



Pastor's Christmas Message

Turn our hearts back to one another

In the last lines of the Old Testament, God promises that He would send a prophet to “turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers” (Malachi 3:24) to restore all things (Mt 17:11) and help prepare the way of the Lord (cf Lk 1:17). God fulfilled this promise in St. John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Christ. In our families, one way we can prepare to receive Christ over Christmas is by turning our hearts back to one another.

Why would God ever have to send a special prophet to turn the hearts of fathers and mothers to their children, and children to their parents? Unfortunately, in our times, many hearts are turned toward *things* such as work, career, possessions, pleasure, sports, entertainment, and so on. Our relationships suffer. The haven of the home becomes a hostel of strangers.

Jesus Comes into the World

When Jesus Christ first came into the world, two hearts united in love turned toward him, welcomed him, and cherished him. The tiny body of Jesus may have laid in the cold manger, but He was safe and secure in the hearts of Joseph and Mary. Christ came as a child into the world to make all things new (Rev 21:5). He came into a human *family* to manifest his desire to restore the human family wounded by sin. This Christmas, may Christ heal and restore *our* families.

When parents and children exchange gifts at Christmas, they express their desire *to turn their hearts away* from the sins of the world, and *back* to one another. Parents and children, when you wrapped your gifts, did you keep your heart, giving only *things*? Or does the heart not speak through the gift? “I turn my heart back to you. I give you my heart and my love.”

Parents, remember the great love God has shown you in blessing you with the gift of children. “Whoever welcomes one such child, welcomes me,” says the Lord (Mt 18:5). One way you welcome Christ at Christmas is by *turning your hearts back to one another and to your children*. And children, what greater gift has God given you than choosing to create you out of nothing through the love of your parents? *Turn your hearts back to them*, “honour your father and mother . . . that you may have long life and prosperity” (Deuteronomy 5:16).

Lord Jesus Christ, help us this Christmas season to turn again to one another and find our way back to you. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, please pray for us that our families may be holy and happy.



2006 Upcoming Events at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal!



To all parishioners, residents of Russell and environs,
and all occasional visitors to our parish:
we invite YOU to participate in some of the Holy Spirit's works
in our parish for the New Year:

Attention Married Couples

We are holding a Marriage Enrichment Dinner on February 11th, for a spiritual Valentine's Day. Invite your spouse out for this special date!

Lenten Mission

From March 12th to 14th, we will be welcoming Fr. Bob Johnson, a priest from Madonna House, to guide us on the path of holiness in preparation for Easter.

Pilgrimage to Quebec May 22nd to 24th

Come for a holiday and come to pray at the holy sites of Cap de la Madeleine, Ste Anne de Beaupre, and the tombs of the Canadian saints of Quebec City, where there will be plenty of time for sightseeing in the historic city.

Parish Golf Tournament

Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 10th for our third annual tournament, being held this year at Metcalfe Golf and Country Club, followed by a dinner and party at St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

Missionary Trip to El Salvador July 10th to 19th

A small group from our parish will be setting out for the adventure of a lifetime, going to seek and serve Christ in our poor brothers and sisters in El Salvador. We go in the name of the whole parish, and look forward to your spiritual and financial support.