

Merry Christmas 祝聖誕快樂



“God Is Always With Us” 主與我們同在

Christmas Season

Christmas During the Night

What we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God.

For our salvation God gave us everything He had—He gave us His only Son, Jesus. How do we say 'thank you' for a gift like that? Recognizing the magnitude of God's gift this Christmas should change the orientation of our lives. Christmas calls us to make stewardship a way of life.

Christmas Day

And the Word became flesh and lived among us (John 1.14)

On this day we commemorate the stewardship of God the Father in the incarnation of the Son for the salvation of the world. It is through our practice of stewardship that the Word made flesh, Jesus, continues to live among us.

Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and

Joseph

"God has brought laughter for me." (Genesis 21.6)

Christian discipleship is an adventure. We can never know what God has in mind with the gifts He has given us. Yet, like Abraham, we obey in faith so that we too may laugh like Sarah in the abundant and surprising blessings God bestows upon His faithful.

Mary Mother of God

The shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. (Luke 2:20)

The shepherds proclaimed the good news of the Messiah's birth. What miracles have you seen this Christmas season? How can you proclaim the good news?

Epiphany

Arise, shine out, for your light has come, the glory of the Lord is rising on you. (Isaiah 60)

2013 年慶祝基督聖誕及新年彌撒時間表 2013 Christmas and New Year Mass Schedule

12月24日 (聖誕夜) December 24 (Christmas Eve)	星期二 Tuesday	晚上 7 時 晚上 8 時 30 分 7:00 p.m. 8:30 p.m.	聖誕短劇「上禮堂」 英、國、粵語彌撒 Christmas Play (Upper Hall) English / Mandarin/ Cantonese Mass
12月25日 (聖誕日) December 25 (Christmas Day)	星期三 Wednesday	早上 9 時 30 分 早上 11 時正 9:30 a.m. 11:00 a.m.	英文禮儀 中文禮儀 English Mass Chinese Mass
12月31日 (除夕) 歲末謝主彌撒) Dec 31 (New Year's Eve Thanksgiving Mass)	星期二 Tuesday	早上 9 時 9:00 a.m.	英文彌撒 English Mass
1月1日 (元旦求恩彌撒) Jan 1 (New Year's Mass)	星期三 Wednesday	早上 9 時 30 分 早上 11 時 9:30am 11:00am	英文彌撒 中文彌撒 English Mass Chinese Mass

The glory of God has been made manifest to us in the birth of a Saviour. How can your discipleship spread the light of Christ upon the dark places of the world?

Baptism of Our Lord

"Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread . . . ?" (Isaiah 55.2)

Whether it is our money, our labour, or our time, there are many ways we can spend it. One of the reasons we live in a culture of want is that we squander our resources on things that do not satisfy. Spend your resources on building the Kingdom, your efforts for God's glory, and your time in prayer.

Theme Sharing

Fourth Sunday of Advent

With Christmas only days away, we are all set for the celebration of the coming of Our Lord. Today's scripture readings reveal the marvelous deeds God has made in this great mystery of Incarnation. The mystery is beyond our human understanding. Unsolicited by his creatures, God on his own initiative executes his plan of salvation by

sending his only Son to this world to dwell among us so that we can be one with him.

The first reading, from *Isaiah*, stresses on God's work for his people. At the time, Jerusalem where King Ahaz of Judah resided was besieged by enemy forces, and the city was about to fall. Isaiah told the king to ask the Lord his God for a sign of the safety of his own people. Expecting outside help (from Assyria), the king refused to rely on God and said to Isaiah, *"I will not ask, and will not put the Lord to the test."* Despite Ahaz's arrogance and refusal to cooperate, God did not forsake his own people. Through the prophecy of Isaiah, God unfolded his plan to save the world by a most extraordinary way: *"The Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel (meaning God is with us)."* What a marvelous sign indeed!

We should realize that God often takes the first step in crucial moments of our lives. Indeed, it is God who first loved us. He is always willing, even without our asking, to bestow his graces on us, especially when we

are in most need of them. He is our saving God, always taking the initiative to reach out and help us; and his love for us is truly immeasurable.

Today's gospel reveals how God fulfills his promise to save his own people. In a most impossible manner, a virgin was pregnant and bore a child. The story goes with Mary, a virgin, being betrothed (i.e. engaged to be married) to Joseph. By custom, they had to live apart for a year before their marriage. When Mary was found to be with child, Joseph was much disturbed. Unwilling to expose Mary to public disgrace, Joseph planned to dismiss her quietly. However, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "*Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.*" Joseph did as told, and took Mary as wife, who in due course gave birth to a child. They named him Immanuel, meaning God is with us. In the second reading, Paul reminds us that Mary's child is the "Son of God", the only begotten Son of God.

God often takes the first steps in our lives by calling and leading us to him. Let us receive this message with profound comfort and gratitude. No doubt, we may at times find God's calling to us somewhat disturbing or challenging. However, if we try to discern God's Will with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can surely remove our doubts and anxieties, and be at peace with God. Today's gospel is a good reminder for us that, with God, nothing is impossible. The Christmas message is that the baby born in Bethlehem is truly the Son of God. God's love is fully manifested in Jesus Christ who dwells among us and introduces us to the intimate loving union of the Most Holy Trinity.

Rejoice in God's Mercy

The problems of life are not always as they seem. Mary was engaged to Joseph but before they lived together she was found to be with child. What was Joseph to do? He planned to dismiss her quietly but then an Angel appeared and all his problems took on new meaning. The child is conceived by the Holy Spirit and he will be the Saviour! Joseph was afraid but had faith and did as the Angel commanded. In difficult times you do not need to walk alone. In three days we

celebrate the birth of the Christ child, Emmanuel, God is with us. The cloud of witnesses, the saints in heaven and those people of prayer here on earth have suffered trials themselves and can advocate for you and guide you. In times of trial, turn to prayer; invite Mary and Jesus into your life. Things are not always what they seem and we never have to walk alone.

Action

The angel's promise is fulfilled as we celebrate the birth of the Christ child in three days. Amidst the trials of your life, be like Joseph; in faith and humility lay your turbulence in the manger and know that God is with you.

Gospel of joy (Evangelii Gaudium)

Pope Francis advised "Gospel of joy" (Evangelii Gaudium) for 2014

«Gospel of joy»: Church to open the door, issuing prophetic voice

The second point: to carry out creative and bold updates to the Gospel to restore its original fresh elements. In his advisory, the Pope noted there is a need for changes in the "pastoral and missionary" sector as well as the "structural reform" of the church, so as to make it more focused on missionary work. The Pope also reflected on carrying out "changes to the Pope's duties", using the approach of a more collective leadership and positively decentralized organization. We must look for "new passages" and "creative approaches", and be not afraid to review the church's customs and normal practices of "not being directly related to the Gospel". The advisory stressed the need for an increase in the level of responsibility on the part of the believers, and to have expanded opportunities for a more prominent presence of women in the church organization. To Be Continued

Vatican Radio News

Pope Francis' words

There is no cross, big or small, in our life which the Lord does not share with us.

Parish Activities

Mission Mexico Day

Last Sunday, we collected totally \$2,147.50 and will forward to the Diocese for the mission in Mexico. May God bless you!

2013 OLPH Christmas Play

The annual Christmas Play will be held on Christmas Eve and this year's play is titled "*Waiting for the Christmas Guest*" and it focuses on a poor cobbler and his wife who prepare their table on Christmas Eve for a visit from the Lord Jesus. Participating in the play include the Young Adults Group, Youth Choir, Sunday School, St. Gabriel Choir, Mandarin Choir, Perpetual Help Harmony Choir and English Choir. With God's Love as the theme "*Waiting for the Christmas Guest*" let us find our Christmas guest together on Christmas Eve! All parishioners, relatives and friends are welcome to come for a great night!

Additional Evening Cantonese Thanksgiving Mass at 6:30 p.m. on New Years Eve December 31 (Tuesday)

Pastoral Care Team, in thanksgiving to God for the many graces that He has given to them in 2013, will offer an additional Chinese evening Thanksgiving Mass at 6:30 p.m. on New Year's Eve (Dec 31 Tuesday). Everyone is welcome to join them in thanking God for the last year's blessings!

Movie Night: Five People You Meet in Heaven

On his 83rd birthday, Eddie a war vet and a maintenance worker at the Ruby Pier amusement park, dies while trying to save a girl who is sitting under a falling ride. When he awakens in the afterlife, he encounters five people with ties to his corporeal existence who help him understand the meaning of his life.

Date: January 4, 2014 (Saturday)

Time: 6pm Potluck and
6:30pm start of movie

Place: Upper Hall of OLPH

Together in Action 2013

Theme: "You will be my witnesses"
Our parish's final target is \$50,000. Donation envelopes can be picked up from both the front and the side entrances. As of

December 1, our campaign has received a total of \$ 58,072.44.
May God bless you for your generous support!

Weekly Activities

Tuesday 24

Christmas Eve Mass

7:00 p.m. Hymns & Prayers/
Christmas play

8:30 p.m. English / Mandarin/
Cantonese Mass

Wednesday 25

Christmas Day Masses

9:30 a.m. English Mass

11:00 a.m. Chinese Mass

Saturday Dec 28

Legion of Mary (meeting)

(Immaculate Heart of Mary Praesidium)

Time: 9: 45 a.m.

Place: K of C Room at OLPH Church

Tai Chi Lesson

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Place: OLPH Church Lower Hall

Yoga beginner class

Time: 2:00 p.m. - 3:15p.m.

Place: OLPH Church Lower Hall

Young Adults choir practice

Time: 6:00 p.m-8:00p.m.

Place: OLPH Upper Hall

Faith Sharing Group (Arbour Lake)

Time: 7:30p.m.-10:00p.m.

Contact: Grace Chan 403-208-1806

Sunday Dec 29

R. C.I.A.

Adult Catechumenate Class

(Cantonese, Mandarin and English)

Time: 9:30 a.m. - 1:30p.m.

Place: OLPH Church Lower Hall

Imitating Christ

Chapter 25 :

Zeal In Amending Our Lives

One day when a certain man who wavered often and anxiously between hope and fear was struck with sadness, he knelt in humble prayer before the altar of a church. While meditating on these things, he said: "Oh if I but knew whether I should persevere to the end!" Instantly he heard within the divine answer: "If you knew this, what would you do? Do now what you would do then and you will

be quite secure." Immediately consoled and comforted, he resigned himself to the divine will and the anxious uncertainty ceased. His curiosity no longer sought to know what the future held for him, and he tried instead to find the perfect, the acceptable will of God in the beginning and end of every good work.

To Be Continued

Stories Faith Sharing

Lasting Rewards

Ukrainian gymnast Larisa Latynina held the record of 18 Olympic medals. She won them in the 1956, 1960, and 1964 Olympics. The 48-year-old record was surpassed when Michael Phelps swam for his 19th gold in the 4 x 200-meter freestyle relay in the 2012 London Games. "[Latynina] kind of got lost in history," the publisher of the International Gymnast magazine said. When the Soviet Union broke up, "we had forgotten about her."

Paul, the apostle, reminds us that sometimes hard work is forgotten. Athletes subject their bodies to great discipline as they train to win perishable medals for their effort (1 Cor. 9:25). But it is not just that the medals are perishable. Over time, people's memory of those achievements dim and fade. If athletes can sacrifice so much to achieve rewards on the earth, rewards that will eventually be forgotten, how much more effort should followers of Christ exert to gain an imperishable crown? (1 Tim. 4:8).

Athletes' sacrifice and determination are rewarded with medals, trophies, and money. But even greater, our Father in heaven rewards the discipline of His children (Luke 19:17).

God will never forget our service done out of love for Him who first loved us.

I thank You, Lord, for the opportunities to use the gifts You have given me for Your service today.

Help me to do so in obedience, expecting nothing more than Your "well done" as reward.

Sacrifice for the kingdom is never without reward.

[Read More Know More](#)

Christmas: A Time To Purify Our Minds And Lives

If one were to ask Christians in America what they understood the true meaning of Christmas to be, nearly every one of them would respond, "It's about the birth of Jesus Christ." The birth of God Incarnate, God come among us in the flesh, is an event of infinite proportion. All the words used throughout Christian history in describing this pivotal event fall far short of the sublime wonder of it all. Nevertheless, the above survey results are hardly a surprise in this age of militant secularization: The anti-Christian stratagem that labors to erase the true meaning of Christmas, replace it with a merely festive and impoverished notion of "happy holidays," and encourage every sort of consumerism, has indeed made its inroads into the manner in which many celebrate the Christ Child's birth. During his final general audience before Christmas, Pope Benedict XVI reminded the faithful that Christmas is a time for renewal and purification: "In the night of the world, let us still allow ourselves to be surprised and illuminated by this coming, by the Star which, rising in the East, has inundated the universe with joy. Let us purify our minds and our lives from everything that contrasts with this coming -- thoughts, words, attitudes and actions -- spurring ourselves on to do good and to help bring peace and justice to our world for all men and women, and thus to walk towards the Lord."

In one sense, purifying our minds and lives of thoughts, words, attitudes and actions that contrast with Christ's coming can and should be taken to mean ridding ourselves of all sin -- the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation first comes to mind. Yet in another sense, it can be taken to mean filling a void that exists both interiorly and exteriorly as a result of improper attitudes. This void is something which is lacking, it is a negative aspect of one's life that is not merely unfulfilling or incomplete, but rather is something opposed to holiness, which can block the way along the path of light, and is, therefore, spiritually harmful.

Within the Pope's statement that we ought to purify our minds and lives, and thus walk toward the Lord, is found the key which unlocks the doorway to a wholly new, fully Christian, human existence of freedom and

love -- it is a doorway into a "new world" with God, a place in which the old is burned away as a mote of dust before the heat of the Son, allowing the new to shine forth in radiant splendor. Catholic on line

主日分享

將臨期第四主日

厄瑪奴耳

本主日彌撒禮儀集中於默想天主聖子降生成人的奧蹟，在這奧蹟中，聖母瑪利亞的角色是不容忽視的。

本主日彌撒中的進堂詠，開宗明義援引依撒意亞先知的預言說：願蒼天遍灑甘露，雲端降下正義；願大地裂開，產生救主。」(依 45:8) 領主詠也同樣援引依撒意亞先知的預言說：「請看，一位貞女將懷孕生子，這孩子將被稱為厄瑪奴耳。」(依 7:14) 這也是本主日彌撒中讀經一的主題。

本主日彌撒中的讀經二，聖保祿宗徒扼要地陳述他所宣揚的福音。這福音的主題是耶穌基督。聖保祿宗徒也強調耶穌是達味王的後裔。

本主日的彌撒福音取自聖瑪竇福音中的聖誕故事。它的主人公是聖若瑟。聖瑪竇稱他為「義人」，說天使顯現給他，向他啓示耶穌誕生的奧蹟。聖瑪竇，像聖路加一樣，強調耶穌「因聖神降孕、由童貞瑪利亞誕生」的信理。聖誕節快要到了。聖若瑟和聖母瑪利亞會懷著信德，虔誠地期待耶穌來到他們的家中。我們慶賀他倆的幸福，同時以彌撒中的集禱經向天主祈求說：

「上主，求你將聖寵傾注我們心中；我們因天使的傳報，知道你的聖子降生人世。願我們仰賴他的苦難和十字架，獲享復活的光榮。」

"節錄自梵崗電台主日聖道禮儀"

福音的喜樂

教宗方濟各的 2014 年新勸諭

《福音的喜樂》(Evangelii Gaudium)

福音的喜樂：教會要敞開大門，發出先知性的聲音

第二點：以恢復福音原始的清新為起

點，進行有創意和大膽的更新。教宗在勸諭中指出，需要“牧靈和傳教上的轉變”和教會“結構上的改革”，使之更著重傳教工作。教宗也想到，在更加體現集體領導和有益的權力分散道路上，進行“教宗職務的轉變”。必須找出“新道路”和“有創意的的方法”，不怕重新看待“與福音無直接關聯”的教會習俗和規範。勸諭中強調，有必要增長平信徒的責任，為女性在教會中更為明顯的臨在擴展空間。 待續 梵蒂岡電台訊

教宗方濟各的話

我們生活中或大或小的十字架，沒有一個不是上主與我們共同分擔的。

堂區活動

墨西哥傳教日

多謝各位教友對墨西哥傳教日的支持，我們共籌得\$2,147.50 作墨西哥傳教工作之用。願主降福您們！

聖誕話劇

本堂週年聖誕話劇將於平安夜舉行。今年聖誕話劇為「等待·聖誕的來賓」，主角為一位貧窮的鞋匠和準備迎接耶穌在平安夜到來的妻子。永援聖母青年團、主日學、聖佳播聖詠團、國語基信團、青少年聖詠團、英文聖詠團及永援聖母歌詠團現正積極排練。並誠意邀請各位教友及其親友於平安夜當晚七時前來觀賞「等待·聖誕的來賓」的演出，一起等待並一同分享基督降生的喜訊！

12月31日(星期二)除夕晚上

感恩中文彌撒

牧靈關愛組為感謝天主在 2013 年內賜給他們各式各樣，大大小小的恩寵及照顧，因此特別邀請阮神父加設一台除夕晚間中文感恩聖祭。歡迎所有教友一同參加，共同感謝天主過去一年的眷顧！

電影晚會：在天堂遇見的五個人

遊樂場工人艾迪 83 歲的生日當天，為了解救一位小女孩而喪命，他在天堂遇見了五位曾經在他生命中出現的人，並使他領悟到人付出的愛與 暖都不會白費，我們來到人間是為了與別人相遇。

日期：一月四日(星期六)

時間：晚上六時 Potluck、六時半放映

地點：永援聖母堂上禮堂

2013 教區公益金，齊來獻愛心

主題：「...為我作證人...」

本堂今年的目標是 50,000 元，捐款信封可在聖堂入口處拿取。截至 12 月 1 日，捐款已累積 58,072.44 元。

就讓我們立即行動，繼續慷慨解囊。在此感謝各位教友，並願主降福您們！

活動一週

星期二 12 月 24 日

聖誕夜彌撒

晚上 7 時聖誕劇

晚上 8 時 30 分英、國、粵語彌撒

星期三 12 月 25 日

聖誕日彌撒

早上 9 時 30 分英文禮儀

早上 11 時正中文禮儀

星期六 12 月 28 日

(聖母軍聖母無玷聖心支團)

時間：早上 9 時 45 分(開會)

地點：聖堂二樓騎士會室

楊式太極班

時間：上午 10 時至 12 時 30 分

地點：永援聖母堂下禮堂

瑜珈初班

時間：下午 2 時至下午 3 時 15 分

地點：永援聖母堂下禮堂

永援聖母青年團練習聖詩

時間：晚上 6 時至 8 時

地點：永援聖母堂上禮堂

信仰小團體 (Arbour Lake)

時間：晚上 7 時 30 分至 10 時

聯絡：Grace Chan 403-208-1806

星期日 12 月 29 日

成人慕道班 (粵語、國語及英語)

時間上午 9 時 30 分至 1 時 30 分

地點：永援聖母堂下禮堂

師主篇

第二十五章、勤於改過自新

從前有一個人，又盼望升天堂，又怕升不了，悠悠惚惚的，心神不定。有一次，難過的厲害，進了聖堂，俯伏在一座祭臺前，自己心裏說：「若我知道，我能恆心到死，那才好呢！」這話還沒有說完，忽然聽得天主在他心裏說：「若你知道這事，你要做什麼呢？你那時願意做的，現今就做，自然可得平安。」那個人一聽這話，立時心神安定，把自己交於天主的聖旨，滿腹的風波，頓時平息了。從此以後，自己將來怎麼樣，也不多管了；他所專務的，就是認明了天主的聖意，叫天主喜歡，自始至終，勉勵為善。

待續

靈修小故事

簡單真理

多年來，莎拉的腰痛每況愈下。醫生轉介她去做物理治療，於是她每天得做 25 個伸展動作。疼痛雖然得到舒緩，但還是存在。所以醫生又安排了 X 光檢測，且把她送到另一個治療師那裡。新的治療師要她停止先前 25 個伸展動作，每天只做一個伸展動作。出乎她意料之外，這個簡單伸展動作的效果竟然最好。

有時最簡單的真理是最棒的！當人們要求神學家卡爾·巴特（Karl Barth）用一句話總結他的神學思想，他回答：「耶穌愛我！」有些人說他還補充一句：「我知道是因有聖經告訴我。」上主對我們的愛是顯而易見的。祂賜下獨生子來拯救我們這些罪人，基督死在十架上挪去了我們罪的纏累；祂的復活，更賜給我們在祂裡面的新生命。何等奇異的愛！正如若望告訴我們的：「你看父賜給我們是何等的慈愛，使我們得稱為上主的兒女！」（若望一書 3 章 1 節）

耶穌對我們的愛，並非止痛藥，當然也不是解決所有生命問題的萬靈丹。但它是可以讓我們能隨時倚靠的真理，賦予我們生命意義和上主的平安。

知多一點點

聖誕節的默想

「嬰孩耶穌被襁褓裹起……」（路 2:7）
襁褓大約是一條寬約四英寸的布條，可能是若瑟或瑪利亞的舊衣服裁成的。新生嬰兒的父母在洗淨嬰兒後便會用襁褓裹起來，除了保暖，也為避免嬰兒脊骨彎曲。

襁褓裹嬰兒正正反映若瑟和瑪利亞的貧窮。貧窮的人不可能預備「嬰兒衣服」（這是耶穌時代的奢侈品，未有成衣和紡織工業時，只有富人才能有剪裁精緻的小衣服給嬰孩穿），嬰兒有動作，一塊大布裹著會鬆脫，保暖效果便打折扣。襁褓就是「民間智慧」，把嬰兒用布條像「木乃伊」般裹起來，便能發揮較佳的保暖作用。

另外，貧窮人家的嬰兒容易營養不良，脊柱往往因此而彎曲。父母用襁褓裹嬰兒時，是故意拉直嬰兒的背，使它不容易彎曲，讓嬰兒長大時不致成為「駝背子」。

「嬰孩耶穌被放在馬槽裡……」（路 2:7）。馬槽是一塊方型的石頭，中間雕鑿出一個洞，是餵馬、驢或騾吃飼料或喝水用的。嬰孩耶穌被放在馬槽中，除了表示祂在餵馬、驢駒的地方出生外，更有其「神學意義」：

1. 耶穌被襁褓裹著，躺在石頭鑿成的馬槽，尤如屍體躺在棺材中，這就預示耶穌的降生是將要為人犧牲、死亡、埋葬，墳墓竟成了新生命（復活）的開始點。
2. 祂在養動物的地方出生，表示祂甘願為人受苦，受折磨。
3. 祂躺在馬槽中，尤如食物，祂就是「從天降下的生命之糧」（若 6:50）。
4. 祂被裹著襁褓，躺在根本不是嬰兒床的馬槽，顯示祂選擇了貧窮、謙卑的生活，祂以身作則，徹底改變當時人崇富嫌貧的觀念，是「貧窮的人是有福的」（路 6:20）的先聲。

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