 For All Parishioners and Benefactors

Jan 2 Thursday - Saint Basil the Great

8:00 Rebeca Garcia Pindado – by family

Jan 3 Friday - Most Holy Name of Jesus

9:00 Stella Casucci – by friends & family
 Nancy Golfi – by friends & family
 Gildo Luvison – by friends & family

Jan 4 Saturday - Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

4:00 Phil Mazzone – by wife Norma & family

Jan 5 SUNDAY – THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

9:00 Iole Biamonte - by parents Joe & Maria Orsini
 Domenico Cameli – by moglie Angelina
 Luigino Maruca – by Maruca family
 Costanza Martuccio – by husband Joe & family
 11:00 Pompilio/Angelina DiEmanuele– by son Ezio
 Ruth Rondinella-by daughters Andrea/MaryLou
 Rachel Patterson-by Mary Lou Boychuk
 Maria Ciarlo – by Angela & Tony Romano
 Lena Mazzotti–by Audrey & Mary Giura & fam

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.

JOURNEYING TO CHRISTMAS PRAYER

"Lord Jesus Christ, true light of the world, you guide all mankind to salvation. Give us the courage, strength and grace to build a world of justice and peace."

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Jesus Christ is the unique and ever greatest gift of Mother Mary to the world. Jesus is born to unite us as children of God.

MESSAGGIO DEL VANGELO

Gesù Cristo è l'unico e il più grande dono di Maria Santissima al mondo. Gesù è nato per unirci come figli di Dio.

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP – CHRISTMAS 2024

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Christmas Eve 2024 marks the beginning of a Holy Year that will last until January 6, 2026. It starts with the opening of the Holy Year Door at St. Peter's Basilica. This happens once every twenty-five years. Pope Francis has asked each diocese throughout the world to officially begin the Jubilee Year on December 29th 2024. We will mark that day with a Mass at our Cathedral at two o'clock in the afternoon.

The theme that Pope Francis has chosen for the Jubilee is, "Pilgrims of Hope: In the document initiating this year (*Spes Non Confundit* – Hope Does Not Disappoint), the Holy Father states, "Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt ... For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God's work helps us find reasons for that hope." (SC 1)

Another significant reason to hope in the feast of Christmas. This is the hope that is found in the birth of a child which is always a joyous event. What makes this birth so unique is that the child is Jesus, the Son of God.

New Life is always a sign of hope; however, this becomes even more significant when it is connected to our salvation. In the beautiful Advent Hymn, "Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus" we hear these words: "Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King, born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring."

God became a little child in order to save us so that we could be with Him forever. This means that on our pilgrimage of life, we have a future. It is rooted in a belief that good things will come to us because Jesus was born in a simple stable in Bethlehem.

Please be assured of my sincere prayer that this Christmas will be a source of hope for you. May any disappointments that come from anxiety and doubt be overshadowed by the bright hope found in the birth of the Christ child.

May the coming Holy Year also bring us closer to Jesus as we take to heart the words of Pope Francis: "may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the 'door' of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as 'our hope'." (SC 1)

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

WEEKLY QUOTE

"Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark"

R. Tagore

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.

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 regnare. Egli 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

**THINKING OF STUDENTS IN NEED
AT CHRISTMAS – NFCE**

The Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education is a registered charitable foundation that assists students in need who attend Niagara Catholic District School Board schools. Your donation to purchase food cards will help Christmas for students in need and their families. Receipts are issued for tax purposes. Mailing address 427 Rice Road, Welland, ON L3C 7C1. Phone 905-735-0247 ext. 210.

Christmas Blessings

During this Christmas season we recall all those people who are an important part of our lives and our ministry. You are for us a source of faith and hope in a world that desperately needs witness.

As an expression of our ministry and gratitude, you and your loved ones will be prayerfully remembered at all the Masses celebrated at St. Ann Church on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Christmas time we share greetings with one another and exchange gifts, and we express our solidarity with those in need as we share generously with them. Yet, these feasts will remain beautiful only if they are a living witness of the love which God showed towards us through his only Son, born of Mary.

We hope that the feasts of Christmas will remain dear to our families. May they remain Catholic feasts during which everyone encounters a heart which loves, a heart which focuses on others; where children are safeguarded and rejoice in holy joy; where the elderly and the infirm find great solace in their families; where love destroys any form of resentment.

May Christmas continue to remind us of the choice God made to remain in our midst and to redeem us: to be our **Emmanuel - God is with us**. This truth should encourage us to act with forgiveness and justice.

May Christmas also remind us of the choice for poverty God made in order to save us: *“Jesus was rich, but he became poor for your sake to make you rich out of his poverty.”* (2 Cor 8:9) This should lead us to do our best in our community as we reach out to those in need.

During Christmastime, let us all together bless God for the great love he has shown to us as persons who are vulnerable. We bless and praise him because he *“has come to seek out and save”* all his children. (Lk 19:10)

Fr. Kessete Hammad

2025 JUBILEE OF HOPE

...will officially open on December 24th 2024, with Pope Francis opening the Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. In his Bull of Indiction *“Spes Non Confundit”*, Pope Francis decreed that, *“...on Sunday, December 29, 2024, in every cathedral and co-cathedral, diocesan bishops are to celebrate Holy Mass as the solemn opening of the Jubilee Year...”*. In our diocese, Bishop Gerard Bergie will celebrate Mass at 2:00pm at the Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria (3 Lyman Street, St. Catharines) Sunday, December 29th 2024. The Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, as the solemn opening of the Jubilee Year. All parishioners are encouraged and welcome to attend.

Buon Natale a tutti

Durante questo tempo di Natale ci ricordiamo di tutti quelli che sono importante nella nostra vita e nel nostro ministero. Voi siete una testimonianza di fede e speranza in un mondo che ne ha bisogno. Come espressione del nostro servizio e gratitudine, voi e i vostri cari sareste nelle nostre preghiere durante tutte le messe celebrate a Sant’ Anna nella vigilia e nel giorno di Natale.

Natale ci proietta nel riconoscimento della discesa del Signore, della sua rinnovata Presenza nel mondo. Il Dio che ha creato tutte le cose si manifesta nell’umile grotta di Betlemme.

Maria Santissima, la Vergine del silenzio e dell’ascolto, é al cuore dell’ odierna pagina evangelica: attraverso di Lei il Signore si manifesta al mondo. Ella rappresenta, per tutti i cristiani, il modello da seguire. Maria è la persona alla quale fu rivolto l’annuncio dell’ angelo: *“Rallegrati, o piena di grazia, il Signore è con te”* (Lc. 1:28) per concludere l’incarnazione del Verbo eterno, la pace fra Dio e l’umanità e la nostra redenzione. Grazie al saluto angelico, Dio si fece uomo, una vergine divenne Madre di Dio, il peccato fu perdonato.

Perciò noi ripetiamo questo medesimo saluto per ringraziare Dio dei suoi benefici. Lodiamo Dio Padre perché amò talmente il mondo da dargli il suo Figlio per salvarlo. Benediciamo Dio Figlio perché discese dal cielo, si fece uomo e ci redense. Glorifichiamo Dio Spirito Santo perché formò nel seno della Vergine quel corpo purissimo che fu la vittima per i nostri peccati.

Con questi sentimenti rechiamoci senza timore a Betlemme e nella riconoscenza, nello stupore e nell’ amore, contempliamo, con Maria Santissima e con San Giuseppe, ancora e sempre, la nascita del Signore.

Padre Kessete Hammad

NATIVITY SCENE – ST. CATHARINES

All parishioners are invite to visit the beautifully restored Nativity Scene in front of St. Catharines’ CityHall (50 Church Street, St. Catharines). It is a stunning display to see day and night! This meaningful religious display was made possible through the dedication and generosity of the Catholic Women’s League, the Knights of Columbus, Mr. Tom Rankin and Mr. John MacLellan of Rankin Construction, McNamara and Reynolds Design Centre, Mr. Dennis Sawatzky of Garden City Home Hardware Store and many volunteers of our community. It will be up until January 7th 2025. It is sure to inspire you.

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.

NEXT COFFEE WEEKEND

January 11th & 12th 2025

All parishioners and visitors are invited the weekend of - **Saturday & Sunday – January 11th & 12th** for Coffee and Refreshments in the Parish Hall. This Coffee Weekend is being sponsored by **Rosie Damiani & Nina Girolamo** in memory of their parents **Francesco & Clementina Scialdone**.

IL PRIMO PRESEPE

Fu San Francesco d'Assisi, che assembrò il primo presepe in una grotto 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.

WORLD DAY OF PEACE – January 1, 2025

The World Day of Peace was established by Pope Paul VI in 1968 who asked that every year, this commemoration be repeated as a hope and as a promise, at the beginning of the calendar which measures and outlines the path of human life in time, that Peace with its just and beneficent equilibrium may dominate the development of events to come." Each year has a specific theme, chosen by the Holy Father.

The **WINNER** of the **CHRISTMAS BASKET** drawn by Fr. Kessete is: **Mr. FERRUCCIO FORTE**

Congratulations!

Thank you to all of you who showed your support by buying tickets.

THE SAINTCD Jubilee 2025 Primer Workshop

Terri Pauco will be facilitating a workshop for pastors, staff, volunteer parish leaders and others who are interested in learning more about the Jubilee Years and the diocese's plans to promote it. For the Virtual Jubilee 2025 Workshop over ZOOM – Tuesday, December 17th 2024 7:00-8:30pm OR Thursday, December 19th 2024 7:30 – 9:00pm. On-line Registration through this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/jYt6QG6QnP>

3-MONTH REPORT MONTHLY COLLECTION/EXPENSES

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| September Collections | \$ 8,686.06 |
| September Expenses | 15,030.58 |
| October Collections | \$ 9,956.64 |
| October Expenses | 17,234.25 |
| November Collections | \$10,932.95 |
| November Expenses | 13,165.84 |

LEGACY DONATIONS

When you or your family are making arrangements for Wills and/or Legacies, we would humbly and kindly ask that you consider including St. Ann Church as one of the beneficiaries. Also, when making funeral arrangements through the various funeral homes in the Niagara Region, as parishioners, please consider directing donations to St. Ann Church. Your generosity is much needed and greatly appreciated.

The Diocese of St. Catharines is seeking a full-time Financial Assistant. A detailed job description can be found at: <http://saintcd.com/employment>. Interested candidates are invited to submit a resume by January 15th 2025 to John O'Brien, CFO (jobrien~saintcd.com)

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

On Sunday 22nd December at the 11:00am Mass, the **CHILDREN'S LITURGY GROUP** will unite for the last time for 2024 in the Presentation of the Nativity Play.

The group will not convene during the Christmas Holidays but will resume on Sunday 12th January 2025.

Merry Christmas to All!

The Office will be closed from Saturday, December 21st 2024 to Wednesday, January 2nd 2025. The office will reopen Thursday, January 3rd 2025 (In case of emergency call: 905-358-9333.)

L' ufficio rimarrà chiuso dal Sabato 22 Dicembre 2024 al Mercoledì 3 Gennaio 2025. L' ufficio riaprirà Giovedì 3 Gennaio. In caso d'urgenza, telefonate al (905) 358-9333.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK & THE HOMEBOUND

Ronald Bennett, Angelina Cameli, Rita Cameli, Domenic Calabrese, Angelina DiRienzo, Maria DiRienzo, Beatriz Disch, George Elliss Carmen & Maria Fabiani, Sam Fiore, Jenny Green, Virginia McConnell Agueda Maria Melo, Patricia Millington, Vincenzina Pascuzzi, Don Taddeo, Marianna Weber