

Margaree Family of Catholic Churches

St. Joseph's

St. Michael's/St-Michel

St. Patrick's

Pastor: Fr. Silvichan Dominic, CFIC

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Mission Statement: Open to God. Open to Others. Open to Transformation.

Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas, Dec. 24 & 25, 2023

Weekday Masses: NO WEEKDAY MASSES THIS WEEK

Feast Days/Memorials: Dec. 26 – St. Stephen, first martyr; Dec. 27 – St. John, Apostle, Evangelist; Dec. 28 – The Holy Innocents

From the Pastor's desk: My dear people in Christ,

With deep joy and gratitude, I extend to you my prayerful wishes for a holy and blessed Christmas and happy new year. During this Advent Season, it has been my prayer that each of you would find opportunities to reflect on your own faith and relationship with the Lord Jesus and His Church.

Christmas is a joyful season. What a beautiful gift we have in Jesus. But we should not forget about the sacrifices behind this joy and this beautiful gift, we celebrate. Our Lord Jesus emptied himself to share our humanity so that we may share his divinity. Christmas also speaks about the sacrifices of Mother Mary and Joseph. There is sacrifice in the journey and the offerings of the Maggi, and in the life of shepherds as well.

The faith we are enjoying now is someone else's hard work and sacrifice. We can't in any way take our faith and celebrations for granted. It's the time to take our faith seriously and do some sacrifices. Let your sacrifice be your gift for the infant Jesus and your family. Sacrifice your time, wealth and health for our faith, family and friends. This is the only way we are able to have that "God-With- Us (Emmanuel) Experience in our midst.

Christmas has a way of bringing to Church individuals and families who, for various reasons, have not been to Holy Mass or the sacraments for months or even years. What a wonderful and Grace filled opportunity to put aside past differences and old habits and begin anew that prayerful relationship with the Lord and His Church family. I extend all of you an open, and cordial welcome. Together may we grow in strength and grace to celebrate together God's presence in our lives and His love for all His creation.

I pray that you all will be ready to welcome the Messiah who will fill your hearts with His presence of joy and love. I ask you all to pray for our parishes that we may find God's way which brings us together in one: to worship Him faithfully and to reach out to serve His people sincerely. All He needs from us is to have our humble response to Him wholeheartedly. My sincere thanks to all our Staffs, Parish Pastoral Council, Finance committee, Liturgy committee, Parish Hall Committees, CWL, Knight of Columbus, Choirs, Environment Committees, pastoral team, Bereavement Committees, Cemetery Committees, Building and Maintenance Committees, Volunteers, all our ministers, the youth, parents and all the faithful who help me endlessly in my ministry this year. May God bless you all abundantly!

May the Prince of Peace be with you and yours as you celebrate His Birthday this Christmas!

May the Prince of Hope be with you and yours as you enter a New Year in prosperity and hope!

May the Mother of God, Mary the Virgin, inspire you all to say "YES" to Christ who enters into your life and transforms each of you with His presence!

Kindly pray for me, I need all the prayers I can get from my most beloved people on my holidays and my family. See you on February 22

The Christmas season seems to carry a lot of emotion and expectation about homecoming. We hear songs like “I’ll Be Home for Christmas,” and “There’s No Place Like Home for the Holidays.” I received a Christmas card that read: “Home is not necessarily where you’re from...it’s where people understand you.” And Mark Twain reminds us that “Home is where, when you go there, they have to take you in.” I am so blessed to be among such wonderful people.

Yours in Christ-the Emmanuel,

Fr. Silvichan Dominic, CFIC

Questions and Answers:

Q no. 1: Why do we give Christmas gifts covered in ornamental papers? It is because God gave Himself to us a divine gift covering His Divinity as a human baby.

Q no. 2: What does the Christmas star mean? The star on top of the tree symbolizes the star of Bethlehem, which led the three men to the stable where Jesus was found.

Q no. 3: Why do we decorate the Christmas tree? It is because the Christmas tree represents the “tree of life” in the Paradise which was restored later by the tree of Calvary in the form of a cross.

Q no. 4: Why do we make cakes on Christmas day and share it with others? The cake represents the “Promised Land flowing with milk and honey” given by God to His Chosen People and his own body and blood given as the Holy Eucharist, the heavenly food to his followers by Jesus Christ.

Q no. 5: Why do we celebrate Christmas with Christmas star and other light decorations? It is because Jesus introduced himself as the light of the world and advised his followers to become the light of the world.

Q no. 6: What do candy canes represent? The shape of the candy cane represents a shepherd’s staff or shepherd’s stick, which he used to guide the sheep. Historically, the red color on the candy is said to be Jesus’ blood and the white resembles life after salvation for Christians.

Q no. 7: Why do we use Christmas wreath? According to many theories, the wreath represents the crown of thorns that was put on the head of Jesus when he was crucified. In modern times, it is used as a symbol of God’s everlasting love and eternal happiness.

Q no. 8: Why do we use bells in Christmas decorations? Bells were part of the Jewish high priest’s garb. Christmas bells not only symbolize the joy of Christmas; they also remind us that Christ is the High Priest.

Q no. 9: Why do we use Christmas cookies, breads and pastries? Christmas pastries are made with flour and remind us of the many uses of bread in Scripture. The Jewish people offered cakes made with oil to the Lord. The Israelites took their unleavened loaves with them when they fled Egypt. They recalled this event yearly in the feast of Unleavened Bread. The manna in the desert tasted like wafers made with honey. Elijah performed a miracle in which a widow’s flour did not run out during a time of famine. When David brought the Ark of God back to Jerusalem, he gave each person in Israel a loaf of bread, a cut of meat, and a raisin cake. Jesus multiplied loaves twice in Scripture and came as the Bread of Life. He comes to us in every Mass under the form of Eucharistic bread and wine. This rich history is present to us with every taste of Christmas pastries.

Q no. 10: Why do we sing Christmas carols? Christmas carols remind us of the angels who announced the birth of Christ by singing, “*Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth!*” Song has been a part of worship since the beginning. Miriam composed and sang a hymn of Thanksgiving when God delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians. David sang and danced before the Ark of the Lord when he was accompanying back to Jerusalem after having rescued it from the Philistines. He composed the Psalms, all of which are to be sung. Many of the Psalms mention times when the Jewish people sang, some of which are: bringing in the harvest, going up to the temple, success over one’s enemies. Jesus mentioned funeral songs in one of His exhortations. People use song as an expression of highest emotion. How fitting that we sing about the birth of Christ!

Q no. 11: Why do we use Advent candles in the Church? Advent candles were originally part of the holiday wreath tradition, and the two combined as part of a long-standing Catholic tradition. That being said, there is historic evidence that Germanic people used wreaths and candles in the time before Christianity to provide hope during the dark days of winter. In fact, the Catholic Church didn’t actually adopt the tradition until some time in the Middle Ages! The four candles symbolize the number of weeks for Advent. Traditionally, three of these candles are purple, standing for prayer, penance, and preparation. The other candle, which is lit on the third

Sunday of Advent, is rose-colored. It signals a time of rejoicing. New religious practices sometimes change the color of the candles to uniformly white. Regardless, the light of the Advent candles symbolizes Jesus Christ as “the light of the world.”

Q no. 12: Why did God become man instead of pardoning man by a single declaration of absolution for his inherited and acquired sins? It is to show God’s everlasting love for man in spite of man’s sinful nature. It is also to demonstrate God’s agape love for man by Jesus the savior’s or Man-God’s death on the cross, challenging us to love Him in return and to express it by loving our neighbors. It is by his death on the cross that Jesus actually became the Holy Eucharist or Holy Mass for us. That is why in oriental rites the Holy Mass begins singing the angels’ announcement at Christ’s birth to the shepherds, “*Glory to God in the Highest*” and in the Latin rite, singing or reciting the “Gloria” a bit later.

Fr. Silvichan Dominic

MINISTRY

CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR’S SCHEDULE 2023/24

Christmas (Vigil) – Dec. 24 – St. Joseph’s – 4 p.m.; St. Patrick’s – 6 p.m.; St. Michael’s – 9 p.m.

Christmas Day – St. Michael’s - 10 a.m.

Dec. 30/31 – regular schedule – Sat. – St. Joseph’s – 4 p.m.; Sun. – St. Patrick’s – 9:30 a.m.; St. Michael’s – 11 a.m.

Jan. 1 – Feast of Mary, Mother of God – St. Michael’s – 10 a.m.

Please note: - Beginning January 14, 2024 Sunday Mass will be held at St. Patrick’s Parish Hall at 9:30 a.m. until further notice.

World Day of Peace – 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.” – ORDO Pope Francis’ theme for this year is “Artificial Intelligence and Peace”. Google “Pope Francis’ message for World Day of Peace 2024” to get his full message.

CWL/KofC News

CWL Dues – Sheila is now collecting dues (\$34) for 2024.

PRAYERS

Pope Francis Prayer Intention for December – For persons with disabilities – We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation.

Pope Francis Prayer Intention for January – For the gift of diversity in the Church – We pray that the Holy Spirit may help us recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community and to discover the richness of different traditions and rituals in the Catholic Church.

Prayer Corner – Please remember in your prayers those who are sick: Ann Gillis, Ann Mailette, Anna Matheson, Karen Baer, Dana Montgomery, Johnny Coady, Jesse Kilfoil, Claire (Simon) LeBlanc, Vicki MacEachern, David Timmons, Rosita Gillis, Lucy MacIntyre and Denise LeBlanc. If you are sick and would like your name in the Prayer Corner, please contact the Parish Office.

Our condolences are extended to the families of Rita (Marriott) Aucoin and Laird Burton.

Prayer for World Peace – Father, even when things seem hopeless, we know that through You we are never without hope. We beg your intervention for a world on the constant brink of war. Beat our swords into plowshares and cause the lion to lie down with the lamb. Intervene in this world that we might avoid the horrors of war and let peace rule in all lands. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Prayer to St. Joseph - Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel - St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God cast into Hell, Satan, and all the other evil spirits who roam throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen

Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila – Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. All things pass away. God never changes. Patience obtains all things. He/She who has God lacks nothing. God alone suffices.

Prayer of St. Patrick - May the Strength of God pilot us. May the Power of God preserve us. May the Wisdom of God instruct us. May the Hand of God protect us. May the Way of God direct us. May the Shield of God defend us. May the Host of God guard us against the snares of the evil ones; against temptations of the world. May Christ be with us! May Christ be before us! May Christ be in us; Christ be over all! May Thy Salvation, Lord, always be ours, this day, O Lord, and evermore. Amen.

Members of the Margaree Family of Catholic Churches Ministries

Parish Pastoral Council – The members of our Council are Chair – Lawrence MacLellan; vice-Chair – John Gillis; secretary – Mary MacNeil; other members: Mary Louise Burns, Lorna Chiasson, Mose Fortune, Alfred Gallant, Donald Angus Gillis and Hilda Murphy-Phillips.

Finance Committee – The members of our Finance Committee are: Chair – Cathy Miller; other members are: Hubert Chiasson, Paula Cormier, Aurea Gillis, Michael Gillis, Marie MacNeil, Cindy McBride, Stella McDaniel and Cecile Miller.

Liturgy Committee - The members of our Liturgy Committee are: Chair - Lawrence Cameron, Secretary – Betty MacFarlane, vice-Chair – Wilfridine Crowdis; other members: Trina Colette, Sandra Gillis, Donna MacFarlane, Mary Hilda MacIsaac, Dorothy MacKenzie, Irene MacLellan, Steve MacLennan, Denise Olson and Barbara Wyrwas.

Building & Maintenance Committee – St. Joseph’s – Contact person Joey MacKinnon and other members: Alex MacNeil and Jerald Miller; St. Michael’s – Contact person: Cyril LeBlanc and other members: Dennis Doucet and Emile LeBlanc, Belle Cote; St. Patrick’s – Contact person Jack Miller and other members: Tom Godreau and John McBride. If you see anything which needs to be done, let the contact person know.

Bereavement Committee – St. Joseph’s – Helen Gillis, Rosita Gillis, Mary MacNeil and Marie MacNeil; St. Michael’s – Helena Chiasson, Elaine LeBlanc, Odette LeBlanc and Dorothy MacKenzie; St. Patrick’s – Sheila Fortune, Kay Hannigan, Cindy & John McBride and Cecile Miller.

Quote: “May Christian believers, followers of various religions and men and women of good will work together in harmony to embrace the opportunities and confront the challenges posed by the digital revolution and thus hand on to future generations a world of greater solidarity, justice and peace.” – Pope Francis in his message for World Day of Peace, Jan. 1, 2024

Have a Blessed Christmas, everyone!