

## Christmas 2020

Dear Parishioners of Saint Monica:

### Greetings and Peace of Christ!

What a year we have experienced! The year began normally and suddenly our daily life has been turned upside down when the corona virus hit us like a fury storm. The pandemic has created much anxiety and stress of life, but our faith in God helps us to carry on by following the necessary health guidelines. When we were able to have public Masses up to 50 participants, there is no shortage of generous volunteers to keep our worship space safe, sanitized and readied for the next Mass celebration. May our Lord bless you with his grace and love.

Although our PREP sessions were stopped at the height of the pandemic, we were able to celebrate First Holy Communion and Confirmation for the candidates in August and September. This year's First Holy Communion was divided into two Saturdays to accommodate the candidates and their parents. Archbishop Miller presided Confirmation on the feast of the Canadian Martyrs, September 26, and anointed the candidates with the chrism, empowering them with gifts of the Holy Spirit. It was a beautiful celebration even with the limited accommodation of sponsors and family representatives. A special word of gratitude was extended to the PREP teachers and supporters who had gone the extra mile to make the celebration possible.

Our parish office remains opened throughout the pandemic. Weekly parish e-bulletin is distributed out to those who has shared their email address with us. Hopefully, the bulletin helps connect you with the parish. It is good to see parishioners who felt safe to sign up for Mass. Others are more comfortable following online Mass. Do and follow what you need to keep up our spiritual life and nourishment. God is surely with us and keeps us in his love.

Advent has arrived and preparations are on the way for the celebration of Christ's birth in humanity. At the time of this composition, public worship has been suspended for another week. In anticipation for the two great feasts, the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Guadalupe, I entrust our faith community to Our Blessed Mother, that she intercedes with her son, Jesus, before the Heavenly Father to lift the pandemic clouds. It would be the most gift for the celebration of the biggest birthday of our Faith, the birth of Our Saviour, that we would not be taken for granted anymore.

We all know our Christmas and New Year Masses have been suspended by order of the BC government health authority until January 8. This decision did not come easy and we entrust to the Lord for the protection of everyone especially the vulnerable. Meanwhile, let us pray for the safety of everyone to remain healthy and peace of mind.

You and your families are remembered in the daily Mass, though it is celebrated in "absentia" of a congregation.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

Blessings of Christ our Saviour, Jesus the Lord.

*Fr. Robert SJ*



## ST. MONICA PARISH

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PASTOR: **Rev. Robert Wong, SJ**

### PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday

9:30 am – 1 pm / 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm



December 20, 2020

4th Sunday of Advent

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*The Lord dwells among us.*

David worries that the ark of God dwells in a tent; Mary doesn't hesitate to allow the ark of God to dwell within her. God is not bound by human constraints. Yet God asks us to participate with him and cooperate with his grace, that the ark of the covenant – and the arc of salvation history – may be made available to all.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Lord reminds David that he, the Lord, chose David. He tells David that a kingdom will be established in David's name and endure forever. St. Paul gives glory to *the only wise God, through Jesus Christ*. In the Gospel, the angel Gabriel tells Mary that she will conceive and bear a son, and hearing that the Holy Spirit and *the power of the Most High* will be with her – she responds, *may it be done to me according to your word.*

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### Today's Readings:

1st: 2 Samuel 7.1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

Psalm: 89

2nd: Romans 16.25-27

Gospel: Luke 1.26-38

**Support our parish this Christmas** - Our parish relies on your ongoing support during this challenging time. Your gifts are critical in keeping our parish active and thriving into the new year. Online giving is easy to set-up, safe, secure, and saves time. Give now at [support.rcav.org/christmas](http://support.rcav.org/christmas)

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**Distribution of Holy Communion on Christmas Day and New Year Day** - Trusting you will have a chance to follow one of the online Masses on Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. **Holy Communion will be given out at 10:30am, inside our Church**, while observing social distancing and wearing a mask. Please follow the direction of the volunteers. No congregating in the church or foyer, please.

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**Sunday Missal 2020 - 2021** - The new liturgical year is here. You are encouraged to own a copy of the Missal for your perusal at home. \$5 a copy is a great investment for your faith life all year round. You can get your copy at the Office or in the church foyer. Thank you for keeping up your spiritual life with the Word of God.

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**2021 Donation Envelopes** - No doubt the pandemic has brought many challenges and anxiety to everyone of us, including our parish financial commitments. Thank you for making any sacrifices to support St. Monica Parish. The new envelopes package is available for you in the church foyer. If you do not find your package, please let us know and you'll be given one for your perusal. May the Lord bless your generosity always.

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**Project Advance 2020** - Many parishioners have made your donation online via the RCAV.org website. THANK YOU for your support and generous response of our parish commitment to this year's appeal of the Archdiocese. Our share is \$13,000. Our total goal is \$40,000 plus expenses for the refurbished new floorings in the Parish Centre and classrooms. PA2020 continues until December 31. May the Lord bless you always!

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**Advent Confessions** - Although the lockdown has been extended beyond Christmas and New Year, you are encouraged to prepare spiritually for the celebration of our Saviour's birthday. The Sacrament of Reconciliation offers us the opportunity to renew our faith in the merciful love of God. Confessions are available Saturday, Dec. 19, 10am to 12noon and Thursday, Dec. 24, by appointment.

#### ***A Stewardship Moment***

In today's Gospel reading we have the story of the Annunciation, when the angel of the Lord announced to Mary that she would give birth to Christ through the intercession of the Holy Spirit. Mary allowed God's messenger to speak to her. She was attentive, not afraid to enter into a dialogue, then unconditionally obedient. Mary's acceptance of this mystery is a stewardship model for us. Good stewards remain open to the incursions of divine life into the normal course of their daily lives. How open are we to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our own lives? What might we do this last week of Advent to be more attentive to the Lord?

#### **Christmas 2020: Jesus, Our Living Hope**

This year's Christmas preparations will undoubtedly look different; the faithful of the Archdiocese will be challenged to make space intentionally in their hearts despite the obstacles presented by the pandemic. Our priests will be undertaking more work and some Christmas traditions will not be possible under current Provincial restrictions. As we journey through Advent to the joy of the Incarnation, may we, through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother, encounter Jesus, Our Living Hope. Learn more about this year's Christmas celebrations at [rcav.org/christmas](http://rcav.org/christmas)

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#### **December Memorial Mass and Christmas Remembrance Tree Service**

We invite you to join us online on Sunday, Dec. 20 from 2:30 - 3:30 pm as we celebrate Holy Mass at Gardens of Gethsemani Chapel for all of our beloved departed of 2020. Following the Mass, we will have the Christmas Remembrance Tree Service. We invite you to register online at [rccav.org](http://rccav.org) and submit the name of your departed loved one. Staff at Gardens will write the name on an ornament and place it on the Christmas Remembrance Tree which will be blessed at the end of Mass. A participant from last year's Remembrance Tree Service shared that for her to put an ornament on that tree, was a way to tangibly love her lost ones and tell them: "I have not forgotten you. You are still in my heart."

**May the God of hope fill you  
with all joy and peace...  
- Roman 15:13**



#### **Knights of Columbus**

#### **59th Annual Charity Appeal**

**Tickets only \$3 - WIN \$177,000 in prizes -**

**Limited Tickets!**

**1<sup>st</sup> Prize \$100,000**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize \$50,000**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize \$10,000**

**4<sup>th</sup> Prize \$5,000**

**5<sup>th</sup> Prize \$2,000**

**6<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> \$1,000 each**

**BUY YOUR Tickets ONLINE -**

**KofCDraw.net/C12861**

**Prizes will be drawn with the grand prizes and 12 consolation prizes on Saturday January 30, 2021**

#### **Mass Intentions**

**December 20 - 26, 2020**

Mon, Dec 21	-	Caroline Tie (INT)
Tue, Dec 22	-	Bonifacio Soria & Trifonia Mendoza (+)
Wed, Dec 23	-	Victoria Manalo (+)
<b>Thu, Dec 24</b>	-	<b>Christmas Eve</b>
<b>Fri, Dec 25</b>	-	<b>Nativity of the Lord</b>