

**Mass Times:** Saturday: 7:00pm, Sunday: 9:00 am and 11:00 am— Tuesday to Friday at 9:00am

**Reconciliation:** Saturdays 6:15pm, Sundays 8:15 am or by Appointment.

Pastor: Father Aruldhass Lucas, SAC.

Mailing address: 1088 Gillett Street, V2M 2V3—Office hours: Monday to Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm

Website: stmaryspg.ca—E-mail: stmarys.parish@shawcable.com

*We acknowledge that St. Mary's Parish rests on the unceded traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh*



THE ROMAN  
CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF PRINCE GEORGE

Bishop: Most Rev.  
Stephen Jensen



## CHRISTMAS THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD DECEMBER 24TH, 2023

My Dear Parishioners,

The first phase of the Synod on Synodality has just concluded. In his homily at the conclusion of the first phase, Pope Francis invited us all: "May the Church adore: in every diocese, in every parish, in every community, let us adore the Lord! Only in this way will we turn to Jesus and not to ourselves. For only through silent adoration will the Word of God live in our words; only in his presence will we be purified, transformed, and renewed by the fire of his Spirit. Brothers and sisters, let us adore the Lord Jesus!"

Christmas is here, and we are called to celebrate. Have we prepared ourselves for His coming? Whether we are ready or not, He is ready and willing to come to us if only we let him into our hearts. He is in our midst; His name is Emmanuel, God with us!

I remember a famous story about how Prince Vladimir of Kiev (956-1015) chose the religion that he and his kingdom would follow. He sent some of his trusted subjects into the surrounding areas to examine the religious celebrations found there. After having witnessed a liturgy at the Church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople (now present-day Istanbul), the Prince's explorers returned to him and relayed the following: "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth, for surely there is no such splendor or beauty anywhere upon earth. We cannot describe it to you: only this we know that God dwells there among humans, and that their service surpasses the worship of all other places. For we cannot forget that beauty." Ask yourself were you in heaven last Sunday morning? (as heavenly as it is!)

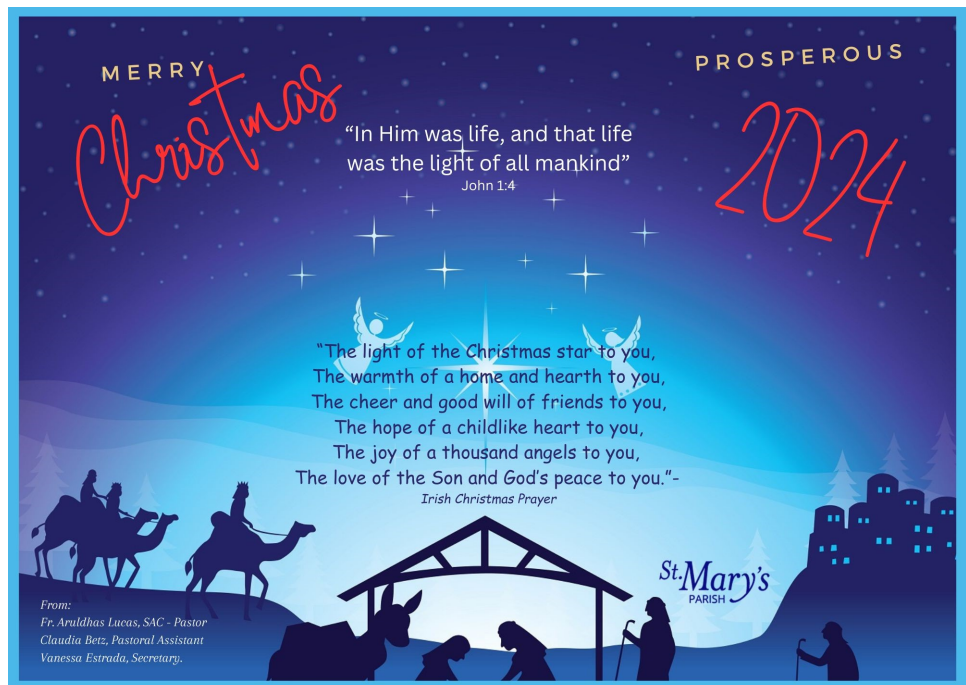
May Jesus be reborn in your heart and life during Christmas 2023 and every day of the New Year 2024. May He radiate His presence from within you as sharing love, unconditional forgiveness, humble service, a compassionate heart and overflowing generosity.

May the Holy Babe of Bethlehem bless you with health in body and soul and grant you a peaceful and blessed New Year.

Dear brothers and sisters, as a Pastor, I would like to thank and appreciate each one of you for your presence, prayers, and support to the parish. And I want to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2024.

God bless you through the powerful intercession of Our Lady of Aparecida.

Father Aruldhass Lucas SAC  
The Pastor





# MASS

## INTENTIONS

Sat	Dec 23	7:00 pm	Int for all our Parishioners
Sun	Dec 24	10:00 am	RIP Branco Brbot
		4:00 pm	Int for all our Parishioners
		9:00 pm	RIP Hugh Norman
Mon	Dec 25	10:00 am	Christmas Day Mass
Tue	Dec 26	9:00 am	RIP Bronco, Luka, Slavko, Thomas Brbot
Wed	Dec 27	9:00 am	RIP Odiane Michaud
Thu	Dec 28	9:00 am	
Fri	Dec 29	9:00 am	RIP Isabelle Thomas
Sat	Dec 30	7:00 pm	Int for Vukovic Family and RIP Ivan Vukovic
Sun	Dec 31	10:00 am	RIP Lucy Ritchie and Claudette Gauthier.
		6:30 pm	Adoration of the Holy Eucharist
		7:00 pm	New Year Vigil Mass
Mon	Jan 1	10:00 am	New Years Mass

### PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for the intentions of: Brigitta Betz, Eldon Gauthier, Maria Levar, Beverly Stuart, Rizal Advincula, Grace Noblette, Minnie, Blair, and Korena Peters and family, Garry Kaulbach's daughter, Birdie Froment, Mia Savic and family, Pam Meyer, Joanne Rebogaliata, Manae Peters, Ruth, and Wark family.

### READINGS AND LITURGY

*Isaiah 9.2-4, 6-7; Psalm 96.1-4, 11-13;  
Titus 2.11-14; Gospel: Luke 2.1-16.*

The prophet Isaiah speaks of the coming of the Prince of Peace, whose dominion is vast and forever peaceful and who reigns with judgment and justice. Paul writes to Titus, saying that the grace of God has appeared, saving all. In the Gospel, Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem, where she gives birth to her son. His birth is proclaimed to nearby shepherds by an angel of the Lord. And a multitude of the heavenly host appears alongside and praises God.

*Faith Catholic*

### ST. MARY'S PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

The St. Mary's Parish Office will be closed from Friday, December 22nd to Thursday, December 28th.

### THE GOLDEN RICE GRAINS

There is a beautiful poem by the mystic poet of India, Rabindra Nath Tagore, extolling the reward of generous giving. It tells the story of a king who regularly visited his people, passing through the streets in a chariot. One morning as the king was passing by, a beggar woman who planned to ask him for alms, stood on the roadside with her begging bowl. As the king approached her, however, he descended from his chariot and stretched out his hand as though he was expecting a gift from the woman. Excited and surprised, the woman put her hand in the cotton bag on her shoulder, took out a pinch of rice, and with trembling hands gave it to the king. The king was well pleased; he smiled at her put her offering in his pocket and gave her back a pinch of grains from his other pocket. When the woman returned to her small hut that evening and examined the grains, she had gotten that day, she was surprised to find a few grains of gold in the rice. You can imagine both her surprise and despair when she realized she should have given all her rice grains to the king. — We are here to offer our gifts to Child Jesus in the manger as His birthday gift. Let us remember that Jesus does not want our material gifts as much as He wants ourselves, with all our weakness and temptations, our merits, and demerits. Let our Christmas gift to him be a heart full of love and a strong and sincere resolution to share it generously with others.



**St. Augustine's Reflections:** In this poem written some fifteen centuries ago, Augustine, the great theologian, tried to capture the mystery of the Incarnation:

Maker of the sun,  
He is made under the sun.  
In the Father he remains,  
From his mother he goes forth.  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
He was born on earth under heaven.  
Unspeakably wise,  
He is wisely speechless.  
Filling the world,  
He lies in a manger.  
Ruler of the stars,  
He nurses at his mother's bosom.  
He is both great in the nature of God,  
And small in the form of a servant.

## SAVE THE DATES!

# DEC 2023

# JAN 2024

SATURDAY

23

7:00PM  
4th week of Advent  
Mass



SUNDAY

24

10:00 AM  
4th Sunday of Advent  
4:00 PM  
Children's Mass -  
Christmas Vigil  
9:00 PM  
Christmas Vigil Mass



MONDAY

25

10:00 AM  
Christmas Day Mass



SATURDAY

30

7:00 PM  
Holy Family Mass



SUNDAY

31

10:00 AM  
Holy Family Mass  
6:30 PM  
Adoration of the  
Holy Eucharist  
7:00 PM  
Mary, Mother of God  
New Year's Vigil Mass

MONDAY

1

10:00 AM  
Mary, Mother of God  
New Year's Mass

**Happy  
2024!**

### U. S. BISHOPS: VATICAN DECLARATION DOES NOT CHANGE CHURCH TEACHING ON MARRIAGE

On Monday, December 18, 2023, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith issued a declaration titled *Fiducia Supplicans*, addressing the topic of blessing same-sex couples and others in relationships that do not follow Church teaching. Out of context reporting on the new document in secular media has led to some confusion about whether this is a shift in the Church's teaching on marriage. The Catholic News Agency released an article on Monday covering the topic, drawing from a statement from the U.S. Bishops which affirms Church teaching has not been changed by the new document. The article offers more context and insight into the purpose and details of *Fiducia Supplicans*, including the difference between the purpose of a liturgical and pastoral blessing, and circumstances in which a blessing cannot be given, such as at civil union ceremonies where a pastoral blessing may give an appearance of legitimacy which does not exist.

Please read the article here: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/256314/us-bishops-vatican-declaration-does-not-change-church-teaching-on-marriage>

### DIOCESE OF VICTORIA PASTORAL CARE TRAINING SESSIONS – WINTER 2024

The valuable and free Pastoral Care Outreach Training series will be offered online again this winter. Nine sessions will be held via Zoom on Saturday mornings from 9:30 – noon, starting on January 20 and running until March 23, 2024 (with no session on March 9 for Spring Break). Participants who attend all sessions will receive a Certificate of Completion. Participants will require a phone number and email address, a computer, tablet or Smart Phone with speakers, microphone and webcam, a reliable Internet connection, and access to Zoom. Please register through your local parish by January 12. For further information, please email [moiraking@shaw.ca](mailto:moiraking@shaw.ca).

### STATEMENT OF CCCB ON VATICAN'S DOCUMENT ADDRESSING PASTORAL BLESSINGS

On Tuesday, December 19, 2023, the CCCB released a statement regarding the recent publishing of *Fiducia Supplicans* from the Vatican. In the statement, Bishop William McGrattan, president of the CCCB, says: "While explicitly affirming the Church's traditional understanding of marriage, *Fiducia Supplicans* allows pastors to bless people who freely request a blessing, seeking divine help to live in fidelity to God's will. The Declaration makes clear that such blessings must be directed to the persons themselves rather than their situation and that they must be spontaneously requested and are not ritual or liturgical actions."

For the full statement, please visit the CCCB website here: <https://www.cccb.ca/announcement/statement-of-ccb-on-vaticans-document-addressing-pastoral-blessings/>

### MONTHLY DAY OF EUCHARISTIC EXPOSITION AND ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Emmanuel Hermitage invites you to a Personal Date with Jesus on **Tuesday, January 9th, 2024**, at the Domano Chapel, 6500 Southridge Ave. Mass will be celebrated at 7:30 AM and the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM for a day of silent prayer and adoration. We will pray for the universal Church and the world, and for the people and needs of our Diocese. In particular we will pray for the protection of all human life, for all the sick, for vocations, for Peace in our world, and for the intentions of those participating in the day. Please mark your calendar on the second Tuesday of each month for Personal Date with Jesus days.



# PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

*We are a community of disciples called together: To share the life and mission of Jesus, to proclaim the word, to celebrate liturgy, to educate and to serve, to seek justice and reconciliation.*

## PARISH INFORMATION

The Pastor is Father Aruldas Lucas, SAC. Resident Priest: Father Prabhakar. The Pastoral Assistant is Claudia Betz and the parish secretary is Vanessa Estrada. The Mailing address is: 1088 Gillett Street, V2M 2V3 Regular Office hours are Monday to Friday: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm Office telephone: 250-564-4097 for after hours Emergency: 250-562-4921, Email—[stmarys.parish@shawcable.com](mailto:stmarys.parish@shawcable.com). St. Mary's Parish is governed by a **Pastoral Council** made up of Parishioners, the chair is Ron Polillo. The Finances of the Parish are overseen by a **Finance committee**, the chair is Irene Meeuwissen.

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

The Principal is Jenny Schroeder, the School Secretary is Jackie Boyes. The phone number for the School is 250-563-7502. Visit the website for more information: <https://www.stmaryspg.org/>

## SACRAMENTS

### BAPTISM FOR INFANTS

Parents are to be registered parishioners and participate in a preparation session. Sessions are held as needed in the parish office. Contact the parish office at 250-564-4097.

### BAPTISM FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Parents who wish to have their child baptized (age 5 to 12) are asked to register their child in the Family Faith Formation program. During the school year there will be special sessions that will prepare them for baptism. Children in Grade 2 and up will also receive preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion. Please contact the parish office for more information. 250-564-4097.

### FIRST RECONCILIATION, FIRST COMMUNION & CONFIRMATION

In the Diocese of Prince George, First Reconciliation and First Communion are celebrated in Grade 2, and Confirmation in Grade 6. Our sacramental preparation program begins in the fall for children in St. Mary's School and for those attending Family Faith Formation classes. For more information, please phone Jenny at the school or Claudia the parish office. 250-564-4097.

### RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION ADULTS—RCIA

Are you interested in becoming Catholic or in learning more about the Catholic faith? Please contact the parish office for more information. 250-564-4097.

### SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Various options for marriage preparation are available. Please make an appointment with the pastor, at least 6 months before the intended wedding date.

### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Communal celebrations of the sacrament are generally held during Lent and Advent.

### PASTORAL CARE TO THE SICK, ELDERLY & DYING

If you or anyone in your family is sick, elderly or home bound, and would like to receive communion, anointing of the sick or a pastoral visit, please give us a call. If there is an emergency visit in the hospital or Hospice, ask the nursing station to contact the Catholic pastor on call.

### FUNERALS

Please contact the pastor before making final arrangements with the funeral directors.

## GIVING AT ST. MARY'S

We have a few ways to conveniently contribute to your parish. We have the old fashioned drop your envelope in the collection or locked Mailbox. You can mail us your envelope at 1088 Gillett St. V2M 2V3. We also have online options. E-transfer has been set up with our bank, please e-transfer to: [SMPaccounting@stmaryspg.ca](mailto:SMPaccounting@stmaryspg.ca) When you use this option you will be prompted with the following statement "I understand that St. Mary's Parish (The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Prince Rupert) has registered for Auto deposit and will not need to answer a security question to deposit funds" Our website [stmaryspg.ca](http://stmaryspg.ca) has been set up to accept donations from credit Cards.

## HEARING SUPPORT DURING MASS

For those with hearing impairment, we have portable receivers that broadcast the Mass via earbuds or headphones. Please contact Claudia at the parish office if you would like to use one. To use the receivers with hearing aids, please bring your own headphones.

## PARISH / COMMUNITY GROUPS

### CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

The CWL is open to all ladies of the parish. We meet on the first Tuesday of each month in the St. Eugene Room at 7:00 pm. Please phone Cortnie Weir 250-967-4849 for more information.



### KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS (COUNCIL 5246)



The Knights of Columbus is open to all men of the parish. General Meeting are on the third Tuesday of each month in the St. Eugene Room at 7:00 pm. For information, please phone Grand Knight, Darrin Huzar at 250-614-3161.

### ST. MARY'S YOUTH GROUP

Meets twice a month on Wednesday evenings during the School year for all Youth in Grades 7 to 12. Please contact Claudia at the parish office for more details.

### THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



**Drop-In Centre** is located at 1220—2nd Ave. Mon-Fri: 8:30 to 9:30 am, 12:30-1:30 pm, 7:30-8:00 pm; Sat-Sun: 9:00-10:00 am and 2:30-3:00 pm. Hampers are available to families and seniors. Call 250-564-7871 weekday mornings.

**Thrift Store:** is located at 1645—3rd Ave. Hours are Mon-Fri, 9:30- noon and 12:30-4:30 pm. Donations are being accepted at the back entrance. Call 250-562-5136

### SHEPHERD'S CORNER

Shepherd's Corner is located next to the SVDP Drop-in Centre. (1220—2nd Ave) This is a place where people who are experiencing challenges can gather, share their stories and be heard. Volunteers provide a listening ear and a compassionate heart.

### RAINBOWS

Rainbows is a peer support group for children, adolescents and adults who are grieving a death, divorce or any other painful transition in their family. Sessions run for 12 weeks each Thursdays from 6:30 to 7:30pm, beginning in both September and February at St. Mary's School. There is no cost to participants. Contact: 250-562-3477 or e-mail: [rainbowspg@shawcable.com](mailto:rainbowspg@shawcable.com) **[www.rainbowspg.com](http://www.rainbowspg.com)**

