

OUR LADY OF PEACE PARISH

A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

3914 Bloor St. W., Etobicoke, Ontario M9B 1L7 Telephone: 416-239-1259

Email: olpeace@archtoronto.org Website: www.olpeace.archtoronto.org

Our Pastor: Fr. Biju Kannampuzha Tel: 416-239-1259 Ext 3

Office Administrators: Teresa McNamara & Rosanne Colavecchia Tel: 416-239-1259 Ext 0



*Father, You revealed Your Son to the nations
by the guidance of a star. Lead us to
Your Glory in Heaven by the Light of Faith.*

Epiphany of the Lord

It's the three wise men, or "magi," who take the center stage in today's celebration of the Epiphany. Without a doubt, they, and their journey to find a newborn king are essential elements in Matthew's account of Jesus' birth. However, despite their importance, Scripture doesn't give us much information about them. In fact, it doesn't even tell us that there were three of them. It wasn't until later that they were numbered and identified by the traditional names of Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. Scripture also doesn't tell us exactly where they came from. Scholars tell us that Persia was a likely country of origin. Scripture, however, is content simply to tell us that they came from the East.

This vague geography is significant, however, as it identifies the wise men as Gentiles, or non-Jewish people. They foreshadow the truth that God in Jesus would gather people from every corner of the world into one, universal, catholic community that we know as "Church." No one would be excluded from this assembly. Instead, all men and women, regardless of race, color, ancestry, ethnicity, or country of origin, would be invited to take their place within the new people of God.

Indeed, we discover this theme throughout our entire liturgy today. The Opening Prayer reminds us that, through the guidance of a star, Jesus was revealed to people of every nation. The reading from Isaiah and the psalm speak of people from all nations coming to Jerusalem to praise the Lord. And St. Paul explains to the Ephesians that the good news of the gospel and membership in the church are meant for everyone- both Gentiles and Jews. It could be that Paul had to stress this point because some people resisted it or found it difficult to accept.

Unfortunately, this continues to be a problem today, and that's what makes Paul's words so relevant to our contemporary situation. They speak directly to the continuing scourge of racism and discrimination in the world.

Perhaps in response to this experience, today, our Church advocates the rights of immigrants to our country. And our official Catholic Catechism states clearly that discrimination and racism are wrong. It says: "Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design." (CCC 1935)

As Christians what can we do to fight racism and discrimination? First, we can pray for racial reconciliation. Second, we need to examine our consciences and attitudes. For instance, do we see ourselves as superior to those of other backgrounds? Do we hate or have animosity towards those of different races? Do negative racial stereotypes contaminate our thoughts, words, and deeds? Do we belong to groups or institutions that subtly reinforce a sense of racial privilege, or at least diminish the contributions of other peoples and cultures? Third, we can vote and advocate for justice and equal rights, and support those groups that promote them. And fourth, we can strive to be welcoming and hospitable to those in our parish and communities who are culturally different from us.

Racism and discrimination divide and wound the one body of Christ, the Church, a body which Christ calls to be lovingly, harmoniously unified in its rich diversity. On this feast of the Epiphany, we're reminded that Jesus loves everyone, and that everyone should be loved, by those who follow Jesus.



Mass Intentions

Saturday Jan 6th 5 pm

†**Maria Antonia Recchia & Domenico Bruni**
 †**Caterina Gemmiti** Requested by Maria Lombardi

Sunday Jan 7th 9 am

†**Ester Lopez** Requested by Lopez Family
 †**Julian Molina**
For the Special Intentions of Anne Marie Payne

†**Raffaele D’Alessandro**
 Requested by Gina D’Alessandro **11 am**
 †**Maria Angelucci** Requested by Frank Angelucci

Monday No Mass

Tuesday Jan 9th 9 am

†**Cecilia Plut** Requested by Plut Family
For the Deceased members of Rennie Family
 Requested by Shanta Rennie

Wednesday Jan 10th 9 am

†**Owen Kennedy** Requested by Paul White
For the Deceased members of Pradan Family
 Requested by Marvi Pradan

Thursday Jan 11th 9 am

†**Melanio Lopez** Requested by Melanie De Castro
For the Deceased members of Pileggi Family
 Requested by Carlo and Polona Pileggi

Friday Jan 12 9 am

†**Rob Cannataro** Requested by Colavecchia Family
 †**Jorge Cortes** Requested by Melanie De Castro
For the Deceased members of Bastedo Family

Sanctuary Candle: St. Joseph
In honor of the deceased members of
Lopez Family

2024 OFFERTORY ENVELOPES



Offerory Envelopes for the year 2024 are conveniently placed on the table at the rear of the church. Upon collecting your 2024 envelopes, please complete the card sticking out from the box, furnishing your full name, address, telephone number, and email address and leave it in the container provided. Take a moment to inscribe your name and address on the envelopes for the initial weeks of 2024, offering an additional way to verify your contact details. We encourage you to include the donation amount on your envelope, providing valuable assistance to the counters. Please discard any remaining envelopes from 2023.

If you currently do not use donation envelopes, we urge you to consider adopting them or explore the option of enrolling in a monthly-preauthorized giving plan. Both approaches contribute to the financial stability of your parish while ensuring you receive a beneficial tax receipt annually. Your ongoing support is deeply appreciated. **Thank you!**

Pastoral Letter from
Most Rev. Francis Leo
“Seeking The Kingdom Of God
Above and Beyond All Other Things”

Archbishop Francis Leo has released a Pastoral Letter to the Church of God in the Archdiocese of Toronto, entitled, *“Seeking The Kingdom of God Above and Beyond All Other Things”*. This significant reflection from our spiritual shepherd is intended to offer a theological, spiritual, and pastoral meditation as we embark upon a New Year and our collective efforts to build and strengthen the Kingdom of God throughout our archdiocese.

The Pastoral Letter can be accessed by visiting the archdiocesan website at: www.archtoronto.org.



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